

Sense-Impression (1) - Using the Senses Other than Sight

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)

Sense-Impression (Learning through the senses - A Pestalozzi Approach)

Instructions to students:

The students go to an area with different trees and plants. The teacher asks them to name the different senses they might use to observe nature (Sight, Hearing, Touch, Smell, Taste).

The teacher divides the students into groups of three. One member of each group is blindfolded and led to a different tree or plant

(NB: The others must remember which tree or plant which student was led to).

The rest of the students in the group ask the blindfolded student questions turn by turn about the tree or plant, which involve as many of the different senses (except for sight) as possible.

Sample Questions

What does the bark feel like?
Are there any holes?
Can you feel the roots?
Are there any plants growing from it?
What does it smell like?
Can you hear any sounds of animals?'

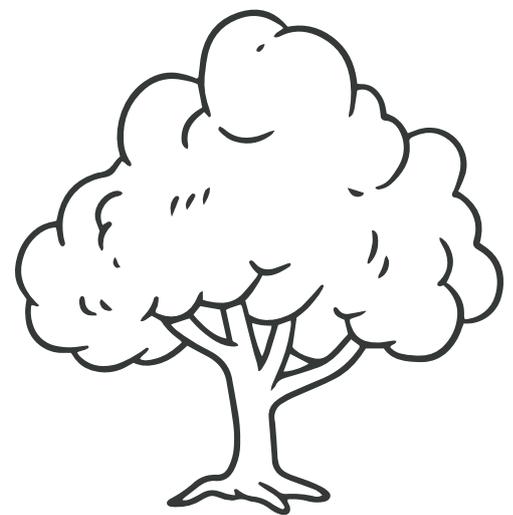
Either: The students, blindfolds removed, find their trees or plants. The students then draw their tree or plant.

Or: Blindfolds removed, the students draw their tree or plant without having seen it first.

NB: This activity can lead into the activity in the Teaching Idea 'The Tree and the Gardener (1) - The Child as a Tree'

Materials Needed

- Pencil
- Paper





Sense-Impression (1) - Using the Senses Other than Sight

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According to Pestalozzi 'sense-impression' is the direct impression made by the world on the senses. It includes everything that a student experiences and perceives through direct observation, personal experience and involvement, using the senses. As many of the senses as possible should be involved in learning. To engage the student fully in the activity, experience should be concrete and meaningful, encouraging exploration. Teaching to achieve 'sense-impression' needs to be carried out in the natural world, outside the classroom as much as possible, and using real objects.



Sense-Impression (2) Using the Senses Other than Sight

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)



Sense-Impression (Learning through the senses - A Pestalozzi Approach)

Instructions to a group of students:

The students go outdoors and the teacher asks them to recall what different senses they might use to observe nature (Sight, Hearing, Touch, Smell, Taste).

The teacher gives each student a blank piece of paper and a pencil and asks them to either sit or lie down with their eyes closed and to notice everything they can hear, feel, smell and taste.

After several minutes (or when they seem ready), the teacher says to the students that when they are ready they should draw everything they have heard, felt, smelled and tasted on the paper beside them.

(NB: This activity can be used to lead into poetry writing or painting.)

Materials Needed

- Pencil
- Paper

Sense-Impression (2)

Using the Senses Other than Sight

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)

According to Pestalozzi 'sense-impression' is the direct impression made by the world on the senses. It includes everything that a student experiences and perceives through direct observation, personal experience and involvement, using his or her senses. As many of the senses as possible should be involved in learning. To engage the student fully in the activity, experience should be concrete and meaningful, encouraging exploration. Teaching to achieve 'sense-impression' needs to be carried out in the natural world, outside the classroom as much as possible and using real objects.

Sense-Impression (3) - Using the Five Senses and Similes

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)

Sense-Impression (Learning through the senses - A Pestalozzi Approach)

Instructions to a group of students:

Each student is given a real object, which can be understood using as many of the senses as possible. (*Groundnuts still in the shell would be a good object. Alternatives could be wrapped boiled sweets or oranges*).

The teacher checks the students' knowledge of the senses (Sight, Hearing, Touch, Smell, Taste).

The teacher explains that, after five minutes, he or she will ask each student to contribute a sentence about the object, which should include a comparison (simile) and refer to one of the five senses, for example, 'The groundnut sounds like a child's rattle'.

