



Why use Circus Workshops in our School? Where's the evidence that it does any good?

Below is the Abstract from the full report which has been shared with Swamp Circus Trust Ltd (Yorkshire) by Ben Cornish of Circus Berzercus
<http://www.circusberzercus.co.uk>

We hope that this Abstract will provide you with some research-based evidence to support the option of booking circus workshops for your school and why circus skills will be of benefit to your pupils and students.

The full report can be provided on request.

Yours sincerely,

Jules Howarth

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“The Effect of Kinaesthetic training on literacy performance among primary school pupils

Eldridge, S.; Cornish, B., Falkner, L.

Abstract

A small-scale exploratory study undertaken from January to July 2004, using unrelated samples was conducted to ascertain whether kinaesthetic training had a beneficial effect on learning, literacy and self-esteem in children with literacy difficulties, and was a sufficiently motivating, manageable and cost effective approach to alleviate these difficulties.

22 children aged 8 – 11 years in an Exeter middle school who were demonstrating literacy levels up to four years below their chronological age were allocated to an experimental (kinaesthetic training) or control group (on the waiting list for such training) matched as much as possible by age, sex, class teacher, literacy level and handedness. All were subjected to a battery of assessments before and after the training programme, which was conducted over a period of six months.

The results are encouraging. The majority of the children wholeheartedly recommend learning to juggle as a result of the training. Teachers noted improvements in mental alertness, confidence and self-esteem among children in the experimental group. However, there was a mixed response regarding discernable progress in literacy skills.

Quantitative data showed a significant difference between the experimental and control group ($p < 0.05$ one-tailed) with respect to reading accuracy. The experimental group showed an average increase in standard score of 3.36 whilst the control group's average increase was 0.27. When converted to reading ages this equated to an average increase of 9 months (range 0 – 24 months) for the experimental group and 2.72 months (range minus 6 months – 18 months) for the control group.

Another promising result was an increase in reading speed for the majority of the children in the experimental group (8 of the 11) with an average increase from 111 words a minute (range 31 – 166) to 159 words a minute (range 59 – 255). This compares to the 5 (of the 11) children from the control group who showed an increase in reading speed from an average of 100 words a minute (range 52 -251) to 105 (range 75 – 179).

Variations in the amount of practice children did between sessions, the extent to which the less co-ordinated children took to juggling, and the nature of the literacy difficulties may have affected the results.

These preliminary results remain encouraging in contributing towards the development of a manageable, motivating and low-cost exercise package with evident educational benefits.”

NB: We, Swamp, have added the **bold** in the text format.

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