



Visual Understanding in Education

November 1, 2005

Dear Friends,

It has been ten years since Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen started VUE as a small nonprofit fueled by research and optimism. During this time, our VTS curriculum has become a more substantial player on the arts education stage. Your support has helped to keep VUE strong and stable, permitting us to focus on increasing access to VTS. We believe VTS has an even bigger role to play, and we ask you to help us make our goals real.

We believe all children can succeed, because we have seen it happen, in classrooms across the country. VTS (Visual Thinking Strategies) has existed in its current form – books and slides and posters for Kindergarten through fifth grade – since 2001. Since then, we have directly prepared hundreds of teachers to use VTS, and thousands more through museum and school staff who learned to train through us. Thriving VTS programs exist in Boston, New York, Miami, San Antonio, Minneapolis, San Francisco, and San Diego, among many other places.

VTS has the capacity to change the way this country thinks about education. VTS teachers, principals, and superintendents have told us that VTS has changed what they thought was possible in the classroom. When students see that their ideas have value, they *want* to participate. When teachers see their students engaged, thinking creatively and critically, they address other subjects using VTS methods.

VTS has stood outside the mainstream for long enough. The mainstream, in fact, is moving toward us, as anyone who has read recent state or federal guidelines for visual art or critical thinking will see. Funders and school district representatives are increasingly receptive to the ideas that underlie VTS. We are excited to report that sales of the curriculum continue to grow, and we conduct more VTS trainings each year.

We have a plan that will exponentially increase the number of VTS teachers and students, and we are writing to ask you, as you consider year-end gifts, to give to VUE, the 501(c)(3) organization that created VTS in 1995. Your gift - \$50, \$500, \$5,000, or \$50,000 – will be completely tax deductible, and will help us continue the work that has brought us here, and achieve ambitious goals for the next twelve months.

In order to greatly expand use of VTS, VUE has ambitious plans for 2006:

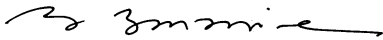
- Promoting recently produced CD-ROMs with VTS curriculum images for grades 3-5 (now available!)

- Partnering with the Indianapolis Museum of Art to plan, develop, and test a new interactive website for school and museum trainers, combining written materials with video and audio, to complement in-person training
- Streamlining the VTS training regimen so that “teacher-coordinators” based in schools can use the new website to quickly prepare large groups of peers for the VTS classroom
- Partnering with school districts in New York and Los Angeles, for large-scale programs to be funded by a combination of private and public dollars
- Testing a pilot middle school curriculum in several school districts, and publishing the middle school curriculum in 2006-2007.

In addition, VUE’s ongoing programs – working with museums and schools that wish to implement VTS, institutes, and trainer trainings will continue. We will continue to publish research findings. Our newly-energized board of directors is working with our engaged and committed staff to diversify funding, increase awareness of VTS, and build VUE’s capacity so that it may respond to new challenges quickly, creatively, and effectively.

Ten years on, VUE and VTS continue to grow stronger, and to occupy a more central place in the educational landscape. VTS has had a positive effect on every age and in every community that has adopted it. You, who know us best, are likely to understand why. Donations that you made in late 2004 and early 2005 have helped us to stabilize VUE’s operations, continue to grow our programs, and devise and partly realize a method to bring VTS to exponentially more classrooms. We hope that you will consider our goals for 2006 to be worthy of your continued financial support.

Best wishes for the New Year.



Philip Yenawine
Co-Director



Abigail Housen
Co-Director