

Nasal Learners

Backed by olfactory-education experts, parents of nasal learners are demanding that U.S. public schools provide odor-based curricula for their academically struggling children.

“Despite the proliferation of countless scholastic tests intended to identify children with special needs, the challenges facing nasal learners continue to be ignored,” said Delia Powers, president of Parents of Nasal Learners. “Every day, I witness firsthand my son Austin’s struggle to succeed in a school environment that recognizes the needs of visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic learners, but not him.”

Powers said she was at her wit’s end trying to understand why her son was floundering in school when, in May 1997, another parent referred her to the Nasal Learning Research Institute in Columbus. Tested for odor-based information-acquisition aptitude, Austin scored in the 99th percentile.

“My child is not stupid,” Powers said. “There simply was no way for him to thrive in a school that caters only to traditional students who absorb educational concepts by hearing, reading, seeing, discussing, drawing, building, or acting out.”

Scholastic Scents is a Cambridge, MA, company attempting to fill the void in educational materials geared towards nasal learners.

“Our line of scratch-and-sniff textbooks won’t be available until next school year,” Scholastic Scents president Randy Beak said, “but we do have a variety of educational packets such as the Oregon Trail fragrance set and our “Speak and Smell” language workshops. I’d also recommend you browse our non-textbook selections, such as the all-odour version of *The Yearling*.

However, according to Dr. Ira Snout, author of *The Nose Knows: A Nasal-Based Development Guide*, such efforts do not go far enough. Snout said there are three distinct types of nasal learners: the goal-oriented nasal learner, the activity-oriented nasal learner, and the learning-oriented nasal learner. Each type, he said, must be treated differently.

“It’s important to understand that not every nasal learner is the same,” Snout said. “For example, while goal-oriented and activity-oriented nasal learners may see the prospect of olfactory reward at the end of a task as sufficient motivation, the learning-oriented nasal learner needs something more to sustain his interest.”

For parents who suspect their children may be nasal learners, Powers recommends the Stanford-Binet Nasal Index Exam. “It would be nice if the schools gave this test, but the sad fact is, for the child with special nasal needs, today’s educational system stinks.”

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