

TREACHING®

Teaching and Reaching Each Child™

a publication with concise and in-depth guidance
for educators who *parent* their students
and for parents who *educate* their children

“It can’t be more obvious!”

Deepening Perception

Some of us are born with abilities, while others of us must learn and develop them. They are not natural for us, and they, therefore, require much hard work to attain.

Picture yourself standing with a friend in front of a highly-regarded piece of art in a museum. She talks about the beauty, the genius, and the message conveyed by the artist through his art. First you stare at the art piece, then you stare at your friend. “Is she off her rocker?” you ask yourself as you wonder what she is looking at and what she means. She seems to see something as plain as day that you cannot even find. How is this possible?

Your friend is endowed with perceptive abilities which penetrate the surface of what she sees. Oh, don’t get spooked. She’s just making connections in her mind that you are not used to making. That’s the key, by the way. Making connections. Your friend sees what you see, and then her mind realizes things that are connected to what you both see. She is not prophetic, just perceptive.

Perceiving what lies beneath the surface of something is not limited to viewing art. Perception is the key to understanding the messages and nuances embedded in what others write, draw, act out, or say, and for that matter, what they don’t write, draw, act out, or say.

Perception impacts many things. It adds meaningfulness. It helps us appreciate what we read. We are able to “read between the lines”. Perception also helps us draw conclusions from what we read. Social perception helps us relate to other people. We are able to read body language and to understand what others are trying to tell us by putting what they say into context. Perceptual abilities are especially needed by schoolchildren to achieve academically and socially.

Can people learn to be more perceptive? We believe they can. It takes guidance.

**Perception helps us to
“read between the lines.”**

The most essential theme to building perceptual abilities is making connections. Teachers and parents can lead the way toward deeper perception by helping others to make those connections which may be natural for ourselves.

Step One: Analyze Contributing Factors

The already-perceptive adult (APA) will be the "seeing-eye dog" for the perception-learner (PL) for now. This adult will lead the way. The first thing the APA needs to do is prepare by analyzing the object with its embedded messages requiring perception. How is the embedded message linked to what is visibly on the surface? In other words, how are the visible and inferred components similar or related? For instance, where we see a frown, we detect displeasure. A frown is a down-turned "smile". Down is viewed as a negative direction, implying a negative mood. That is the connection.

The second part of this step is to observe discrepancies or inconsistencies. The job of the APA is also to figure out why the PL does not perceive. What is confusing? What does the PL think or see that is detracting from the clarity of the connection that I see?

Step Two: Expose Unseen Perceptions

The APA should lead group discussions during which participants describe what they see perceptively. The PL

listens to these descriptions and tries to "see" them. Also, compose and describe scenarios that have obvious points plus nuances that require mild perception followed by a list of possible perceptions. See if you can get your PL to identify a reasonable perception by choosing one from the list of choices. You are not asking her to propose one, you are asking her to pick one from a given list. After she makes her choice, ask her to tell you why she chose the one that she did. Ask her to make connections. You may need to correct her perception and to show her connections she may not have seen on her own.

Step Three: Imagine Others' Thinking

Since perception means reading the unwritten word, practice reading other people's unwritten words. Imagine what they are probably thinking. This requires making the connections that we talked about earlier. Watch two people having a discussion or argument. What does each person say and what does each person mean without saying it. Suppose someone is giving driving directions to his friend. Repeating the directions over and over is fruitless. Finally he draws a map for his friend. Presto, now he understands the directions. We can gather (perceive) from that situation that the receiver of the directions is a visual learner. You can also perceive that his learning without

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We hope that you find this issue to be most helpful.
We welcome comments and questions.**

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**Eliezer and Miryam Vilinsky
Educational Support Services, Inc.
19 Sands Point Road • Monsey, New York 10952
phone or fax: 845-426-3673
email: ess@treaching.com**