

What is multi-sensory instruction?



A multi-sensory approach to language learning helps students learn through more than one of the senses at the same time. Students are taught using all pathways of learning (visual, auditory, kinesthetic or seeing, hearing, touching) simultaneously, in order to enhance memory and learning.

What are some basic multi-sensory teaching techniques?

When reading, *tracing* the letters while seeing them and hearing/saying them at the same time, triggers greater memory recall. The key to success with tracing is having the student see it, hear it and trace it *at the same time*. Tracing can be used when children are just beginning to connect sounds and letters, and it is often helpful to use varied textures and items to trace on, for example; sand, fabric or carpeting.

When spelling, hearing the word, saying the word, and segmenting the sounds on fingers (*“finger or touch spelling”*) while sounding out the word, helps to build accuracy. For example, the teacher says the word, the student repeats the word, the student sounds out and segments the word on his/her fingers (one sound per finger, i.e. *p a t*), and then writes the word.

Segmenting words into syllables using arm movements or finger spelling, is another multi-sensory technique that is very helpful.

Forming letters with your hands is another way to provide a visual, kinesthetic and auditory memory connection. For example, you can make a “b” with your left hand and a “d” with your right hand, saying the sound it makes at the same time. Often, children with language difficulties have problems distinguishing between visually similar letters, especially b and d. However, forming the letter kinesthetically with their hand, seeing it, and saying the sound, can provide instant recognition for the student.

Who benefits from multi-sensory language instruction?

A multi-sensory language approach benefits those with reading and/or spelling difficulties. It has been proven to be effective for a wide range of ages and abilities, including adults.

What are some programs that utilize multi-sensory techniques?



Alphabetic Phonics (www.hsutx.edu/academics/education/mltc/alphabet.htm)
The Association Method (www.dubard.usm.edu/associat.htm)
Lindamood-Bell (www.lindamoodbell.com)
Montessori and Sequential English Education Approach
Orton-Gillingham (www.interdys.com)
Project Read (www.projectread.com)
Reading Mastery (www.cedu.niu.edu/pride/web7.htm)
The Slingerland Multisensory Approach (www.slingerland.org)
The Sonday System (www.readabc.com)
The Spalding Method (www.spalding.org)
Step-by-Step (www.ldaminnesota.org)
The Wilson Reading System (www.manitta.com/sub_pages/reading.htm)

Where can I learn more about multi-sensory learning techniques?

LDA of Minnesota: <http://www.ldaminnesota.org> or 952-922-8374

Learning Disabilities Association of America: <http://www.ldanatl.org>

The International Dyslexia Association: <http://www.interdys.org>

The International Multi-sensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC):
<http://www.imslec.org>

UMBIDA, The Upper Midwest Branch of the International Dyslexia Association.
Phone: 651-450-7589, PMB159, 5021 Vernon Ave., Mpls., MN 55436

McIntyre, Curtis W. and Pickering, Joyce S. (1995) *Multisensory Structured Language Programs: Content & Principles of Instruction*. Retrieved June 9, 2003, from Learning Disabilities OnLine:
LD In-Depth: http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/reading/mssl_methods.html

LDA of Minnesota

For more than 36 years, **Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota** has been serving the needs of people of all ages at risk for learning disabilities or related learning difficulties by maximizing their potential so that they may lead more productive and fulfilled lives. Services include educational assessments, one-to-one and small group tutoring, consultations, family literacy activities, school-to-work transition programming, professional training, public education, and high-quality educational products.

LDA of Minnesota is the state affiliate of LDA of America, a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to identifying causes, promoting prevention of learning disabilities, and enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their families by encouraging effective identification and intervention, fostering research, and protecting their rights under law.