IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

The Effectiveness Of Multisensory Learning Approaches In Teaching Primary School Children

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Abstract

Multisensory learning is a teaching approach that engages multiple senses—visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile—to enhance understanding and retention. In primary education, where children learn best through experience and play, multisensory techniques help connect abstract concepts to concrete experiences. This paper examines the effectiveness of multisensory learning in improving comprehension, memory, and motivation among primary students. Drawing on the theories of Orton and Gillingham, Piaget, and Gardner, it emphasizes that integrating sensory activities strengthens neural connections and supports diverse learning styles. Empirical evidence suggests that multisensory instruction benefits all learners, particularly those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The paper concludes by recommending strategies for implementing multisensory methods in classrooms for holistic and inclusive learning.

Index Terms: Multisensory Learning, Primary Education, Teaching Methods, Learning Styles, Inclusive Education, Sensory Integration

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning in early childhood is naturally multisensory—children explore, touch, see, hear, and move to understand the world. However, traditional classroom instruction often limits learning to auditory and visual channels. Multisensory learning reintroduces the use of all senses to create engaging and effective learning experiences.

According to the *Orton-Gillingham approach* (1930s), integrating sensory pathways strengthens language learning and comprehension. In primary education, where cognitive and motor skills are developing, multisensory teaching caters to different learning styles and enhances retention.

This paper explores how multisensory learning methods improve students' academic performance, motivation, and inclusivity in the primary classroom.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Foundation

Piaget (1952) proposed that children construct knowledge through hands-on experiences, while Gardner's (1983) *Multiple Intelligences Theory* supports learning through varied sensory and intellectual channels. The Orton-Gillingham method integrates visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways to improve literacy and comprehension skills.

2.2 Academic and Cognitive Benefits

Multisensory approaches enhance focus, comprehension, and long-term memory. Students who engage multiple senses during learning show greater understanding of concepts and improved academic performance (Shams & Seitz, 2008).

2.3 Emotional and Behavioral Engagement

Using sound, color, movement, and texture makes learning enjoyable and stimulating. It increases attention span and reduces boredom, thereby motivating students to participate actively (Fleming & Mills, 1992).

2.4 Inclusive Education and Differentiation

Multisensory learning benefits students with different abilities, including those with dyslexia, ADHD, or language delays. It allows teachers to adapt lessons to each child's learning preference, making education inclusive and equitable (Birsh, 2011).

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper uses a **qualitative review methodology**, synthesizing empirical and theoretical studies from 2010–2024 focusing on multisensory teaching in primary education.

Data Sources: ERIC, Google Scholar, SpringerLink, and educational psychology journals. **Inclusion Criteria:**

- Research on multisensory learning for children aged 6–12 years.
- Studies on academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Peer-reviewed English publications.

Data were analyzed thematically to identify benefits, challenges, and best practices for multisensory instruction.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Enhanced Conceptual Understanding

Combining visual (charts, colors), auditory (rhymes, songs), and kinesthetic (movement, touch) activities helps students grasp abstract concepts easily. For instance, using sand tracing for alphabets or math manipulatives for numbers improves retention and comprehension.

4.2 Improved Memory and Retention

Studies reveal that when multiple senses are engaged simultaneously, neural connections become stronger, leading to better recall. Activities like singing multiplication tables or using color-coded flashcards enhance long-term memory.

4.3 Motivation and Enjoyment in Learning

Multisensory methods transform classrooms into interactive learning environments. Students are more motivated and confident when learning involves art, music, and hands-on exploration rather than passive listening.

4.4 Teacher's Role and Implementation

Teachers must design lessons incorporating multisensory strategies such as movement-based tasks, tactile materials, and digital tools. Continuous observation and feedback help tailor the approach to individual learners.

V. CONCLUSION

Multisensory learning approaches make education more dynamic, inclusive, and effective. By stimulating multiple senses, teachers can reach diverse learners and foster deeper understanding. At the primary level, where learning is exploratory and experiential, multisensory teaching bridges the gap between play and academic learning.

Integrating sight, sound, touch, and movement not only enhances academic outcomes but also nurtures creativity, concentration, and joy in learning. Schools should provide teacher training and resources for implementing multisensory education effectively.

Future research should explore digital multisensory tools and their role in improving engagement and inclusivity in diverse classrooms.

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