



## **Awesome Applesauce Taught Me Something**

By Becky Ramsey, Public School and Christian School Representative

In the central part of the United States, we enjoy the beautiful fall foliage. However, the fall season is followed by the colder weather, which brings snow and ice at times. Occasionally, winter doldrums can begin to depress the teacher and the students too. While routines help the organization of a classroom, they can also become a detriment to the excitement of learning. To avoid this, the teacher can design learning activities that help the students to continue their learning path.

A teacher should recognize and challenge the different types of learners (such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic) with activities suited to their learning styles and help them be successful in the classroom.

### **Something Else to Consider**

Sometimes teachers may forget to incorporate activities that could engage one or more of human senses. Taste and smell especially can have a tremendous effect

on student learning. They can enhance children's ability to retain information learned in class.

I learned the effects of these two senses during an interesting discussion in one of my high school English classes. I had taught some of these students when they were in kindergarten. We were now discussing a writing assignment about memorable learning experiences of their younger years. I was astounded that unanimously the students who were in my kindergarten responded and remembered everything about the day *AFTER* we had visited the apple orchard for a field trip.

The class made "awesome applesauce" that day, and the crockpot simmered in the back of the room all day, creating a delectable aroma. We sampled the delicious applesauce for our snack that day. We packaged the remaining sauce in baby food jars, which they took home to share with their families.

The most astounding thing that these seniors revealed was that it was not just the applesauce experience they remembered. They could tell me everything we learned that day — the math lesson, the letter blends, the letter we practiced in writing, and the science lesson. They remembered it all! The senses of smell and taste helped them retain memories all the way through their elementary, middle, and high school years. What did I learn from that discussion? We need to utilize the senses of smell and taste to help with learning in creative ways.

### **Try Some Different Experiences Using These Senses**

When you recognize that the routine is beginning to dull the excitement of learning, try some different experiences. Use smell and taste to enhance a social studies unit by having the students bring in foods of the area or era you are studying.

A good unit to try in December is the Christmas customs of different countries. Bring to class or create in class foods typically eaten in the countries. When you are studying measurements, have the students demonstrate a recipe and then double it or triple it so the whole class can taste it after you make it. This lesson can help with math and public speaking if you ask a child or a group to demonstrate how to use the recipe to make the food. In science, make rock candy

to demonstrate how different chemicals interact with each other. The list of ways to use taste and smell in a teaching unit is endless.

Teachers should not limit the use of these senses to teaching a unit. I knew a teacher who always offered peppermints on review days and test days. She had observed that the smell and taste of peppermint enhanced her students' ability to retain lessons reviewed in class. There are other scents that claim to help relax students and increase their concentration. CAUTION: Check with your administrator, school nurse, and parents before dispensing any scents in your classroom. Some children may be allergic to certain scents.

As you research how to include the normal learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic), look for ways to use smell and taste to *spice* up your teaching style and create excitement for and retention of the lessons you share with your students.

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