

VESTED™ INVESTMENTS

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KOLAK GROUP INC.

Expert Weighs-in on Effective Strategies for Twice Exceptional Students

Susan Winebrenner, author of two books: *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom* and *Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom*, offers several suggestions for tapping into the strengths and addressing the weaknesses of the twice exceptional student—gifted and learning disabled. According to Winebrenner (2003, 137), “The most serious challenge is that the giftedness will go unnoticed and unaccommodated in favor of attending to learning deficits.” This doesn’t have to happen. With appropriate strategies, the twice exceptional student can be accommodated in the regular, heterogeneous classroom setting. Winebrenner offers nine key strategies, most addressed by VESTED™.

1. Help the students to appreciate differences in the classroom. This will help them better understand the differentiation process.
2. Use visual and tactile-kinesthetic teaching formats. Many students who experience learning difficulties are global learners and prefer these teaching approaches.
3. Teach concepts first and then details. By showing film clips before reading or enabling students to see an entire unit on a graphic organizer at the beginning of a lesson, instruction comes across as integrated content as opposed to separate and/or unrelated learning activities.
4. Help the students set short-term and realistic goals. Help students appreciate what progress they do make. Goal setting increases student motivation by making large assignments feel more manageable.
5. Tie past learning to new content. According to Winebrenner, students with learning difficulties “prefer making everything visual so they can see patterns and connections they need to assimilate new learning.” Frontloading techniques could include the use of charts, timelines, semantic maps and any other tool that can be used to condense words into graphics and pictures.
6. Engage all senses in the learning process. Use of the senses supports students to move from the concrete to the abstract in the learning process.
7. Teach organization. Help students organize their lockers, the notebooks, and their desks for long-term success.
8. Use available technology to improve student productivity. Tape recorders, word processors and other technologies help students concentrate and focus on conceptual understanding as opposed to details like spelling that can throw them off track.
9. Allow students to test in separate and supervised areas. Some students need quiet, while others need to read aloud to themselves.

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Special points of interest:

- Twice Exceptional students require special considerations to address both their strengths and weaknesses.
- Help students work with multiple-meaning words and homophones.
- Increase memory and recall with the effective use on music in the classroom.

Verbal-Visual Word Association Strategy



Verbal-Visual Word Association

Vocabulary Term Steel	Personal Association 
Definition Strong Metal	Non-Example  Steal Still Still

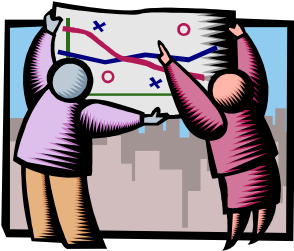
requires the development of a four quadrant configuration. Students record the word under study in the upper left-hand corner. In the lower quadrant, beneath the word, they provide a definition in their own words.

ables the students to extend their vocabulary and recognize possible areas for confusion.

Some teachers have modified the strategy by having the students write a sentence for the work on the back of their newly developed vocabulary card. Others require the students to draw a vertical line across the non-examples to emphasize that while they may represent additional meanings for the word under study, they do not represent the meaning used in the learning context at hand.

The Verbal-Visual Word Association Strategy enables students to delineate the varied meanings inherent in multiple meaning words and homophones. The strategy

In the upper right-hand quadrant, they create an association in picture format. Then they provide non-examples in the lower right-hand quadrant. This strategy en-



Music for Learning—Accelerated Learning

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a piece of music is worth a thousand pictures.

Music impacts the affective domain and can increase memory and recall exponentially when used skillfully in learning environments. Music therapist and past president of the International Alliance for Learning identified seven classroom uses of music.

First, music can be used to promote classroom community. It can enhance group bonding and interaction. Note how some musical numbers tie sports fans together as they cheer for their team.

Next, music enables teachers to both welcome students and grab their attention. Music can be used upon student entry into the classroom as well as, for exits, breaks, and inspirational moments.

Songs like *Let's Get it Started* and *Happy Trails*. Can be employed to start and end class respectively.

Music can also be utilized in active learning experiences. It can serve as a soundtrack for plays or dialogues, kinesthetic learning activities and metaphorical stories. Think back to the *Eye of the Tiger*.

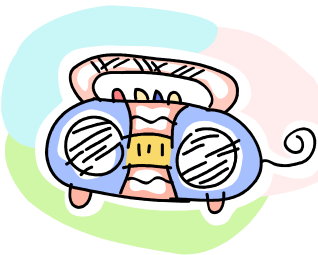
Further, music can be applied to help the students focus and move into alpha learning states. By lowering student heart rates to 60 beats per minute, students accelerate their learning while listening to baroque music. Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Pachelbel's *Canon in D*, are among the more popular pieces of this style of music.

Music can be employed to promote memorization

through rhythm and rhyme. Students then learn through raps, chants, and songs. No wonder most kids can learn their ABCs so quickly!

Additionally, music can induce creative thinking and reflection. New age music and world music allow for free exploration of thoughts and ideas. Music for this purpose spans from Beethoven to more contemporary composers such as Yanni.

