

72 WAYS TO MAKE LEARNING MULTI-SENSORY






Research shows that stimulating all the senses has a profound effect on learning. If our senses are engaged to create a whole mind/body experience, we form long lasting memories and our learning is embedded into our very being so that we recall and use what we've learnt very quickly and easily. Our sensory organs are often referred to as "the window to the brain" and the more sensory stimulation we receive, the more neural connections are made and the organisation and functional activity of our brain is improved. As trainers, we can use visuals, textures, sounds, tastes and smells to:






- Influence the mood or create a particular state among learners (for example relaxed and calm, or creative and energised)
- Increase learners' concentration and heighten or maintain their alertness
- Increase learners' awareness of the surroundings and their experiences
- Anchor learning (by associating different smells, sights, tastes, sounds, touch sensations or movements with different facts or learning points)
- Aid learners' understanding by using sensory activities to illustrate or explore a topic or learning point
- Improve memory and recall by using more areas of the brain simultaneously
- Recreate or simulate real situations so that learners can connect the learning to real experiences



Sensory stimuli in training shouldn't be an add-on or a gimmick just to make training more "interesting" or "fun" but it should be an integral part of the learning process. Many trainers use scented marker pens, play music, provide fiddle toys and nibbles, get people moving around and use lots of images in order to stimulate the senses, but there is so much more we can do and we can be much more innovative in the way we use the senses.

Below is a collection of ideas – some our own and some collected from other trainers – to inspire you to think about new ways to make your training truly multi-sensory. We hope you find them useful and that your learners enjoy them.

					
1. Use different coloured toys or props (themed according to the course topic) to divide into groups	✓				✓
2. Create posters with images relevant to the topic for the walls	✓				
3. Ask learners to draw, rather than write, their thoughts or ideas	✓				✓
4. Colour code key learning points	✓				
5. Ask learners to find hidden objects related to the topic or learning points	✓				✓
6. Use coloured hats to make different states/styles/ideas/learning points visual	✓				✓
7. Use Human PowerPoint (see our resource on 5 ways to have more fun at work)	✓	✓			✓
8. Use consistent images linked to different ideas to anchor them	✓				
9. Use different gestures/body language postures to communicate different meanings	✓				✓
10. Use photo cards with images for learners to associate with different states, memories or learning	✓				
11. Use costumes/dress to illustrate points or generate curiosity	✓				✓
12. Ask learners to find an object to represent how they feel/what they have learnt etc	✓				✓
13. Make a sculpture or collage to illustrate learning	✓		✓		✓
14. Use coloured stickers to highlight key points (on flipcharts or handouts)	✓				✓
15. Blow up different coloured balloons to represent relative importance of different factors	✓		✓	✓	✓
16. Ask people to choose colours to represent how they feel/who they are (eg using DIY paint charts)	✓				
17. Paint a mental picture by asking people to close their eyes and envisage.....	✓				
18. Use optical illusions to explore perspective/interpretation	✓				
19. Tell stories to illustrate learning or generate discussion		✓			
20. Record different sounds and ask people to guess what they represent (related to learning points)		✓			
21. Create silence		✓			
22. Use changes in voice tone, pitch and volume to highlight or anchor learning points		✓			
23. Use games that involve speaking and listening such as word association or Chinese whispers		✓			
24. Use music to create a mood, anchor ideas, generate energy or emphasise sections of the course		✓			
25. Use musical instruments to generate sounds to mark different sections of the course		✓			
26. Put key words or learning points into a story, limerick or song and perform this		✓			✓
27. Use different music to introduce key points or different activities		✓			
28. Use blindfolds to accentuate listening, learning and memory		✓			
29. Use recorded sounds to recreate a place/time/state (see British Library sound archive)		✓			
30. Ask people to show how they feel/what they think using “found sound”		✓			✓

					
31. Use drumming, singing, and music making (eg for team development)		✓			✓
32. Use <u>boomwackers</u> for icebreakers, team building , communication skills etc		✓			✓
33. Use a “talking stick” to identify whose turn it is to speak		✓			✓
34. Use flowers, fruits, oil burners, scented candles, incense to create different smells		✓			
35. Put pots of fresh herbs on tables and encourage people to stroke/brush them			✓		✓
36. Use essential oils to create mood			✓		
37. Give learners playdoh to create models representing who they are, what they’ve learnt etc	✓		✓		✓
38. Put highly scented flowers on tables (stocks, roses, freesias etc)	✓		✓		
39. Create a different ambience using different scents for each workspace/break-out room			✓		
40. Give people sprigs of fresh herbs to handle/smell – use these to divide into groups			✓		✓
41. Create smells to evoke a scenario or accompany a story			✓		
42. Use glue, paint, and other materials with strong smells for creating sculptures, collages etc	✓		✓		✓
43. Associate different smells with different learning points/topics			✓		
44. Go outside and note fresh air smells			✓		✓
45. Ask learners to choose a smell to associate with their learning/how they feel etc			✓		
46. Use different sweets/food to divide into groups			✓	✓	✓
47. Associate different tastes with different learning points as anchors				✓	
48. Use food for reward and association				✓	
49. Write messages/discussion points on chocolate/sweet wrappers	✓			✓	✓
50. Get fortune cookies made with key messages inside	✓			✓	✓
51. Use diversity beans (the taste is not what you’d expect from the colour) to explore assumptions	✓			✓	
52. Keep people alert by providing contrasting flavours which stimulate different taste buds				✓	
53. From different nibbles – learners choose a flavour which represents them and describe why		✓		✓	
54. Ask learners to imagine the taste of something to help bring visualisations to life				✓	
55. learners describe their favourite food and what it says about them (imagine its taste as they do)		✓		✓	
56. Ask learners what foods they associate with what memories/emotions and why – use as anchors				✓	
57. Learners identify different foods that act as a metaphor for learning points and explain why				✓	
58. Use energisers, trust activities etc which incorporate moving around					✓
59. Use different actions/movement or touch to anchor different learning points/facts	✓				✓
60. Ask learners to create their own name badges from craft materials	✓		✓		✓

61. Give learners stones/crystals with different textures to hold and associate meanings with these					✓
62. Use paper dolls to dress to illustrate different messages	✓				✓
63. Give people gift boxes to handle and open with resources inside them	✓				✓
64. Get learners to walk and talk (outside)		✓	✓		✓
65. Create human sculptures using learners own bodies to explore or highlight learning	✓				✓
66. Use games and puzzles that involve moving, touching, holding, rearranging items	✓	✓			✓
67. Provide different textured materials - learners to describe how they feel/what they represent etc		✓			✓
68. Give learners templates to create a learning box and put in items to remember learning points	✓				✓
69. Give out magazines and scissors and ask learners to cut out images to represent learning points	✓		✓		✓
70. Juggling/ball-throwing circles for icebreakers/energisers/learning review	✓				✓
71. Use self-massage techniques for relaxation and/or energising					✓
72. Use qigong exercises after lunch to aid digestion					✓

At Saltbox we work with all of the senses to give our learners the best possible learning experience.

To find out how we do this...

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