

# Pioneering the Implementation of Brain-Research in the Classroom

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The **Highly Effective Teaching** (HET) **model** was created for the purpose of increasing human capacity, and is a compilation of my lifetime including things I have read, places I have gone, people I have met, knowledge I have discovered, and thoughts I have pondered. I am privileged to have had multiple opportunities to travel the world, meet great thinkers, read biographies of people long gone, had children of my own, taught other people's children, and had parents who expected all four of their daughters to contribute something of value in their communities.

## History of the Highly Effective Teaching Model

The **Highly Effective Teaching** Model (formerly known as ITI: Integrated Thematic Instruction) is an outgrowth of all these experiences plus years from working with students both in the classroom and the community. I taught 6th grade in a middle school, was a science teacher for 1200 K-6 students in a large elementary school, and then a teacher of the gifted and talented 2-8th grade. I was a national consultant for gifted and talented for eight years. After which, I established my own business and educational foundation.

It was my work with the gifted and talented (starting in the mid 1970's) which led me to more and deeper research into how we learn, how to orchestrate optimal learning, and how to be effective in how information is presented to students to promote the greatest achievement. For the next seven years, I was a national consultant for gifted and talented, reading all that I could find about the human brain as well as attending University seminars on the subject whenever possible. The culminating point for me was the book I found in an airport while traveling across the country, *Human Brain and Human Learning* by Leslie Hart, which was published in 1983. I somehow had missed his first book, *How the Brain Works*, which was published in 1975 and how I wish we could've had deep conversations with him at that time. It wasn't until 1984 that I personally met him — and the rest is history. Some of the major elements in the **Highly Effective Teaching** model were influenced by his remarkable synthesis. Hart was a voracious reader of primary research in the area of human brain and developed the Proster (Program Structure) Theory of learning patterns and programs. This profound gift of the theory of learning was that it encompassed everything necessary to consider for creating learning environments that were

meaningful, enriched, and free of threat, all based on the natural way a brain learns.

All this is to say the ***Highly Effective Teaching*** Model is solid, grounded in brain research and the science of learning. This means it can be replicated anywhere and, indeed, it has been actively and successfully implemented as an educational model since 1984. Since that time, two important aspects have been added:

The model is continuously updated to reflect the current research with practical application strategies, and

There is a team of ***Highly Effective Teaching*** coaches and presenters, some who have been with Susan Kovalik and Associates, Inc. for the past 18 years. Their ongoing work with teachers, administrators, and educational leaders throughout the United States is an inspiration and constant reminder of the effectiveness of this bodybrain-compatible model.

Highly *effective* teaching and learning is possible in any school environment, providing meaningful opportunities for students and a joyful renewal for teachers. A quarter-century of using brain research to enhance learning has provided thousands of teachers with solid guidelines toward impacting student performance and consistently raising achievement levels. The model has given administrators a solid base with specific goals for supporting and encouraging their teachers.

You may discover you have intuitively practiced many aspects of the ***Highly Effective Teaching*** model — and this material explains *why* it works.

I hope you create your own journey through the many books and variety of people you have known, so when you look back on your career you may celebrate your own wonderful opportunities and accomplishments.

Life is good, and *very* good.

Susan Kovalik