Last, music can be used for personal expression and musical intelligence. Students can be encouraged to write their own songs and raps to capture the new learning they are taking in. They can also invent their own sounds and instruments to create their own unique soundtracks.



Kolak Group Hosts Summer Trainings in San Antonio, Texas

Kolak Group announces summer training opportunities in San Antonio, Texas.

A VESTED™ Institute will be provided for a national audience this summer at the Radisson at Market Square in San Antonio, Texas, July 27-29, 2009. Additional institutes will be planned in the coming year for other locations including Phoenix, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City and Denver.

Participants who attend an institute become eligible to participate in a Training of Trainers

(TOT). These too, will be scheduled and announced in the coming year.

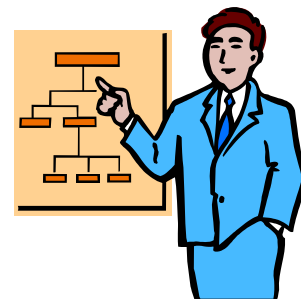
Another training opportunity includes a two-day TOT on how to work with beginning and intermediate ELLs in the content areas. This has been in high demand, so Kolak Group elected to begin work on a training module that will be presented July 30-31, 2009 in San Antonio, Texas.

Registration information will be available soon.

Additional training materials in the works include

an administrative overview for the VESTED™ Instructional Approach and a new book on video review in the professional development process. These products will be available in early spring 2009.

Kolak Group is also diligently working on additional trainings to support ELPS implementation across the content areas, grades K-12.



We Want Your Stories and Ideas!

Kolak Group would like to share your tales out there on the front lines! It is through the sharing of our challenges and successes that the rest of us can benefit. We hope our newsletter can work to

keep all in touch with one another as we all work to provide the best instruction for all students.

As we have opportunities to observe you and visit with you, we will be look-

ing for great successes and ideas to share with others through this publication. So, if you do not toot your own horn, we will do it for you!



Special Shout Out for a North Shore Triplet in Galena Park ISD!

Three North Shore Middle School teachers made the grade with regards to reaching their ELLs and struggling students.

First, Kristine Polevacic demonstrated fantastic scaffolding skills as the students worked to create a graphic organizer in small groups. She shifted down to referencing visuals for those students who needed it and shifted up for others into accountable talk. This flexi-

bility enabled the students to work comfortably on the task at hand as she closely monitored their progress.

Second, Ivy Cadoree had a near four-stage lesson delivery all in a thirty-minute time frame! A simple think-pair-share strategy for the speak stage could have solidified a smooth journey from view to transform. This was so close, we have to mention it! Awesome use of instructional time! Great

spacing and great learning! The students were right on.

Last, but not least... Carolina Cabang delivered a wonderful lesson focused on vocabulary development. The students reviewed vocabulary from cue cards and then engaged in a game to practice. This was followed up with a handout that students worked on independently. Nice transitions and use of instructional time!!!!!!



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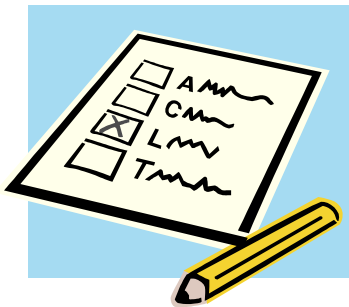


Learning Inside a Kaleidoscope
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It's important to note that the VESTED™ Instructional Approach was born out of the need to provide teachers with specific guidelines for conveying and delivering content area instruction to English language learners, especially at the high school level. After careful consideration and lengthy discussions with experts in the field, Kolak Group Inc. expanded the approach to address the needs of all students —ELLs, GT, Special Ed., mainstream— since VESTED™ works to provide both inclusion and accessibility to curriculum goals for all. Kolak Group Inc. is currently collaborating with districts to continue to expand and refine the theoretical underpinnings of this instructional approach with continued quantitative and qualitative research efforts.



Point to Ponder: ASCD Polls—What Do They Tell Us?



As the year draws to a close and we move forward with the inauguration of a new president, ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development) took the time to poll educators concerning emerging issues for the coming years.

ASCD reports that 40% of its members believe that the most worrisome school issue at present is the high school drop out

rate. Second is school violence at 20%.

When asked how schools have changed as a result of NCLB, 45% report that many changes have been made, although some basics remain the same. 27% report that they have totally revamped their curriculum.

A third poll asked respondents to identify topics in which they need more information. The top two topics included classroom management and discipline at 29% and assessment and grading at 24%.

So what do the responses indicate about the state of the educational landscape? Have discipline issues and violence made it difficult to keep students interested in school? Although

changes have been made to what teachers teach in accordance to higher standards, have these changes resulted in or have maintained high drop out rates?

Whatever the case may be, there are still pressing issues that will need to be addressed if there is to be a fundamental shift in student outcomes. Maybe if we take the pressure off of students to perform well on tests and induce relaxation and de-emphasize assessment and grading, we could impact discipline issues and may even help with the drop out rate. In hind sight, have our efforts to make instruction more rigorous resulted in pushing many kids out for fear of losing face? And just who's face are we talking about??????