

INTRODUCTION

Animals can be fascinating for students of all ages. I have strived to write these 41 lessons with hopes they could interest learners of any age. However, you will find that you may need to change or adapt lessons for the student you are teaching due to age or how he/she learns.

Parents have asked for ways to incorporate other motor activities like drawing into lessons. Therefore, one of the expansion activities is a drawing and coloring page to build motor skills in connection with the lesson. You will see options for the activities. Some students will be able to do all of them, some will only be able to do step one. (More on this in the 'How To Use This Book' section).

Lessons are shorter at the first of the book and longer at the end. The intent is to grow the time tolerance for learners who may have less stamina.

I hope you will enjoy these lessons!

Sincerely,

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I acknowledge each student who I have been given the chance to teach and also their families. Thanks to the students who gave me feedback when I taught these lessons.

Thanks to Soma Mukhopadhyay for letting me learn from her! It has been a great journey. Not only have I learned about improving my teaching skills, but I have also learned more about myself.

Animals

For Nonverbal and Minimally Verbal Students:
Lessons for Soma®RPM and Other Choice Based Systems

By: Lenae Crandall

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

HOW A LESSON LOOKS:

LESSON 3: GIANT PANDA

MAIN COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE(S): Students will acquire knowledge and gain understanding of the giant panda.

MATERIALS: picture of a panda, picture of bamboo

**Students who are able to generate open ended responses by pointing to letters to spell, typing, signing, or speaking, do NOT need to use the options provided.*

TEACH: Did you know, pandas spend about 12 hours per day eating! (*Show the picture of the giant panda.*)

SPELL: Let's spell PANDA.

ASK: What do they do for 12 hours per day? (SLEEP or EAT.)?

EXPAND: Would you want to eat that often each day? (OF COURSE or NOPE)?

Comment on the student's response.

TEACH: They eat so much because they don't digest their food very well.

ASK: The panda struggles to (EAT or DIGEST.) their food well?

EXPAND: 'Digest' goes with (STOMACH. or VARIETY)?

EXPANSION ACTIVITY: Let's spell—

- 1) PANDA since we talked about pandas.*
- 2) MUNCH since they munch on bamboo*
- 3) BAMBOO since that is their primary food source.*
- 4) CAMOUFLAGE because that is an adaptation for survival.*
- 5) DIET since the panda has a bamboo diet.*

Giant panda drawing and coloring page found on page 177.

HOW TO READ THE LESSONS

Instructions on how to read it are in *this font*.

LESSON 3: GIANT PANDA	<i>This is the title of the lesson. It has the lesson number, and the subject of the lesson.</i>
<p>MAIN COGNITIVE OBJECTIVE(S): Students will acquire knowledge and gain understanding of the giant panda.</p> <p>MATERIALS: picture of a panda, picture of bamboo</p> <p><i>*Students who are able to generate open ended responses by pointing to letters to spell, typing, signing, or speaking, do NOT need to use the options provided.</i></p>	<p><i>This is at the top of every lesson. It states the main cognitive objective. Additionally, it lists the materials needed in addition to the student's normal tools they use to communicate responses. For students using RPM, you will need paper, stencils or letterboards, tape, etc. There are a series of *. They remind to read and adapt the lesson according to the student's ability</i></p>

