



"CORE"tastic Kids Newsletter



Are you a Visual, Auditory, or Kinesthetic Learner?

It is important to remember that every individual learns differently and has a unique learning style. "Approximately 20 to 30 percent of the school-aged population remembers what is heard; 40 percent recalls well visually the things that are seen or read; Approximately 20 to 30 must write or use their fingers in some manipulative way to help them remember basic facts.

For some, auditory input is most valuable; others rely upon a visual style. Still others learn through kinesthetic means, or a combination of the three. Every person has one primary learning mode. Once you identify that mode, you can learn to maximize it and enhance your child's education.

Auditory Learners

Auditory learners tend to benefit most from traditional teaching techniques. Auditory learners succeed when directions are read aloud, speeches are required, or information is presented and requested verbally.

Visual Learners

Some students rely upon a visual learning style: "Show me and I'll understand." Visual learners benefit from diagrams, charts, pictures, films, and written directions. These students will value to-do lists, assignment logs, and written notes. Many of these techniques, however, also benefit kinesthetic learners.

Kinesthetic Learners

Most of the school population excels through kinesthetic means: touching, feeling, experiencing the material at hand. "Children enter kindergarten as kinesthetic and tactual learners, moving and touching everything as they learn. By second or third grade, some students have become visual learners. During the late elementary years some students, primarily females, become auditory learners. Yet, many adults, especially males, maintain kinesthetic and tactual strengths throughout their lives. Kinesthetic learners are most successful when totally engaged with the learning activity. They acquire information fastest when participating in a science lab, drama presentation, skit, field trip, dance, or other active activity.

When your child identifies his or her unique learning style, you can begin to build upon it. Understanding learning styles is only a first step in maximizing potential and overcoming learning differences.

October's Exercise of the Month: ROLL-UPS

A roll-up is a simplified version of the sit-up that is kid friendly. We do these in Jungle Gym Class and the children don't even realize they are doing sit-ups. A roll-up strengthens your core muscles, lower back and abdominal muscles. Starts by lying flat on your back, your arms are extended over your head and your legs are straight out in front of you. Roll up one vertebra at a time until your fingers touch your toes. I like to add a little fun factor and tell the children in class we are scooping ice-cream. How many scoops can you add to your sundae? That determines how many sit-up they do. They call out each flavor or topping as they sit up. We pretend the bowl is at our feet so the ice-cream we scoop up behind our heads has to make it to the ice-cream bowl. Children of all ages can join in the fun! If your child has a weak core, you may need to hold their feet to help they gain control of their core muscles and to stabilize them. Have fun making Sundaes!



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Calendar of Events:

**New classes begin
October 18, 2010**



Body Works — From the Inside Out



Spending Time Outside Has Many Health Benefits

More great reasons to get out and play! Take a look at this article by Lee Bowman from Scripps Howard News Service.

When did everyone go indoors?

A study of American adults published in 2008 found them spending 25 percent less time in parks, forests or hunting and fishing than they did in 1987.

About the same time, a survey of adult activity levels found that two-thirds spend more than two hours a day watching TV or videos, and three-quarters said they had not walked or biked to work or to do errands in the past 30 days. A new report from the National Wildlife Federation on the importance of outdoor play for kids paints an even more dire picture: Surveys by researchers at the University of Michigan show that children are spending only four to seven minutes a day in unstructured outdoor play. By contrast, 8- to 18-year-olds are connected to some form of electronic media for eight to nearly 12 hours a day, according to a study done for the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Parents take children to soccer and horseback riding and lacrosse and Boy and Girl Scouts and scads of other organized activities. What there is not much of is free time — time for kids just to be kids — outside. Playing outside without coaches or parents, but with other kids, fosters imagination and helps teach youngsters to share, cooperate and solve problems. It "demands of us that we create a fort out of a backyard, a treehouse out of a tree and a bunch of old boards," said Dr. Michael Rich, director of the Center for Media and Child Health at Children's Hospital in Boston.

