

## ABSTRACT

### TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF KINESTHETIC LEARNING DURING LITERACY INSTRUCTION

by

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Throughout elementary schools in the United States there is an ongoing concern about students' reading proficiency. Many programs, strategies and initiatives have been implemented across elementary classrooms in the United States to help students become proficient readers by third grade. Numerous theorists and researchers support the idea that direct physical movement and play increases the function of the brain and helps the brain get ready to learn concepts (Lengel & Kuczala, 2010). Kinesthetic learning, one of Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, is one approach to incorporate physical and tactile strategies in teaching across subjects.

The purpose of this study was to examine kindergarten teacher perceptions' of the implementation of kinesthetic learning into the classroom during literacy instruction. This qualitative study drew upon data collected from a pre-implementation teacher perception survey, documentation of a teacher discussion group and a post-implementation teacher interview. Five teachers volunteered for this study and all taught kindergarten in the same school district. The duration of the study was 12 weeks. After collecting the teacher perception survey, a discussion group was held during which teachers generated a list of kinesthetic activities that they could

implement during literacy instruction. Teachers implemented kinesthetic learning activities into their literacy instruction over an eight week period. The post implementation interviews were conducted one on one by the researcher following the eight weeks of kinesthetic learning.

Based on the interviews, all teacher participants reported that kindergarten students responded positively to and were actively engaged in the kinesthetic activities incorporated into literacy instruction. Another perception shared by all the teachers was that implementing kinesthetic learning into literacy was only successful with adult support.

This study is a first step to looking at the implementation of kinesthetic learning into literacy instruction in kindergarten classrooms in one school district. Based on their perceptions of student engagement, the teachers in this study felt positive about and motivated to continue the implementation of kinesthetic learning activities into literacy instruction.