

Using a Multi-sensory Approach to Achieve Your Learner's Literacy Goals

Regardless of the goal, use a multi-sensory approach in your instruction. Incorporating all of the senses: hearing, speaking, and tactile/kinesthetic will more likely result in permanent learning. If one way doesn't work, try another.

Examples include:

- To teach word recognition and practice phonics, put sight words on index cards, using a different color for difficult sounds.
- To reinforce a specific skill, dictate words or phrases for your student to record in his notebook.
- To work on word decoding skills, provide letter cards or tiles for practice with sound combinations and making words.
- To model intonation, punctuation and speed and to increase vocabulary, read to your student and have him follow along with you.
- To measure progress, collaboratively build a portfolio or notebook of your student's work with him; make sure each entry has a date on it.
- To develop the habit of working independently and practicing what he's learned, encourage him to write in his notebook or journal.

Everyone learns at a different pace. Some students require less repetition than others, but repetition and reinforcement are keys to successful retention for every student.

Most students are not prepared for the life changing commitment they must make to the tutor-learner process partly because they are unaware of the work involved to reach the literacy level they aspire to. This is where you put the goals and objectives into practice. Although your student is responsible for learning, you need to keep the goals in sight and systematically work through your objectives.

By disciplining yourself to design and use a structured instructional plan, both you and your student can readily see how much progress you are making toward a goal. And, remember...you can make any necessary adjustments to the instructional plan in regard to the materials and/or techniques used to ensure that the goal will be met or, if the adjustments aren't leading to learner success, redefine the goal.

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