Researchers in Britain reported in May a positive effect on the mental health of people who spent just five minutes a day in a park or woods walking, fishing, cycling, riding a horse and even doing farm chores.

Another British study, published in 2008, found that living near parks or woodlands improves health and extends the life span regardless of a person's social class or income. "Nature is fuel for the soul," said Richard Ryan, a professor of psychology at the University of Rochester who led a series of studies published in June that found an energizing effect from nature even when experimental subjects only looked at photos of nature, looked out a window or imagined themselves outside.

"Often, when we feel depleted, we reach for a cup of coffee, but this suggests a better way to get energized is to connect with nature," said Ryan. His team found that being outside 20 minutes a day was enough to boost vitality. Other studies have shown that being in a natural environment helps improve everything from wound healing and blood pressure to muscle tension, depression and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

The Wildlife Federation's new health report lays out the various benefits of outdoor play and urges everyone from parents to pediatricians to educators to take steps to get children outside on a more regular basis. "Nature may indeed be the best kind of nurture," said federation Executive Vice President Jaime Matyas, who is coordinating a larger "Be Out There" campaign (www.beoutthere.org) for the federation and various partners.



Autumn Fires

By

Robert Louis Stevenson

In the other gardens
And all up the vale,
From the autumn bonfires
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over
And all the summer flow-
ers,
The red fire blazes,
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!
Something bright in all!
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall!

When Clear Instruction And Visual Aids Are Not Enough; Why Gesturing is Far More Important Than You Ever Thought

Technology is moving quickly into every child's education. The computers are filled with text and pictures, cartoons and drawings. Yet, in spite of all the amazing things that technology can do, some kids still don't "get it." What are some possible missing ingredients?

The more you know about learning the better. Here's one item to consider: the nonverbals by the instructor are often missing from the menu in many kinds of technology. Gestures reveal unspoken messages and can reflect additional knowledge in both child and adult learners. For example...

Years ago, UCLA pioneer Albert Mehrabian did landmark studies on nonverbal communication. He was the first to put numbers to the research, showing that the majority of ALL interpersonal communication is from nonverbal messages (1967). He described the tonality, facial expressions and a host of other nonverbal avenues that influence the message.

Just a subset of all possible nonverbals, gestures have been recently studied in the role of classroom learning. Gestures can also play a role in changing how the child or the adult REPRESENTS thoughts, either directly or indirectly.

Because gesturing reflects thoughts, it's also an early marker of a change in thinking or emotional state. In this way, it can be used as a DIAGNOSTIC tool, since many problems will show us as improper, or missing, gestures. When students cannot gesture a thought, they may be having trouble conceptualizing it, too. In fact, gesturing (or its lack) may be the first sign of future developmental difficulty. And because gesturing can change thought, it may prove to be useful in the home, the classroom, and the clinic as a way to alter the pace, and perhaps the course, of learning and development.

Wow!

Children frequently gesture when they explain what they know, and their gestures sometimes convey different information than their speech does. This suggests that gesturing is indeed a vehicle through which children express their understanding. The knowledge children express uniquely in the form of gestures is accessible on other tasks, and in this sense, is not tied to the hands.

Gesturing might encourage children to extract meaning implicit in their hand movements. If so, children should be sensitive to the particular movements they produce and learn accordingly. Recently, investigators manipulated student gesturing during a math lesson. Children required to produce correct gestures LEARNED MORE than children required to produce only partially correct gestures, or NONE AT ALL. Hence, research findings suggest that a child's body movements are involved not only in processing old ideas, but also in creating new ones.

Why do gestures work? One theory is that gesturing actually lightens cognitive load while a person is thinking of what to say. There is scientific support for this theory (see all of the references below). Another possible reason (my own theory) is that it makes the brain work harder to CHANGE THE REPRESENTATION from an abstract idea to a CONCRETE thought, hence, they learn better.