The students write down at least one simile for each sense (although one for all the senses, for example 'taste', may not always be possible) and draw the object.



Materials Needed

- Pencil
- Paper

After five minutes, the students contribute their sentences and the teacher writes them on the blackboard. (NB: This lesson could also be taught giving the students two very dissimilar objects to compare)

For an explanation of 'Sense-Impression' refer to the section in bold typeface at the end of the Teaching Idea 'Sense-Impression (1) - Using the Senses Other than Sight'

Sense-Impression (4) - observing the commonplace

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)



Sense-Impression (Learning through the senses - A Pestalozzi Approach)

Instructions to a group of students:

The teacher asks the students to look closely at something in the room which all the students are able to see, the more ordinary and overlooked the better, for example a hole in the wall of the room, or a tear in the curtain or any other small, seemingly insignificant detail of the room.

The students describe the hole or the tear or whatever has been chosen in ever-increasing detail, giving a sentence turn by turn and gradually moving from describing whatever has been chosen to describe its immediate surroundings. For example;

'I see a hole in the paper.'
'I see a long hole in the paper.'
'Through the hole I see the wall.'
'Through the long narrow hole I see the wall.'
And going on to describe the surrounding paper,
'I see figures on the paper.'
'I see black figures on the paper.'
'I see round black figures on the paper.'

Materials Needed

- Pencil
- Paper

The teacher explains that, after five minutes, he or she will ask each student to contribute a sentence about the object, which should include a comparison (simile) and refer to one of the five senses, for example, 'The groundnut sounds like a child's rattle'.

The students write down at least one simile for each sense (although one for all the senses, for example 'taste', may not always be possible) and draw the object.



Sense-Impression (4) - observing the commonplace



Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)

Following this approach of Pestalozzi, the children learn through sense-impression. For an explanation of 'sense-impression' refer to the section in bold typeface at the end of the Teaching Idea 'Sense-Impression (1)' (p.171).

The children learn first to closely examine an object, however dull it may seem. They then learn to talk about it in simple words, recounting all the impressions they receive from the objects surrounding them. After this they write about the object, and finally read what they have written. As a result, the children's words and sentences, which can of course be corrected by the teacher if necessary, are to a great extent the children's own expression of their own thoughts.

Pestalozzi wanted learning to be initiated by the child in this way and believed that an understanding of an object gained through sense-impression is the best way to make sure the child is able to describe the object accurately.

For Pestalozzi, language lessons are also general knowledge lessons and vice versa. This is because children gain sense-impression through direct observation and engagement of the senses; the sense-impression thus gained forms the concepts of general knowledge and ensures the development of accurate speech.



Sense-Impression (5) - Detailed Description



Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)



Sense-Impression (Learning through the senses - A Pestalozzi Approach)

Instructions to a group of Students:

The teacher chooses an object to teach the students about. This may be a piece of glass as in the 'Object Lesson on Glass' given by Elizabeth Mayo and based on Pestalozzi's approach. (NB: This lesson should be referred to. Any other familiar object may be chosen.)

Materials Needed

The object/s to be taught about



Sense-Impression (5) - Detailed Description

Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)

The object is handed round students so that they can exercise their own powers of observation on it. The teacher asks the students questions about it, which result in the students thinking about and describing the qualities of the object, using as many of the senses as possible (for example how it feels, what it smells and looks like). The students are encouraged to compare the object to other things (for example how is the piece of glass different from the window shutter?)

The questions asked by the teacher should aim to draw out the ideas of the children. It is important that the questions make the students feel the need for a term so that they are motivated to find the word and therefore more likely to remember it. The teacher should only provide the term if none of the students can do so and when the students have become really keen to know it.

The teacher lists the words used to describe the object on the blackboard and the students practise using the words in different contexts to ensure proper understanding of their meanings.

Pestalozzi taught his students to closely observe their surroundings, however dull they may appear to be. He used exercises of sense-impression and language to teach children to observe and to talk about their observations, recounting all the impressions they receive from the objects surrounding them. For Pestalozzi, language lessons, such as the one given above, are also general knowledge lessons and vice versa. This is because a child gains sense-impression through direct observation and engagement of the senses, and the sense-impression thus gained forms the concepts of general knowledge and ensures the development of accurate speech.



Sense-Impression (5) - Detailed Description



Foundation House / Elementary (Classes 5-7)