



What is it like to be a 3-D Learner?

Simply stated a 3-D learner is someone who primarily learns and thinks through his or her senses. Part of what makes a 3-D learner function so well in the world's environment or day-to-day tasks is his constant use of the senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, smell, balance and rhythm to adapt to and figure out for himself what is going on or needs to be done to achieve the goals at hand.

A 3-D learner experiences with his senses what he sees, experiences with his senses what he hears, experiences with his senses what he reads, experiences with his senses what another says to him - instead of noticing and thinking about it from the distance of logical thought. His thinking is primarily sensory and holistic (seemingly intuitive), not logical and linear (deductive) like the majority of his friends.

While a 3-D learner reads, he runs a movie or audiotape of what he is reading. As long as he can recognize the words and they fit with his running movie or tape, the story makes sense to him. When he meets words that he does not recognize, he may hesitate, substitute words, misread words, or skip words or lines. If this interruption happens too often while reading, he loses a sense (literally loses his sensory experience) of the meaning of the story he is reading. He has to start again from the beginning to build a new sensory experience of the story of the text. 3-D learners, therefore, often have to read, reread, and reread material in order to understand it.

When the 3-D learner is young, he might learn to memorize and then be able to seem to read words, particularly abstract words, that he has never understood. He sounds to everyone listening to him as though he can read. However, he is unable to build a sensory experience of the words he is reading out loud, and he cannot tell you the details of what he has just read. Or, he might give you an entirely different story, one that fits the sensory experience that he did have while reading the words he could recognize!

Flat, 2-dimensional abstract words, letters and punctuation marks make learning to read fluidly with comprehension very difficult for the 3-D learner. Abstract words and symbols have no associated sensory meaning, like concrete words have! Abstract words and symbols do not stimulate the senses so they can be understood with sensory experiences. If mastery of abstract symbols and words is missing in the education of the young 3-D learner, then he is likely to have repeated failures in reading. What comes tumbling down is his willingness, desire, confidence and ability to read. The 3-D learner needs tools to help him learn to make abstract words something he can experience with his senses. Once he masters the 300 abstract words that are read in grades K-3, he has a chance to learn to read like his peers and read to learn in school. By eliminating the confusion associated with abstract words and symbols, the reader can function in the academic world just like he functions naturally in the environment around him. Then, he can function, and even become competitive, in a world that is filled largely with logical thinkers and readers who think differently than he thinks.