Visual auditory tactile kinesthetic integration (VATKI)

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During the late 1970s and early 1980s I became acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Early. Both have worked with learning disabled students for over thirty years. They taught me the VATKI approach described below. I used this technique mainly for

• teaching sight vocabulary to the people with weak memory skills

• improving extremely poor handwriting due to incorrectly formed letters or poor hand coordination, and

• teaching blending and sound-symbol integration.

A large chalkboard is best to use. If a chalkboard is unavailable, a dry-marker board will do. If supplies are limited, paper bags can be torn open to make large writing surfaces and water can be used as paint on concrete walks. The best surface is one that can be erased and written on again and again.

Prepare the writing area for the student. Pick a word that the student wants to learn. Write the word in cursive script, using the letter formation that the student needs to learn. Make sure that each letter is two inches tall. (When the student is ready, he will write his letters smaller.) Tall letters, such as “k,” “l,” and “h,” will be four inches high. Make sure that each letter begins at the base line and flows smoothly to each other letter. A sample in English of the word “man” follows.
There are several steps that should be followed to master the word. Please do not move on to the next step until the first step is mastered. If a student forgets, move back to the step where mastery is needed. The steps are listed below.

1. **Student watches and listens**

   The student watches and listens as the tutor traces the word and says each letter’s sound, holding the sound for the length of time it takes to trace the letter. For “man” the student would hear: /mmmmmm/ah-ah-ah/nnnnnn/ as the tutor traces m—a—n in cursive script. The tutor would trace and say the word sounds several times before proceeding.

2. **Student watches and says**

   The student watches the tutor trace the letters and says the sounds with the tutor as each letter is traced. When the student can smoothly say the sounds as the tutor traces them, the tutor does not say the sounds with the student. When the student confidently keeps up, it is time for Step 3.

3. **Student traces**

   The student traces the letters but does not say the sounds. The tutor says the sounds as the student traces the cursive letters. Be sure that the student keeps the flow correct and the size large. The large motor areas (kinesthetic) are involved at this time. When the tracing is smooth and accurate, the student may be ready for the next step.

4. **Student traces and says**

   The student traces and says each sound. At first, the tutor says the sounds with him. As the student gains confidence, the tutor allows him to say the sounds without the help. When the student can confidently and accurately say and trace at the same time, he is ready for Step 5.

5. **Student says and watches**

The tutor copies and says the word directly below or directly beside the pattern word. The student watches the copying process and says the sounds with the tutor. The word is erased and copied new each time. When the student smoothly says the sounds as the tutor copies, he is ready for the next step.

6. Student copies

The tutor says the sounds as the student copies the word. When the copying is smooth and accurate, the student is ready for Step 7.

7. Student copies and says

The tutor says the sounds with the student as he copies the word fresh each time. See why an erasable surface is needed? When the student can copy and say the word without aid from the tutor, he is ready for the final step.

8. Student says

The tutor models the saying orally of the letters and sounds in the word without looking at the board. When the student thinks he can do it, let him try. If the student needs any assistance, go back to Step 6 or Step 7 until the student knows the sounds and sequence of letters.

Try VATKI. It may work!

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