

## A True Story

A preschool teacher created a mock class with parents, in which the lesson was to learn about kiwi fruit. Half of the parents were told about kiwis and then given a coloring sheet, along with brown and green crayons. The other half took a “field trip” to the tree in the hall, where they were able to smell, feel, and taste the fruit. Not surprisingly, the latter group of parents left with a much greater understanding of kiwis. And those were adults who, unlike young children, are capable of abstract thinking.

## The Truth About Worksheets

- Worksheets are one-dimensional.
- Worksheets do not involve the senses, other than vision.
- Worksheets do not qualify as active, authentic, implicit learning.

## My Questions

If movement is the young child’s preferred mode of learning, why would we want to teach them in any way other?

If active, experiential learning is more effective and long-lasting than filling in blanks on a worksheet, why do we continue to see worksheets in classrooms?

If we want children to become lifelong learners, why don’t we teach in the way children learn?

If we want children to continue to experience the *joy* of learning they were born with, why do we remove the element of joy from learning?

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Worksheets Do Not  
Equal Learning



interacting with one another at housekeeping and other dramatic-play centers (social studies).

## Implicit Learning

Noted educator and author Eric Jensen labels the learning described in the last section as *implicit* – such as learning to ride a bike. At the other end of the continuum is *explicit* learning – such as being told the capital of Peru. He asks, If you hadn't ridden a bike in five years, would you still be able to do it? And, If you hadn't heard the capital of Peru for five years, would you still remember what it was? Explicit learning may get the facts across more quickly than learning through exploration and discovery, but the latter has far more meaning to children and stays with them longer. And isn't that what we want for our students?

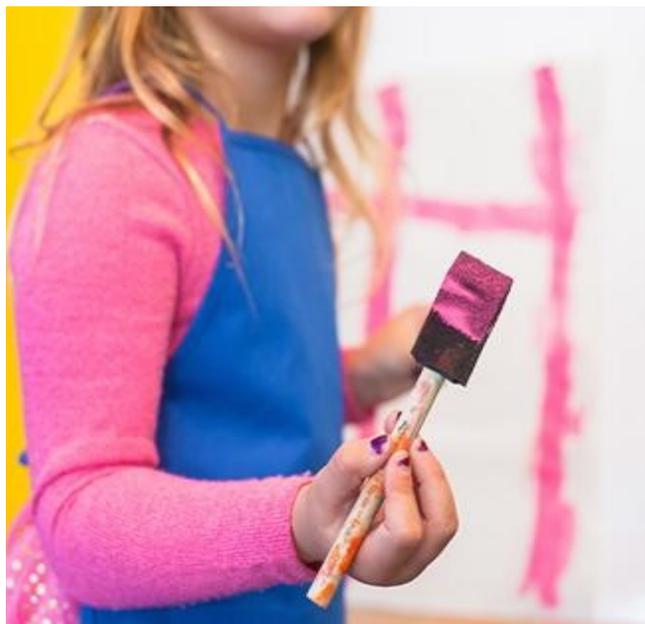
## How Children Learn Best

Did you know that

- The more senses we use in the learning process, the more information we retain?
- Young children are active, experiential learners?
- Movement is the young child's preferred mode of learning?

In the past, this knowledge led to such activities as

- sorting and stacking blocks and other manipulatives (mathematical knowledge);
- singing and dancing, or acting out stories (emergent literacy);
- growing plants from seeds, exploring the outdoor environment, and investigating at sand and water tables (scientific knowledge); and
- trying on various roles and



*“We learn 80% of what we experience physically and sensorially but only 10% of what we read.”*

~ Neurophysiologist Carla Hannaford

## In Defense of Active Learning

When children move over, under, around, through, beside, and near objects and others, they better grasp the meaning of these prepositions and geometry concepts. When they perform a “slow walk” or skip “lightly,” adjectives and adverbs become much more than abstract ideas. When they're given the opportunity to physically demonstrate such action words (verbs) as *stomp*, *pounce*, *stalk*, or *slither* – or descriptive words (adjectives) such as *smooth*, *strong*, *gentle*, or *enormous* – word comprehension is immediate and long-lasting.

Similarly, if children take on high, low, wide, and narrow body shapes, they have a much greater understanding of these quantitative mathematical concepts – and opposites – than do children who are merely presented with the words and their definitions. The same understanding results when children have personal experience with such scientific concepts as gravity, flotation, evaporation, magnetism, balance and stability, and action and reaction.