

Running Head: MAKE IT MULTISENSORY!

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Meaningful Ways to Make Your Lessons Appeal to Your Student's Senses

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the multiple ways educators can enhance and enrich their teaching methods and lessons by incorporating the students' senses. Creating meaningful and creative lessons using multisensory methods lends cognitive, memorable, intellectual experience. Tapping into the various sensory connections in our students' minds initiates a cerebral, etching process of learning. By integrating multisensory elements to a lesson, an educator has a better chance of "reaching" the students via multiple intelligences. Accessing one or more pathways of learning may include kinesthetic, visual, auditory, and even olfactory or tastant modalities of lesson delivery.

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Current educational research is pushing educators away from the 'traditional' lecture with pencil and paper lesson, toward the innovative multisensory enhanced lesson to reach our diverse learners. Although the 'traditional' method is historically proven effective and essential, spicing up lessons with multisensory elements can allow us to access each of our students via sense stimulus. Among many groups, the International Dyslexia Association (2000) advocate for multisensory teaching, since it is simultaneously visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile which in turn, enhances memory and learning.

What is this term 'multisensory teaching'? Multisensory teaching is using a combination of human senses, i.e. auditory (hearing), visual (seeing), and kinesthetic (feeling) while instructing students. Lessons can be conveyed using two or more of these modalities simultaneously to receive or express information, according to S.L. Cook (2007). We can reach students using multisensory modalities grades K-12 and beyond, although it is certainly most effective with our youngest students!

Teaching a concept in a multisensory fashion is easily done by any teacher. Putting a multisensory spin on a lesson is proven to stimulate pathways in the minds of your students, that perhaps the old-fashion pencil and paper may not always gain access to in order to form memorable, learned moments in curriculum attainment.

Teachers today can utilize the vast resources available, in conjunction with their own creativity and originality. As a matter of fact, we have access to a variety of didactic materials simply by visiting the local dollar store or stepping into our own back yards. Tactile objects and manipulatives, vivid pictures and photos, sound bites and mp3 clips, are easily accessible everywhere we turn.

So how exactly can we engage our students' minds in more than one way? Here are a few ways we can stimulate their brains and make learning fun, exciting, and refreshing. Not to mention, memorable!

Kinesthetic Access– Touching and Feeling!

-*Sponges* are wonderful tools that students can spell on with their pointer fingers. Try teaching the alphabet, new letters, a spelling lesson or a new set of sight words by using a package of ordinary kitchen scrubbers!

-*Sand* on a cookie tray or in a Tupperware container can assist in drawing a diagram, map, or again, spelling. Students can use their fingers and hands to make movements in sand to create a replica of a diagram from the blackboard.

-*Clay or dough* is easily made at home or store-bought. The kneading of this durable substance lends a way to create sculptures and models of a main character in a book, and an animal studied in science, or even a general critical thinking activity for a new invention.

-*Shaving cream* on a flat surface provides an area for students to write letters, numbers, and beginning sentences. How about practicing writing numerals 1-20?

Visual Access– Seeing and Viewing!

-*Pictures and diagrams* always assist our students in any subject area. Labeling a neighborhood map or a home lay-out from a book can give the student the perspective of setting.

-*Videos* can be accessed via video tapes, televisions, and the Internet. Show a clip from a movie to demonstrate an idea. Display a portion of an expedition to show a few artifacts from an archeological dig.

-*Flashcards* are tried and true. This fast flipping visual stimulus allows students to practice sounds-letter correspondence, new sight words, and basic math facts.

-*Color* adds wonder to any lesson. Vivid, bright colors can enhance a vowel in a C-V-C word, highlight a number's place value, or emphasize a character's name on a hand-out.

Auditory Access– Hearing

-*Sound clips and mp3 files* online can be accessed to play a sound of a new letter, new sound, or new word.

-*Instruments and music* jazz up any lesson. The movement and playing allows for creative expression. Tapping to a beat promotes basic counting principles. Working together as a band creates cooperation among peers.

-*Songs and jingles* form wonderful memories that stay with our students for a life time. Songs such as the ABC's, Itsy Bitsy Spider, and others will resonate in their minds for years to come!

Olfactory and Tastant Access – Smelling and Tasting

-*Beware of allergens!* Bringing in items containing peanuts, wheat, chocolate, milk or other potential allergens should be planned for accordingly with a permission slip or parent consent of some sort.

-*Cooking and baking* are fun! And they both promote great mathematical number sense. Measurements teach numeracy, fractions, counting, and more!

-*Taste tests* are exciting as well! Have the students close their eyes and test different foods, then describe what they tasted. They can use adjectives to explain the taste and texture of each food.

-*Sniff and guess* is similar to the taste test, but the students can only use their sense of smell.

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