

Sensorial Original Lesson: Matching Colored Mushrooms with Colored Bowls



Age: 18 months to 6 years

Developmental Aims:

Refining visual discrimination, sorting. To develop fine motor skills by holding the tiny porcelain mushroom with a pincer grip carefully.

Practical aims:

For children to be able to sort the mushrooms based on color into the matching bowls. Secondarily, to go through 1-5 to prepare the mathematical mind.

Materials:

A tray that matches one of your mushrooms/bowls. I chose a tray that also has a picture of a mushroom on it because it was visually appealing, but it is in fact a cutting board made of glass that would probably break pretty quickly in the classroom. Make a more practical choice than I did. There should

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be 5 mushrooms in total (or 10, or 15 or 20, depending on whether the child can count up that high yet) with a color matching bowl, as well as a larger bowl to contain all of them mixed up to sort from in a color that matches none of them, so as not to confuse. I chose rainbow colored Fly Agaric/Amanita Muscaria/Toadstool mushrooms in pink, purple, blue, green, and yellow with bowls (actually acrylic muffin wrappers) to match.

Preparation:

Other sorting works. Some fine motor skill to handle the tiny painted porcelain mushrooms.

Presentation:

1. Invite the child to watch the presentation of "Matching colored Mushrooms with their Bowls".
2. Carry the tray from the Sensorial area of the classroom to a table, or if at circle to a rug. Set it down gently and sit gracefully. Have the child sit at your subdominant side so they may see well.
3. Carefully remove with dominant hand the bowl at the top of the stack, using subdominant hand to pull gently away from the bottom of the stack. Place with dramatic deliberation, the main sorting bowl (with all of the mushrooms inside of it) at a central position on rug.
4. Remove the next bowl in the same way. Place in noon position.
5. Remove the next bowl in the same way. Place in quarter-after position.
6. Remove the next bowl in the same way. Place in half-past position.
7. Remove the next bowl in the same way. Place in quarter-to position.
8. Remove the next bowl in the same way. Place in 5-til position.
9. Indicate the appropriate three-finger position to pick out the tiny mushroom individually from the bowl safely from the center of the work rug and dramatically deliberate over which bowl it will match. Say "This is pink." and then place it in the pink bowl.
10. Remove the next mushroom from the central bowl. Say "Purple." Match it to its bowl.
11. Remove the next mushroom from the central bowl. Say "Blue." Match it to its bowl.
12. Remove the next mushroom from the central bowl. Say "Green." Match it to its bowl.
13. Remove the next mushroom from the central bowl. Say "Yellow." Match it to its bowl.
14. Now, step back and look at your work and observe whether you have matched the colors correctly. Make adjustments as needed.

15. Admire your work.



16. Take each mushroom one by one with your 3 fingers and place them gently back into the bowl in the center.

17. Stack the bowls as they were originally placed on the tray.

18. Stand up, then bend through the knees to pick up the tray with both hands carefully and gracefully and bring it back to the shelf from whence it came, carefully emphasizing its specific location with a wave of the hand.

19. In second presentation, repeat steps 1-15, then offer labels that read "Yellow", "Green", "Blue", "Purple", "Pink". Say "This says Yellow", and match it the appropriate matching bowl containing mushroom(s).

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Points of Interest:

The colors of the mushrooms. The varying textures of the porcelain and vinyl of the mushrooms and bowls. The tiny mushrooms.

Control of Error:

There are only enough mushrooms to be an equal amount in each bowl.

Variations:

Adding more colors to the mix.

Extensions:

Labels for the colors of the mushrooms.

Language:

"Mushroom", "pink", "purple", "blue", "green", "yellow".

Source of exercise:

I was thinking about making a fungi album for my Cultural work, and while searching on the internet came across these tiny mushrooms and felt inspired to make a sorting work with them. Truth be told though, I'm a bit of a mycophile. I've been growing oysters and lionsmane at my home so they are often on my mind, particularly in the past few years since doing bioremediation work in New Orleans post-hurricane Katrina and since reading Paul Stamens' *Mycellium Running*.

Notes: Unfortunately this set only came with one green mushroom and no orange mushrooms, which I will remedy before placing this work on the shelves of my classroom. Unfortunately also, the muffin wrapper set didn't come in red. I would like to have the full spectrum of color represented, in particular with all of the primary colors.