Telling children to gesture encourages them to convey previously unexpressed, implicit ideas; which, in turn, makes them receptive to instruction that leads to learning. Previous studies have shown that gesturing improves learning. In summary, researchers found that children told to move their hands in a fully correct rendition of a particular problem-solving strategy (grouping) during a math lesson solved dramatically more math problems correctly. More in "Applications" below.

Want better math scores? Lean in and let's "flesh out" what we learned from the studies above.

What exactly happened in the math studies listed above? Children in the no-gesture condition were shown a new problem without an answer, $6 + 3 + 4 = \underline{\quad} + 4$, and taught to say the words, "I want to make one side equal to the other side", which is a correct equivalence problem-solving strategy that children who succeed on problems of this type often produce. They were then asked to solve the problem without any gestures.

Children who were instructed in using the gesture condition were shown the same problem, $6 + 3 + 4 = \underline{\quad} + 4$, and were taught the exact same words (as those above) PLUS the following gestures:

"Point with a V-shape (using two fingers of the left hand, for the two digits) to "6 + 3," and then, to point with the right index finger (just one digit) to the blank. Undoubtedly, you realize instantly, that if these two numbers are grouped together and summed, they generate the magic solution number that belongs in the blank. Previous research suggests that successful problem solvers often use this strategy mentally as their "grouping strategy."

Now you see that the students were NOT doing SIGN LANGUAGE, which other studies DO SUGGEST can help out the learning also. They were just identifying and isolating the groups and maybe even the process needed.

I think that kids who add MORE gesturing, have to keep forcing the CONCEPT through a processing stage in the brain, which informs, clarifies and represents the knowledge on a much deeper level.

It turns out that there is a whole slew of evidence that shows that body-based learning, action-based or total physical response is very brain-friendly instruction. Let's cut to the chase: everything you do in your classroom is likely to have SOME effect on the brain. Brain-based education says, "Be purposeful about it." Now, go have some fun and make another miracle happen!

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Tips to Encourage Reading

- Let your children see you reading for pleasure in your spare time.
- Notice what attracts your children's attention, even if they only look at the pictures. Then build on that interest; read a short selection aloud, or simply bring home more information on the same subject.
- Present reading as an activity with a purpose; a way to gather useful information for, say, making paper airplanes, identifying a doll or stamp in your child's collection, or planning a family trip.
- Play games that are reading-related. Check your closet for spelling games played with letter tiles or dice, or board games that require players to read spaces, cards, and directions.
- Read aloud to your child, especially a child who is discouraged by his or her own poor reading skills. The pleasure of listening to you read, rather than struggling alone, may restore your child's initial enthusiasm for books and reading.
- On gift-giving occasions, give books and magazines based on your child's current interests.
- Introduce the bookmark. Remind your youngster that you don't have to finish a book in one sitting; you can stop after a few pages, or a chapter, and pick up where you left off at another time.
- Don't try to persuade your child to finish a book he or she doesn't like. Recommend putting the book aside and trying another.
- Treat your children to an evening of laughter and entertainment featuring books! Many children (parents, too) regard reading as a serious activity. A joke book, a story told in riddles, or a funny passage read aloud can reveal another side of reading.
- Limit your children's TV viewing in an effort to make time for other activities, such as reading. But never use TV as a reward for reading, or a punishment for not reading.



Math Activity

Here is a fun and easy way to reinforce place value concepts.
Build a Number (*Place Value*)

Materials: 2-3 sets of 0-9 digit cards

Directions: Identify the digits student will use (e.g. 3, 5, 8) and have them pull from the digit cards. Give directions to form a number to meet specific criteria. Student arranges digit cards to build a number to satisfy the conditions.

- Build the largest number you can.
- Build the smallest number you can.
- Build a number less than 800.
- Build a number greater than 800.
- Build a number that is between 300 and 500.
- Build a different number that is between 300 and 500.
- Repeat with different digits and different directions.