<p>TEACH: Did you know, pandas spend about <u>12 hours</u> per day eating! (<i>Show the picture of the giant panda.</i>)</p> <p>SPELL: Let's spell PANDA.</p> <p>ASK: What do they do for 12 hours per day? (SLEEP or EAT.)?</p> <p>EXPAND: Would you want to eat that often each day? (OF COURSE or NOPE)? <i>Comment on the student's response.</i></p>	<p><i>This is the teaching portion. "TEACH" is what you teach. The <u>underlined</u> words are keywords you should verbally spell out loud as you write them down on a sheet of paper for keywords (and drawings) as you teach the lesson. The words written in () and italics are <u>not</u> to be said. They give you other sensory activities to do or other insights.</i></p> <p><i>'ASK' are questions you ask directly after you teach. The words in () that are CAPITALIZED are the two choices you should write down from left to right for the student to choose from IF the student needs to use the options. The answer with a PERIOD. is the correct answer. These questions help you see if the student is listening, but additionally and maybe more importantly, it helps you see if you are individualizing and accommodating correctly for the student to choose accurately. (positioning of the options centered with the choosing hand, pace of instruction, etc.)</i></p> <p><i>'EXPAND' questions are thinking questions. If there is no (.) after the question, then it is an opinion question that allows the student to choose either option.</i></p> <p><i>Gray words in italics and "" can be quoted and remind the teacher the lesson should be like a conversation and not a list of questions. Sometimes it just says "comment on the student's response." In that case there are no "" and you will come up with your own thought.</i></p>
<p>TEACH: They eat so much because they don't <u>digest</u> their food very well.</p> <p>ASK: The panda struggles to (EAT or DIGEST.) their food well?</p> <p>EXPAND: 'Digest' goes with (STOMACH. or VARIETY)?</p>	<p><i>This activity allows for more student expression and thought to come out about the lesson. It includes creative writing task, reviews and other activities.</i></p>
<p>EXPANSION ACTIVITY: <i>Let's spell—</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1) PANDA since we talked about pandas.</i> <i>2) MUNCH since they munch on bamboo</i> 	

3) *BAMBOO* since that is their primary food source.

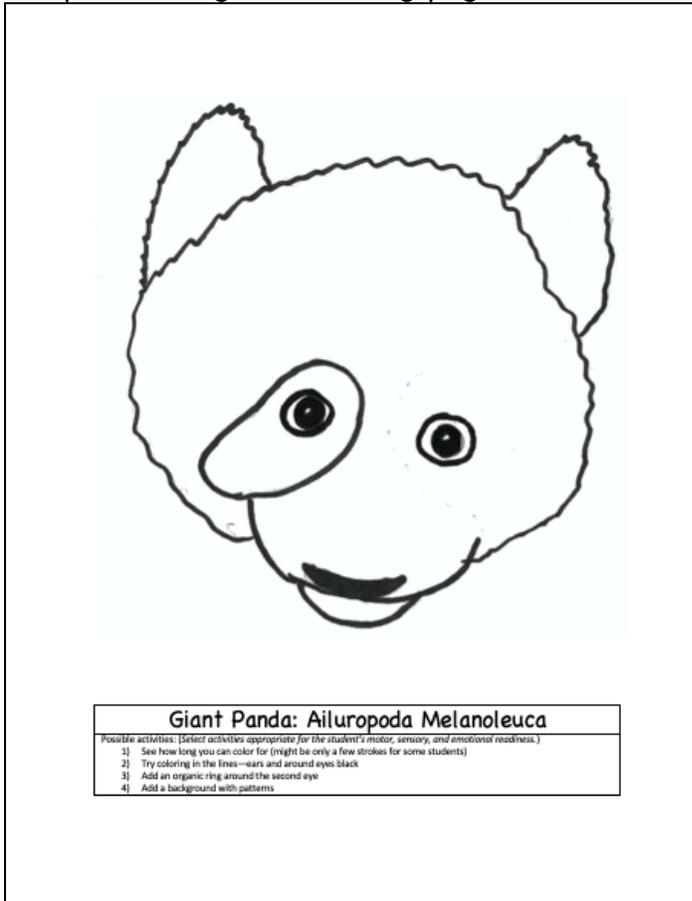
4) *CAMOUFLAGE* because that is an adaptation for survival.

5) *DIET* since the panda has a bamboo diet.

Giant panda drawing and coloring page found on page 177

(See below for a sample of the drawing and coloring page.)

