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Impact of Colors

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Children, like adults, are very aware of color. Psychological studies suggest that color can influence mood and behavior, stimulate the brain and body, and even affect children's health. Likewise, scientific studies have also determined that exposure to certain colors can improve sleep habits, increase memory power, and enhance academic performance. Color psychologists have linked color to brain development, decreased absenteeism, enhanced productivity, and the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Warm Colors: In general, warm colors elicit happiness and comfort. Bold shades of red, orange, and yellow can stimulate the mind and have an energizing effect on the body.

Red – The color of passion and strong feelings, red excites and energizes the body by increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration. Red, used in combination with other colors in classrooms, can help in detail-oriented or repetitive tasks.

Pink – Evoking empathy and femininity, pink creates a calming atmosphere and lowers heart rate. However, despite an initial calming effect, too much pink can lead to agitation and anxiety.

Yellow – Bright and cheery, yellow is associated with happiness and motivation. Soft, subtle yellows promote concentration, while brighter shades stimulate memory and increase metabolism. However, too much yellow can evoke feelings of stress, anger, and frustration.

Orange – Friendly and welcoming, orange has a distinctly social nature. It inspires interpersonal communication and puts people at ease. Orange also enhances critical thinking and memory.

Cool Colors: Cool colors have a calming effect.

Blue – Colors of blue enhance creativity and produce a cool, relaxing environment. Blue calms the mind and body, which lowers blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, and decreases feelings of anxiety and aggression. Children who have trouble sleeping, or are prone to tantrums and other behavioral problems, may benefit from spending time in a blue environment. However, too much blue can also depress or arouse feelings of sorrow.

Purple – Ideal for kids as it is attention grabbing, purple is associated with wisdom and spirituality. Purple combines the stability of blue and the energy of red, taking on the characteristics of either, depending on the shade.

Green – Green symbolizes nature and promotes a serene and calming environment. Associated with health, healing, and well-being, green has a soothing effect on the body and mind by reducing anxiety and promoting concentration. Exposure to shades of green may also increase reading ability. One study discovered that by laying a transparent green sheet on top of text, students could improve their reading speed and comprehension.

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(cont.)

Colors in the Learning Environment

We usually think of using certain colors only to make a room appear larger or smaller. Since classrooms are places of active learning, adding color to a classroom can create an environment that stimulates learning, maximizes information retention, and prevents anxiety. Research confirms that color affects learning, communication, productivity, and emotions too. Color also has both positive and negative impacts on children. Color selection can cause children to become excitable and hyperactive or bored and uninterested. Research shows that lighter colors, such as yellow and blue, elicit positive feelings while darker colors such as deep blue, black, or gray create negative emotions. In addition, the color red may increase anxiety in some children.

Large amounts of bright colors, especially reds and oranges, can cause overstimulation of students. Brain research shows that using more than six colors in a classroom can distract learners and may even have a negative impact on a learner's cognitive ability. One exception to this is with younger children who thrive in an environment filled with brightly colored walls, decorations, and furniture.

Colors also help define specific learning areas of a room for particular activities. For example, blue chairs in corner may define an area for reading and relaxation, while a red table may identify a free-play space. Research also concludes that older students work better in rooms painted with lighter shades of blue and green, which reduce stress and are less distracting than bold, primary colors.

Resources:

"Nursery Color Psychology: Let Science Decide!" by Kitty Lascurain (2017) Retrieved 5-25-17 from https://www.thespruce.com/color-psychology-for-kids-2504750

"Colors in the Classroom Learning Environment – Color Your World" by SmithSystem (2017) Retrieved 5-25-17 from https://smithsystem.com/resource-library/article-library/color-world/

"Colours for the Classroom" by Karen Walstra (2014) Retrieved 5-25-17 from http://www.karenwalstraconsulting.com/home/index.php?ipkArticleID=43

"The Top Color Schemes for a School Classroom" by Dianna Mendez (2016) Retrieved 5-25-17 from https://owlcation.com/academia/The-Top-Color-Schemes-for-a-School-Classroom

"Color Psychology: Child Behavior And Learning Through Colors" by Jacob Olesen (2017) Retrieved 5-25-17 from http://www.color-meanings.com/color-psychology-child-behavior-and-learning-through-colors/

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