

Topics: Tactile sense,
Observations

Materials List

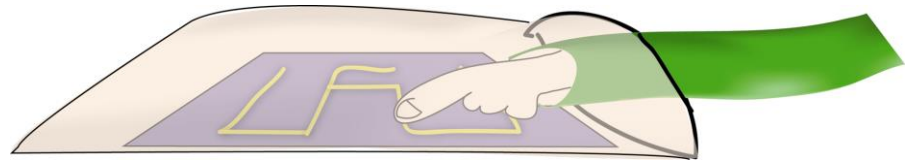
- ✓ Binder covers (front or back cut off the binder) or heavy cardstock
- ✓ Paint (textured paint, fabric paint or puffy paint)
- ✓ Paper bag that will fit the maze (flat bottom)

This activity can be used to teach:

- Senses (Next Generation Science Standards: Grade 4, Life Science 1-2)
- Sensory development and problem solving for Pre-K

Sensory Finger Mazes

Exploring the Unseen



During this activity, young learners develop their tactile sense independent from their visual sense.

Assembly

Create several tactile mazes by painting maze designs on the binder covers or cardstock pieces. Maze designs should be simple and of the type where the students follow the lines instead of the spaces in between the lines. Allow the paint to dry.

To Do and Notice

(Note: To prepare for this activity, young learners will need to be introduced to the concept of mazes and will need opportunities to use their sense of sight to follow mazes before they are ready to try this activity.)

1. Put a maze into the paper bag to hide it from view.
2. Explore and solve the maze by reaching into the bag. Do not worry about the maze being done the “right” way. Even if students are “cheating” a bit, they are still developing the use of their tactile sense.
3. Allow for numerous opportunities to repeat this activity with each of the mazes. Young learners benefit from repetition to practice their newly developed abilities.

The Content Behind the Activity

Human skin is covered with very sensitive touch receptors. Tactile sense is basically the ability of our nervous system to process information received from sensory neurons that are stimulated by touch. Our tactile sense gives us the ability to sense size, shape, texture, and temperature of objects by touching them. Sensory motor experiences for young learners are an important part of cognitive learning. In early stages of development, babies explore their world through taste and touch. As the brain develops, most young learners switch to the sense of sight as the primary way to gather information from their surroundings. This activity helps young learners to continue to develop their ability to process information through the sense of touch independent from their sense of sight.

Taking it Further

- Encourage the use of vocabulary as students are doing the mazes. “Forward”, “back” and “turn” are good vocabulary words for many young learners. “Right” and “left” should only be introduced according to students’ ability levels.
- Glue small plastic toys or foam shapes at the beginning and the end of the maze to indicate the start and finish.
- Have a student do a maze then shuffle the maze (without the student seeing it) with a couple of other mazes. Have the student try to pick which maze they did.
- Instead of mazes, use letter shapes. Letters cut from sheet of sand paper work well. Have students trace their fingers along the path of the letter.

Web Resources - (Visit www.raft.net/raft-idea?isid=373 for more resources!)