Sample coloring and drawing page



To help with implementing lessons, it might be helpful to review lessons by highlighting the TEACH sections in a color (like red), the ASK questions a different color (like blue) and the EXPAND questions in a different color (like yellow). This way as

you reference the lesson your eyes will have an easier time finding the lesson point you are on, without slowing down and losing the student's interest. This may be particularly helpful if the student you are working with is a mover. You may need to carry the lesson, paper, pencils, etc., around with you until you can help the student find a more stationary place. This regulation may take time.

You might write in notes with a pencil to indicate how you might individualize for a student. For example, if the student needs a bit shorter amount of information given in the TEACH section, draw a line in the sentence where you will pause to ask a question. Then, you might add an arrow from the break to the question or write in the question. You might write in alternate choices or rephrase a question to make it more conducive for open ended communication (student comes up with the words instead of writing the words taught or options given) to happen for students who are ready. Little changes and adaptations can make a big difference in how successful the lesson turns out. Visit this link to understand more about implementing lessons: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfOrTWteI1Q&t=117s>

Choices and Student Responses (See chapter 12 of "Understanding Autism Using Rapid Prompting Method" by Soma Mukhopadhyay (2008))

FOR Soma®RPM: Options are spelled out and written in front of the student. They are placed equal distance to the choosing hand. We either rip paper choices into two pieces or hold up a folded piece of paper with the choices written on it. Here are two example videos: <https://youtu.be/-D28Zl3ZUsU> and https://www.youtube.com/edit?o=U&video_id=CtLfkXaSHak.

Options should be written left to right as you read in the order you write and say them. The correct answer, however, will not always be first. That should vary.

NOT all students will begin with the paper options. Some will pick options directly on the alphabet stencils, number stencils, or laminated letter/number board. For example, if you said, "We are learning about panda bears. What are we learning about? (JAGUARS or PANDAS)?" You would not write down jaguar and panda on two pieces of paper, but you might point in the direction of the 'J' on the letter board when you say 'jaguar' and point towards the 'p' when you say panda on the letterboard. This option is good for students who impulsively choose from two options. Scanning the letters for the correct first letter slows the student down so he/she can reason and be more accurate.

Some will get to a point that for a number of questions you will not need the options, but can ask the question and then present the letter/number board or stencils and the student can respond without an option.

Some will be ready to generate their own words, phrases or sentences. You can add to the questions or change the questions to encourage more responses from the student.

Ways to Handle Incorrect Responses

If a student doesn't correctly choose, there are a number of things you can do. At first, or if it is evident the student is teasing or anxious, instead of telling the student they are wrong, you would make light of it or twist it into the correct answer. For example, if I teach and ask, "The bird sits in a tree. Where does the bird sit? (TREE. or CHAIR)?" and the student picks 'chair', you could say, "Oh, then that bird must have got tired of sitting in the tree and wanted to be a person."

If the student keeps picking one side, then sometimes you put a weird answer like a wiggly line to "wake up" the student, on the side the student keeps picking. The other side will have the correct answer.

If the student just randomly hits, you can refrain from paper choices and put tape on two numbers or two letters for the response.

Another way to help a student reason and focus is to give a correct choice and then a very long unfamiliar word. For example, "Gravity is a pulling force. What kind of force is gravity? (3462781 or PULLING.)?"

When the concept is new, it can be appropriate to reteach, unless it seems the miss wasn't due to lack of understanding. Sometimes re-teaching is appropriate.

There are more ways to handle incorrect responses. What we don't say is "try again" or "no, wrong again!" and make a student feel bad about themselves.

Sensory Activities

Sensory activities are writing the key words, drawing, ripping the paper (for choices), making models and other things you do to stimulate the different senses of the student to help learning take place. These are embedded in the lessons (or if not written in the lesson, how you will implement these lessons if you are doing Soma®RPM), but part of adapting to the individual student may be to add more, subtract a few, or change them up. At times, I have given suggestions at the top of the lesson or throughout the lesson for sensory activities.

