

WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

Objective

This activity was designed to allow the students the experience of being blind and using senses other than vision.

Materials

- Blind folds
- Paper or plastic bags (sandwich bags work well)
- 10 to 15 miscellaneous items to stimulate the remaining four senses:
Examples: Smell: lemon, orange, rubber eraser, cinnamon stick
Taste: raisin, nut, small piece of candy
Touch: small calculator, seashell, coin, tape measure
Hearing: bell, zipper, music box, stuffed toy. Use your own ideas.
- Coins and bills of different denominations

Teacher Preparation

Put one object each into a paper or plastic sandwich bag.

Activity

1. Have students name the five senses.
2. Explain to the students that they will be blindfolded (or must close their eyes) and will try to identify different objects using their other senses.
3. Tell the students to raise their hands when they know the answer.
4. Take one item from each sense area and present it to each participant. Students should wait until each participant has a single item. Select a student to name their object out loud by touching their arm. Older students may be given a piece of paper and a pencil, presented with a succession of objects and be asked to number and write a list of the objects on piece of paper – all while blindfolded.
5. Have students attempt to identify different coins or denominations of bills.
6. When all items have been presented, have students remove their blindfolds.

Discussion

Explain to the students that people with visual impairments can compensate for loss of vision with other senses.

Emphasize the fact that the students learned by using senses other than vision.

How did it feel to rely on other senses?

Ask students to name the other senses they used.

Ask them if they were able to identify the different denominations of money. Were the coins or bills harder?

Explain to them that people who are blind develop their own ways of identifying their money. They may fold certain bills a certain way (e.g., all \$1.00 folded in half, all \$5.00 folded in fourths, etc.), or they may have certain pockets in their wallets for each different denomination of bills.

Ask them to come up with ideas to help a blind person identify clothing in their closet (by color, etc.).

Discuss the ways a student with a visual impairment could participate in school activities in their class.

- Adapted from Barnes, Berrigan & Biklen, *What's the difference?*, Human Policy Press, 1978.
- And REACH, *Awareness and Inservice Manual*