

Visual/Spatial Thinking

During the whole class lesson, the teacher and observer are looking for students who are able to manipulate shapes mentally in order to achieve a solution. These students have good memories for visual details. They often enjoy activities involving hands-on building of three-dimensional objects. Since these students may not be as verbal as their classmates, they may not have as much opportunity to demonstrate their talents during traditional classroom activities. They often respond best to visual images such as graphic organizers and instructional computer programs. Students who display much enthusiasm during the activity should be observed carefully as well as those who elaborate on their own ideas or on the ideas of others.

Diagnostic Notes

An observation checklist is provided. Use the same checklist for both whole class and small group lessons so that all of the data is together on one sheet. The following is a short summary of what to look for in student behaviors:

GRASPS CONCEPTS QUICKLY – Look for students who quickly see the perceptions presented. If they need to be shown a “trick,” such as turning a pattern block, note those students who remember that “trick” and will try it in other situations.

SEES INTERRELATIONSHIP OF CLUES – Look for students who will use all available clues or ideas to try to figure out the pattern.

MANIPULATES SHAPES MENTALLY – Sometimes the teacher will be able to observe the students as they turn their heads or hands, trying to visualize or manipulate an object or thought.

DEFERS JUDGEMENT – These students will wait to answer rather than jump to a wrong conclusion.

DEMONSTRATES PERSEVERANCE – Look for students who are willing to wait until they have figured out the correct answer. These students avoid guessing until they determine the correct answer. These are also the students who work to figure out the solution regardless of how long it takes.

INTUITIVELY SEES ANSWER – Look for students who seem to understand intuitively the visual perceptions presented. They may have the correct answer without knowing how they got that answer.