Adaptation and Personalizing

You will want to adapt and personalize. Each student is an individual with a unique sensory system, personality, preferences and so forth. As such, writing lessons for the masses proves tricky. As a teacher, you will need to pre-read lessons and adapt accordingly. I provide 2 options for pretty much every question. Some students will not need the options or can choose from more than two choices. Some can generate their own responses. A student who has just begun may be very nervous and reasoning between choices may increase anxiety, so for a few lessons you might not even use choices, but directly move to spelling or touching numbers on the stencil/ laminated number board.

Some students have unique family circumstances, life experiences and so forth. As a result, some stories, lessons, or questions may need to adapt to that student's individual circumstances.

Some students will need a faster pace of back and forth between teacher and student. You will intersperse questions throughout the 'TEACH' section (discussed below), rather than teach the sentence or two before discussion, as it is written. If you do not, you might lose the student's interest and the lesson fall apart.

Some students need fast pace, some need a quiet voice, some need more auditory input, some need more of a visual input, some need more tactile or kinesthetic activities. To implement best practice Soma®RPM, you will need to adapt to these in the instance of learning.

Lessons and Content

These 41 lessons discuss over 41 animals.

NOTE: In Soma®RPM we use the empirical method (learning through the senses: visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic) and the rational method (use thinking and reasoning) to help a student learn. We also presume intelligence (not knowledge) this may be an adjustment if you aren't use to thinking that way. Be patient with yourself and student as you learn to work together with a new mindset.

Objectives

A proper Soma®RPM lesson has four goals:

- Education/Cognitive Goals

- Skill Goals

- Tolerance Goals

- Communication Goals

Education/Cognitive Goals are the goals about learning the content.

Skill Goals are about developing the coordination between understanding and action to improve the student performance like spelling, handwriting, typing with intentional, controlled movements so the student is doing what he/she wants to do. For this book there is also opportunity to improve motor skills—drawing and coloring.

Tolerance Goals are goals dealing with increasing the time a student can tolerate a topic or session length, visual, tactile and auditory tolerance or how long a student can spell and aim well before he/she starts missing.

Communication Goals are goals about student communication—expression of facts, reasoning, and opinions.

Materials

For each lesson, you will need: paper, pencil, clear tape, timer (to show the student how long the session will be), stencils (letters and numbers) or laminated letter/number board. Additional materials are listed at the top of each lesson. Those using other systems will just need paper, pencils, clear tape, timer, and any other materials unique to the student.

Drawing and Coloring Pages

For each lesson, there is a drawing and coloring page at the back of the book. At the bottom of the page is the name of the animal and its scientific name. Then there are a number of activities a student can do. Parents/teachers should decide which ones to do based off of the sensory, motor, and emotional readiness of the student. Other than the first task listed, the task are not all in the order of what is easiest to do as some student will find different task easier to them compared to a different student who may find a different task easier.

Sensory Readiness: This is the ability of the student to handle the situation sensory wise. Is the student tactically defensive to a writing tool? Struggles to tolerate the movement of coloring? Or is the student tolerate of both of these? Sensory readiness often can be improved with doing very small amounts of something like coloring for 3 seconds and slowly increasing the time.

Motor Readiness: Student's abilities with motor skills? Is a student able to hold the coloring tool? How much can the student control his or her hand to draw a line?, etc. Motor modeling—hand over hand helping the student do the task—before having

the student doing the task physically independent is critical for a student to improve their skills. Hold the picture up on a clipboard in the performance field (where the student has the easiest time accessing and performing) is critical for some drawing skills.

Emotional Readiness: Does the student want to do it? Does the student think the task is for babies?, etc Often giving an explanation of why you are doing the task helps a student be emotionally ready for it.

Understanding how to work with these three areas can help the student have the most successful and positive experience. Consult your Soma®RPM provider if you have questions about these three areas of readiness.