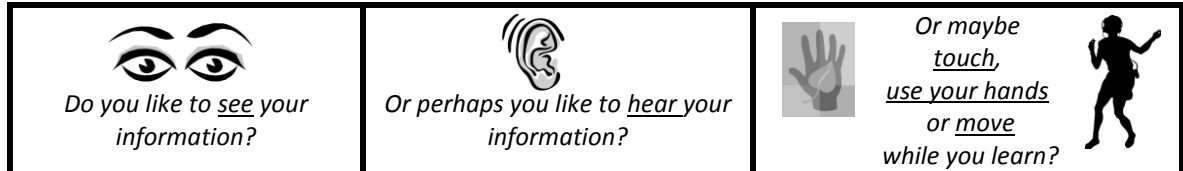


Learning Concepts About Children's Learning

Multi-Sensory Learning

Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic-Tactile Learning - Also Referred to as VAK-T



There are five main physical senses. These are: eyes, ears, touch, taste and smell. Most learning is connected to eyes, ears and touch. Touch is also referred to as kinesthetic or tactile.

**The more these senses are combined,
the easier some students may find it to retain their learning.**

Recognising different ways that learning responses may occur can enable students to build stronger skills for self-management. This is especially important for any students who may find some aspects of their learning difficult. Most students will learn using all these senses in some way, but will often favour one sense over another.

Visual Learners



Visual learners prefer to learn through reading and seeing things. Reading information, viewing pictures, diagrams, charts, graphs, etc, and watching demonstrations, videos, and television, are all visual activities. Visual learners see things in their minds and use images. They will record and construct images and mental pictures of conversations and life experiences. They may need to take notes, make mind maps or keep lists so they can 'see' the information, rather than rely on things they have heard. They may prefer to watch someone's mouth while speaking to reinforce what they are hearing. The visual Arts will have an impact on them too.

In lectures or classroom instructions, which are often auditory, it helps visual learners to write things down, do diagrams, make mind maps, note key words or phrases, or make lists, as this uses their visual strength to help them 'see' the information. Power Point presentations involving pictures and diagrams will work well too.

They tend to have an instant recall as they retrieve information as an entire picture. They may have problems with remembering long oral (auditory) instructions and explanations, as their mind might wander off trying to put ideas and concepts into visual images. They may find verbal directions confusing, preferring instead to have a map. Their conversations may include very descriptive

language using colour, shapes and visually recognisable concepts. They are likely to have strong visualisation skills. Visual learners may remember people's faces, their hair style or features.

Visual learners may use responses such as, 'I **see** what you mean', 'It **looks** fine to me', or 'I've got this **image** in my mind'

Auditory Learners



Auditory learners prefer to hear things, and to talk about them. The sound of information is important. They like to listen to tapes and lectures, and find listening easier than writing or reading for remembering things.

Hearing information, then talking about it is important for learning, as the discussion allows the processing to occur through the ears. These learners are probably the 'chatty' ones at school.

Reading aloud may help them with understanding written work because this is using their auditory strength to help them 'hear' the information. Rereading information aloud onto a tape then playing the audio tape back is a good strategy for reinforcing any kind of learning.

Auditory learners may be able to recall conversations or vocal commands as if they are replaying a recording, including the voice tone and inflections of the conversation. They can also be easily distracted by background noises and lose concentration.

With Auditory learners, information is stored and retrieved using their auditory senses, which stores information sequentially often one sound at a time. The memory may then retrieve the information in that sequential order one sound at a time. Auditory learners may recall people by the sound and tone of their voice.

Auditory learners may use responses such as, 'I **hear** what you are saying', 'That **sounds** OK to me' or 'I need you to **hear** me out/**listen** to me.'

Tactile Learners (Touch)



Tactile learners like to touch and feel things. They experience sensations and have strong feelings about their experiences or conversations. They frequently recall their feelings first, followed by the information actually stored. This can also be the 'emotional' sense.

Their physical sense of touch helps them to imprint things on their minds. Texture, shape, density, fluidity and size can all be perceived through touch. It also includes the emotive aspects of information, such as noting how things feel emotionally.

Often information is 'digested' by how it feels, and retrieved with those emotions still in place. As a Tactile person recalls information they may well express the emotion in their voice.

This area is closely related to, and often included in, kinesthetic learning, and similarly by combining touch with the other styles, the learning and processing will be more complete.

Tactile learners, like Kinesthetic learners, may use responses such as, 'I will **hold** onto that idea', 'I'd like to **touch** on those points again', or 'That **feels** Ok to me'.

Kinesthetic Learners (Movement)



Kinesthetic and Tactile learners are much the same, except kinesthetic learners may prefer to engage the whole body in activity rather than just touch with the hands. They like to learn through doing things, practical application, construction, movement, drama and action. They may prefer to learn by writing or acting things out, or through practical experiments. Any physical action that relates directly to the learning will help kinesthetic learners to assimilate the knowledge easier.

Other activities could include using a fidget ball to keep the hands busy while listening to a lecture, or bouncing a ball while reciting information such as spelling or tables. Walking or jogging with an audio tape of information may also be a useful addition.

