

PERCEPTION ACTIVITY: MIRROR BOX

Station 1

1 - 2 leaders for every 6 - 8 students

15 minutes

- PURPOSE:**
- To help the students understand that writing becomes more difficult when communication between the brain and the hand slows down
 - To help the students understand that people with learning disabilities might require more time to complete tasks involving eye-hand coordination
 - To strengthen the cooperative spirit in forming strategies

- MATERIALS:**
- Choice of Mirror Boxes or Mirrors in Frames
 - Paper
 - Pencil
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- SETUP:**
- Place mirror boxes or mirrors in frames on desks/tables. Equip each with a supply of paper and a pencil.
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- PROCEDURE:**
- The following instructions are given for the activity:
 - Write your name by looking in the mirror, not at the paper.
 - Your name should come out looking correct in the mirror, not correct on the paper.
 - Have the students work in pairs. While one child uses the mirror box, encourage the student watching to help form strategies to perform the task.
 - Discuss strategies with the students as they perform the task.
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Hot Tip!

Watch to be certain students are looking only in the mirror, not directly at their hands or doing the tasks by using motor memory. This will not give them the desired outcome. Their writing should look correct IN THE MIRROR.

MIRROR BOX

Discussion

Before beginning the activity

You are now going to have the opportunity to use these mirrors to write. However, instead of looking at the blackboard/paper and your hand, as you would usually do when writing, you are to look only in the mirror. Try writing your name. **Write your name so that it looks correct in the mirror.** It will not look right in the mirror if you look at the paper directly.

While doing the activity

- Do you know what you want to write?
- Are you able to form the letters?

Some, but not all people with learning disabilities have to struggle with eye-hand coordination. A disruption in communication between the eye and hand occurs in the brain so that the person finds it difficult to form the letters correctly.

- Did you succeed in writing your name?
- How do you feel about completing this task?
(*Relieved, satisfied*)

People with learning disabilities have the same feelings of accomplishment when they succeed at a task that is challenging for them.

- Is your writing neat or messy?
- Was that because you were not trying?
- Did it take longer to accomplish writing your name than it usually would?
- How would it feel if you needed this much time for everything that you wrote?

When people with eye-hand coordination issues turn in messy work, other people might think they didn't care or didn't take much time. Actually, they probably worked harder and longer than their classmates. People today are lucky to have computers, so their writing looks neat. When they edit their work, the computer makes changes easily. (**You can point out what people had to do before there were computers!**)

- Did you figure out some techniques to write your name successfully?
These are called strategies.
- What strategies did you use?
- Did you share them with your partner?
- What strategies might you use if this was a problem you faced every day?
(*Have someone take notes for you, use a computer, use speech-to-text software on the computer, volunteer to give an oral report or be the person who makes the oral presentation to the class in a cooperative learning project*)
- How did you feel doing this activity?
(*Pressured, frustrated, impatient, discouraged*)

If you have to struggle with eye-hand coordination, other things might be difficult like cutting with scissors or catching a ball.

- How can you help a friend who has difficulty with eye-hand coordination?
(*Be supportive, patient, understanding, encouraging*)

Hot Tips!

- If students can write their names quickly, have them try their last names, numbers, script, tic-tac-toe, or draw something.
- It is best to have two students sharing one mirror box so that they can help each other by sharing strategies. Sharing strategies is important. The leader should circulate and encourage students to share what worked for them so they are invested in helping their partners.
- Some students will find this activity very frustrating. Discuss their frustration and how it would feel to have this happen each time they had to write something on paper. Again, see if a partner can suggest a strategy. Note that children who usually complete schoolwork easily may be the most frustrated in your group if they find this activity surprisingly difficult.
- Some children have names with letters that are more difficult to form.
- Some people find writing in script makes this activity easier because they do not have to raise their pencil, so you could suggest that.
- For some students, just writing their initials can be enough.