

Westport School - Interview with Teachers

Roberta Blake and Karen Brennan teach the Fourth Grade and Seth Faber is a Third Grade teacher. All three have just experienced their first year of incorporating Steven Angel's Rhythm Of Learning Program into their classrooms at the Westport Heights Elementary School in Los Angeles. In this interview they discuss the academic and social improvements that some of their students have achieved as a result of this unique and dynamic approach to learning.

What has the drumming done for your classroom?

KAREN: The children are more cooperative then they used to be.

SETH: It has built a sense of community.

ROBERTA: You can see that those that are doing it are doing so much better in class because they do have something that they believe in, and can help them. There's been a difference in the classroom. There is a sense of bonding.

How did you feel when Steven first came in?

KAREN: I didn't think when he first came in that there was any chance in the world that he could succeed. And he has succeeded. Knowing the students that I have, to actually see a kid who maybe read 40 words a minute back in October now read 90 words a minute is quite something.

ROBERTA: I had several that read 30-40 words per minute and now are reading much faster. One little girl, who is also an ELL student, was reading very slowly. Now, because of the program, she is almost at grade level. She also is coming up in her vocabulary and her comprehension.

SETH: I did see a lot of improvement with fluency - from thirty words to the grade level of a hundred words.

ROBERTA: I use it for concepts like equivalent fractions. That way they got it. When they were confusing concepts it was very helpful. Next year with my Fourth Graders, I would introduce it the very first week to help with multiplication.

SETH: There are a lot of short bursts of growth. Sometimes there are three or four kids that I could pick out, who might be the quiet shy ones and I noticed that the drumming really brought them out. One that later comes up to me and says, "That really helped me when we did the exercise before the test where we close our eyes and visualize succeeding." They'll tell me that because of the exercises they saw themselves getting all the answers right, getting an A on the test.

ROBERTA: Sometimes the quiet children absorb this program like a sponge. Based on the steady improvement they've made this year, I know there will be a huge improvement in their scores when we have testing next week. I have so many distractions in my classroom and even the language of the program, words like "focus" and "concentration" have been very useful tools in getting the children to be able to work together.