

Tweaking Curriculum To Work With Your Child



What do you do when a curriculum resource isn't working?

- Shelve it for the younger kids?
- Dwell on the wasted time shopping for it in the first place?
- Wonder what to replace it with?
- Sell it on eBay?

This year I purchased *Vocabulary From Classical Roots Book A*. I thumbed through the books and realized it wasn't a match to my daughter's Visual-Spatial learning style. I decided (against my better judgment) to use it as-is.

Homeschooling Day 1 - I diligently followed the teacher's manual only to discover a brick wall sitting across from me (that looked an awful lot like my daughter).

I was getting ready to shelve it for my younger crew, regret the time and money I spent buying it, and wonder what on earth I was going to replace it with.

Instead of giving up on the resource I pulled out my Visual-Spatial activities list. As I went down the list I saw how I could tweak the curriculum to work with my daughter.

The result?

Homeschool Day 2 - I confidently used Visual-Spatial activities instead of the teacher's manual and found an adorable little sponge excitedly yelling out derivatives (no joke).

Do you have a curriculum resource that isn't working?

Before you hit the **List Item** button on eBay, let me show you how to identify the problem, discover sure-fire activities for success, and get your curriculum working for you!

To Your Child's Success!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jena".

Tweaking Curriculum To Work With Your Child



Step 1 - Recognize When It's Time To Tweak

Here are two sure-fire signs that the curriculum is not working for your child...

1. *Brick Wall* - information is bouncing off and not soaking in.
2. *Glazed Eyes* - your child isn't following the lesson, she's confused.

Step 2 - Identify The Problematic Activity

When you have a brick wall or a pair of glazed eyes staring back at you, take note of the activity you both are engaged in. Are you reading aloud? Is your child using a workbook? Is your child reading silently? Is your child doing seatwork? Is your child writing?

Step 3 - Fix The Activity To Work With Your Child's Learning Style

Find your child's learning style on pages 3-6. Use these activities for teaching and ditch the problematic ones. Here's what I did when *Vocabulary From Classical Roots* wasn't working for my Visual Spatial daughter...

Activities causing the brick wall...	I tweaked using Visual Spatial Activities...
Write the root words on a dry-erase board and discuss the meanings.	<p>On a dry-erase board I write the root and draw a picture of its meaning. (Visuals)</p> <p>She creates flashcards for each root using pictures to show meanings. (Picture Cards)</p>
Read through each vocabulary word and definition.	<p>She brainstorms words that contain the root. (Discovery-Pattern Finding)</p> <p>I write each word on the dry erase board using red for the root part and black for the rest. (Colors To Distinguish Parts)</p> <p>I ask her if she knows the meaning. If she doesn't, I read the meaning from the book/dictionary. (Discovery/Pattern Finding)</p>
Ask scripted questions to discuss vocabulary word definitions.	I ask her to use the word in a sentence. If there are additional ways to use the word she didn't think of, I give her hints. (Discovery)



Auditory Learning Activities

Ask yourself...

- (1) How can the topic be presented verbally?
- (2) How can my child 'tell' me what he has learned?

Teach Lessons Using...

- Lectures on CD
- Reading aloud to your child
- Facts set to music
- Live lectures (or online/ DVD)
- Interactive computer programs
- Talking through lessons and assignments with your child
- Time for discussions
- Group (or partner) activities
- Videos
- Reading aloud instructions to your child
- Choral reading

Have Your Auditory Learner...

- Participate in group (or partner) activities
- Read along with books-on-cd/mp3
- Read aloud to oneself (or other siblings/whole family)
- Verbally repeat key points
- Set facts to music
- Use interactive computer programs
- Talk aloud while following a recipe, reading instructions for a literature assignment, memorizing states and capitals, working through an algebra problem, etc.
- Answer workbook/comprehension questions orally
- Use narration instead of book reports
- Give oral presentations instead of written essays
- Set information to familiar tunes and sing it



Kinesthetic Learning Activities

Ask yourself...

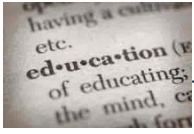
- (1) How can the topic be experienced?
- (2) How can my child 'do' what he is learning?

Teach Lessons Using...

- Field trips
- Experiments
- Reading aloud so your child can move while listening
- Simulations
- Role playing
- Learning centers

Have Your Kinesthetic Learner...

- Construct models (solar system, Egyptian city)
- Experience the topic first hand (field trips, demonstration, plant a garden)
- Touch and examine what she is learning (dissect a flower)
- Work with manipulatives for math, spelling, and writing
- Role-play historic events, math processes, scenes from literature, etc.
- Memorize information (such as math facts) while moving (i.e.. playing basketball)
- Instead of written reports have your child do dramatizations
- Play educational games (fun way to learn grammar, history, math and spelling)
- Use videos and websites
- Take frequent "movement" breaks during seatwork



Visual Print Learning Activities

Teach Lessons Using...

- Assigned reading
- Outline of the unit as a handout
- Flashcards
- Written directions for assignments

Have Your Visual Print Learner...

- Read, read, and read some more
- Take notes during lectures or after reading assignments
- Outline
- Journal
- Write essays, creative stories, poem,
- Use workbooks and worksheets
- Highlight while reading
- Write research papers
- Create a timeline of events



Visual Spatial Learning Activities

Ask yourself...

- (1) How can the topic be illustrated?
- (2) How can my child 'show' me what he has learned?

Teach Lessons Using...

- Visuals - "a picture is worth a thousand words"
- Flow charts to teach processes
- Colored pens to distinguish parts (show parts of speech in a sentence, spelling patterns, divisor/dividend, etc.)
- Videos
- Field trips
- Highlighting, underlining, and drawing images while teaching
- Discovery - capitalize on your child's pattern-finding strengths
- Reading aloud
- Visuals hung up around the room (i.e. Greek & Latin word parts)
- Unit charts to introduce the big picture

Have Your Visual Spatial Learner...

- Draw while listening to lectures
- Use webbing to brainstorm, organize information for writing (pre-writing), or analyze stories and characters
- Use concept mapping to show knowledge of a subject and its relationships
- Map locations of a story setting, historical events, geographical features
- Work with math manipulatives
- Use graphic organizers for just about everything. Introduce or recap a unit, analyze literature, explain cycles and sequences, pre-writing and brainstorming are just a few examples.
- Create storyboards for creative writing and literary analysis
- Dramatize or demonstrate the concept
- Draw pictures of events on a timeline
- Research using websites and videos
- Create picture cards for learning spelling words, math facts, etc.
- Create graphs and charts to show the results of research assignments or to answer workbook questions
- Construct models
- Create collages, posters, and murals of a concept or to summarize a unit
- Use computer software such as Eyewitness Encyclopedia