

Marko & Associates specializes in education consulting, including school in-service at all levels, corporate management training and education consulting in other fields.

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EDUCATION CONSULTANTS

NEWSLETTER

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“Inspiring Passion In Teachers”

JANUARY • FEBRUARY • MARCH 2008

FROM JANE

Fall has been a busy time for Marko and Associates. Our new book *Classroom Strategies for Dynamic Teachers* has proven to be a real hit. At the book release party, teachers enjoyed a glass of wine and shared their stories about using the book. I often hear teachers talking about how easy it is to learn and use a new strategy.

This makes me smile, because that's exactly what we were trying to achieve. As the introduction says, "This book is dedicated to all the dynamic teachers, doing their best for children. The days are too short, the budget too small, the children are restless, yet you perform miracles every day." This book will help you perform those little miracles every day!

As you use *Classroom Strategies for Dynamic Teachers*, email your stories to jane@markoandassociates.com. We are looking for helpful hints you have discovered while using the strategies and great stories to share with others. You can see an excerpt of the book at www.markoandassociates.com.

Jane Elizabeth Marko



TEACHING TIP

Student Engagement 21st Century Learning

The world is changing and students' skills need to change along with it. As important as facts are, it is equally, if not more important for students to have higher level thinking skills. English has grown from 50-60 thousand words in Old English to over five to six times this, making the available words between 650,000 - 750,000.¹

We are living in a time of exponentially expanding information. As Thomas L. Friedman writes in his book, *The World is Flat*, there are ten flatteners that have led to globalization. Two that need immediate attention from teachers are:

#9. In-forming: Google and other search engines are the prime example. "Never before in the history of the planet have so many people on their own had the ability to find so much information about so many things and about so many other people"²

#10. Personal digital devices like mobile phones, iPods, personal digital assistants, instant messaging, and voice over IP.²

Information is everywhere, all the time, and changing. Our students need to be able to navigate through this bombardment of information and make it useful to their learning. Successful productive citizens are proficient at this skill.

To practice and develop higher order thinking skills, technology is essential. Translating this to the classroom, daily lessons need to model and practice the use of technology. Teachers need to take the same topics they have been teaching and design lessons that model the collection, synthesis and evaluation of facts.

Sound impossible? Not at all! The technology is on our side. An interactive white board such as a SMART Board makes this a very doable daily activity. With an interactive white board, a teacher can lecture the basic facts, link to numerous websites, add more supporting or contradicting facts from each, all the while annotating over the websites. You can ask the students for questions that pop into their heads, write them on the interactive board, and then move them to the area on the website to where evidence is found.

Simply put, a teacher can "make thinking visual" and create many situations for critical thinking. This technology allows teachers to quickly offer multiple sources on a topic to create a rich learning environment.

¹ (<http://hypertextbook.com/facts/2001/JohnnyLing.shtml>)

² (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_World_is_Flat)

WEB WATCH

Great Teaching Ideas are There for the Picking

As true professional teachers, it's our desire to stay up-to-date, always learning about current best practice and integrate the ideas, strategies and philosophies into our current teaching practice. I am not saying change your current teaching practice every time a new idea comes out. We don't toss the baby out with the bath water. I am saying it's our responsibility, as professional teachers, to stay up-to-date carefully analyze new ideas, think about your teaching practice and blend the best-of-the-best.

We all know what we do expertly and what we could do better. Focus on the areas where you would like to be more effective and begin your search for an idea, a best practice, and/or a system that might help. The simplest way to stay current is to join a professional organization. You will receive newsletters, magazines, and emails loaded with great ideas and new research on best practices. Listed below are the websites of many professional organizations. Pick one or two that are relevant to you and check them often.

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

www.ncte.org/

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

www.aera.net/

National Middle School Association (NMSA)

www.nmsa.org/

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)

www.nabse.org/

National Middle Level Science Teachers Association (NMLSTA)

www.nmlsta.org/

Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education (AACE)

www.aace.org/

National Council for the Social Sciences (NCSS)

www.ncss.org/

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)

www.nsta.org/

Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)

www.aace.org/site/

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

www.cec.sped.org/

The International Reading Association

www.reading.org/

Music Teachers National Association (MTNA)

www.mtna.org/index1.htm

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

www.naeyc.org/

National Education Association (NEA)

www.nea.org/index.html

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

www.nctm.org/

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

www.ascd.org/

Remember all those activities, strategies, and ideas that you know you do really well. Please share them with other teachers. There is so much greatness in every classroom! Let's talk it up and share.

MARKO
& ASSOCIATES

Jane Elizabeth Marko
Marko & Associates
7430 North Bell Road
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53217

414-688-5263
jane@markoandassociates.com

Dictionary Definitions Don't Cut It

See Jane Elizabeth present "Dictionary Definitions Don't Cut It" at the WSRA convention, "Crossroads of Literacy: Changes and Challenges." The presentation shares alternative strategies for teaching vocabulary. Jane presents February 8th starting at 2:45. Check your program for the room number.

To register for the WSRA convention go to www.wsra.org/. Jane's book, *Classroom Strategies for Dynamic Teachers* will be on sale in the Exhibit Hall at booth 38. Come and see us there! The convention is Feb. 7th - 9th.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Flip Flop Review

Looking for a new way to get your students to think about what they just read? Flip Flop Review is the strategy for you. Basically, you will pair up your students and ask them to talk about the reading. Here comes the tricky part. The first student talks for 60 seconds about the reading. Next, the second student talks for another 60 seconds about the reading, but cannot repeat anything the first student says. This is repeated but the time changes to 40 seconds for each. You repeat the 40 seconds and then change the time to 20 seconds each. Finally, you have each student talk for 30 seconds, but this time they summarize the reading and are allowed to repeat only the key points of the reading. The kids love it. They get to talk and have a great time trying to catch each other accidentally repeating. They really listen to each other. I always end this activity by having the students individually write a five sentence summary about the reading. You can find the complete write up on this strategy at www.markoandassociates.com Just click on excerpts from *Classroom Strategies for Dynamic Teachers*.

TRAINING

SMART BOARD Training

Jane does SMART Board training a few times a month. To sign up visit www.infocor.com/ and click on InfoCor Training Institute (ITI).

