

SUDS – Reaching all students with your instruction

Traditionally, teaching in the primary grades is multi-sensory and more hands-on and kinesthetic. Starting in the third or fourth grade, teaching tends to become more auditory, and then a shift happens again at the secondary level as content becomes more abstract, symbolic, and graphic, which tends to be more visual. Many students adapt to these changes in teaching approaches, but many do not. This is one reason some students seem excel or fall behind depending on the grade level they are in. The teaching styles change, but some students do not.

When you couple visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles with the eight kinds of intelligences identified by Howard Gardner, the array of smarts and learning styles in any classroom grows proportionately.

In any given lesson or project assignment, remember to include **SUDS**. Not necessarily in this order, but take it into account somewhere in your teaching so that as many learning styles as possible are covered in any given lesson. **S**ay it, **U**se it, **D**emonstrate it, and **S**how it.

When you get to know your students, trial and error will help you decide what ways your students will learn best. There are clues and questions you can ask that can help you identify your students' learning styles. Any class you have is going to contain a mix. SUDS covers all of the bases. The "talkers" in class are often auditory learners, those that would rather read than be read to are often visual learners. Students that are always fiddling with stuff and rearranging their desks are often kinesthetic learners.

Some students can learn when you just tell them about a project. This auditory approach has been the mainstay of some educational practices for many decades and is typical in most classrooms, beginning with the middle grades. But only a percentage of students actually learn best this way.

Demonstrating what you want them to do is the way to capture another group of students. Seeing what it is you want them to do, or modeling the activity they are to engage in is what turns that "light bulb on" in their heads. This can also include hands-on activities, critical analysis sessions, or using gestures and pointing while you give verbal instructions. Some students do best when they get their hands into the materials and engage in exploration first. When students are kinesthetically engaged in dealing with the materials, they are using whatever medium is involved in an active and individual manner. These are also the students that may dive into a worksheet before any directions are given.

When you show it, you can present previously made examples, and/or pull in art historical or contemporary works that relate to the theme or project idea for students to examine and discuss. For some students, this is when they get it. So it is important for all these types of activities to take place in every lesson or project assignment possible.

Including numerous approaches to the material also gives students with different learning styles time to process and translate what is being done into their own mode of understanding. This gives you, the teacher, a greater chance of allowing for all learners in your classroom to benefit from the learning experience.

In sum, if you put **SUDS** in your teaching you have a greater chance of making meaningful connections for all the students.