Usually Kinesthetic learners will have a strength in auditory or visual as well, and by combining a physical or tactile activity with the auditory and visual skills, the learning will be more complete. Kinesthetic learners may recall people by their movements and mannerisms, or by the way their face moves with speech.

Kinesthetic and Tactile Learners may use responses such as, 'I just can't get a **grip** on it' or 'I **get** it now.'

Smell / Taste



The other two senses of smell and taste generally have less direct effect on our learning and processing styles. Connoisseurs of food and wine, for instance, will have well developed senses of smell and taste.

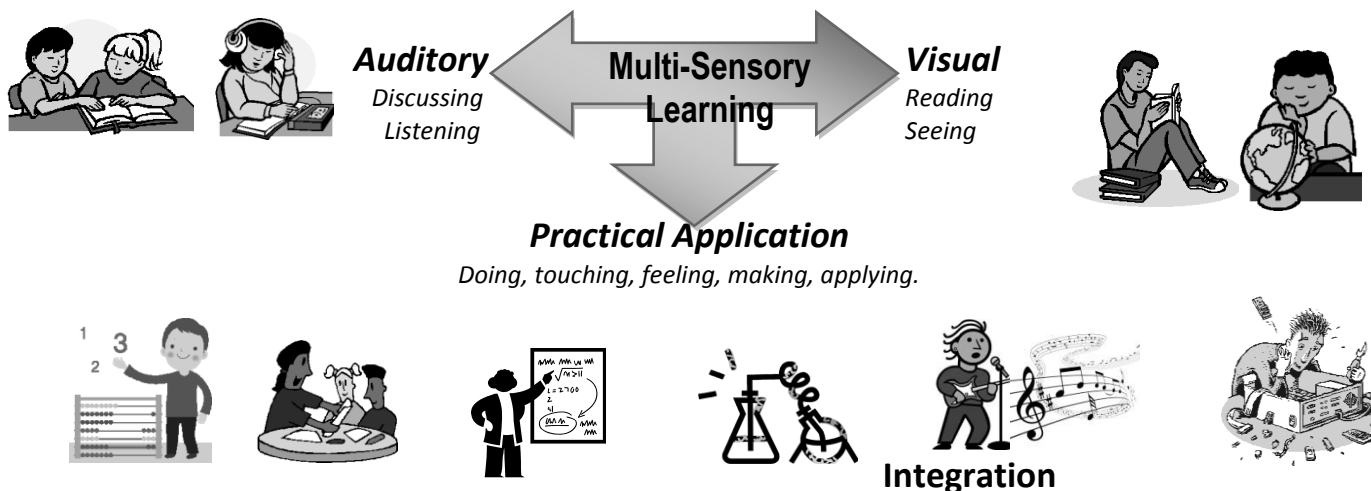
However if we are extra sensitive, certain smells and tastes can certainly affect our thinking and behaviour, such as strong perfumes and scents, or highly spiced food. Even the smell of household cleaners, laundry powders and soaps can affect some people's ability to function with clarity. Such things as food colourings, chemicals and additives can also trigger less rational responses and make people irritable. A simple walk through the cleaning products' aisle in the supermarket can trigger sensitivity in some people.

If these are things that affect you or your children, then be aware of them and avoid them as much as possible in your own life.

Pathways to our Brain

All our senses have pathways that lead to our brain. Our senses may all be functioning well, for example good eyesight and hearing, but the way the brain processes information and comes back with a response is quite individual. Two people experiencing the same thing will have a different

vocabulary and set of emotions to describe it. This can be reflected in the differences of opinions that can occur when things are discussed.



Strategies

Integration often happens naturally in a school environment. Using as many senses as possible enables learning to be processed by the brain in more ways than one. Below are some simple and fun ways to assist children at home.

Spelling

Have your child -

- read the word aloud
- spell the word aloud
- write the word while spelling it aloud
- write the word on a textured surface with the finger (like carpet) for younger students
- make word cards for reading fluency
- put words into sentences

Reading

Have your child –

- discuss the story before reading, using the pictures to predict the story

- read aloud to you
- explain what they think is happening while you're sharing the story (comprehension)
- listen to you read to them
- read onto a tape and play it back

Developing Fluency in Reading

- The most significant way to develop fluency in reading is for a child to read the story back to you over 3-4 times a week. The child will recall the words they were uncertain over. With each re-read, the story becomes easier and will build a quicker reading style. They will also remember more of the story because the struggle of reading has lessened. The child will feel more confident and aware of the words. When they meet those words again in other stories, they will recall them easier each time.

Maths

- Use blocks and counters for *showing* how addition and subtraction works.
- Use place values to help with addition and subtraction. The easiest form of this is found in vertical adding and subtracting, often called algorithms. It helps the student to 'see' the connections between numbers, and to create a sense of place values in relation to both the top and bottom number.
- For tables, do the Family of Facts to expand on multiplication and division rules
e.g.
 $6 \times 4 = 24$; $4 \times 6 = 24$; $24 \div 6 = 4$; $24 \div 4 = 6$.
- For tables, explain $4 \times 6 = 4$ groups of 6:

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Or use a grid 4 by 6 to
a practical application:
