

# What is "vesting"?

**vest-ing:** *To place (authority or rights) in the control of a person or group, especially to give someone an immediate right to present or future possession or enjoyment.*

Vesting can also be considered as the process of becoming intrinsically motivated to learn, to have a vested interest in the subject.

**Why is vesting critical to learning?** Eric Jensen states: "Vesting...How we feel is what's real. It's the link to what we think." It is often difficult to engage the learner's emotions in ways that can mobilize their resources towards a shared learning goal. Students are not naturally interested in learning. Vesting is the key to open that door. Without student vesting, learning can be very stressful and grinding for everyone from parents, to students to teachers. Without vesting, complex learning just does not occur.

**What can foster vesting?** Our brain can learn simple things during extreme conditions. For example, you can remember an early scene from the *Wizard of Oz*, but to understand the meaning of that scene one needs to have a vested interest in the theme. Complex learning requires a vested interest which often involves working memory, retrieval, critical thinking, and risk taking. Elements that encourage vesting include but are not limited to: relevant and meaningful content, moderate stress levels, positive and deductive physical learning environments, positive peer relationships, optimum student health, self assessment of personal assets, personal goal setting (choices are good), baby steps (starting small then build), teacher enthusiasm for the subject content, assignment choices vs. forced, positive teacher relationships, relevancy of curriculum, adequate challenges, positive emotional states, supportive feedback ( specific, prompt, and constructive), teacher interest in students, elicited curiosity, and finally: creating hope.

**The value of Hope.** Hope is very powerful. Hope mobilizes our resources. When we believe that success is possible, we try harder and are willing explore more options. With hope, we focus on results, not excuses. With hope, we work with, not against the teacher. Hope may be the single most essential ingredient! Hope is positive expectancy. Hope improves brain chemicals that increases the mood and persistence, which increases the results of anything we do. Even if all other factors are in place with teaching, if the student does not think you believe in him or her, you will lose ground. Many kids have had many experiences and are very familiar with negatives. They need real persistent hope. Hope shifts the paradigm from you teaching the student (didacticism) to the student learning on their own (inquiry). With hope, students are an engaged partner in the process of learning.

**What does hope sound like?** Remember feedback? We asked our son what he loved most about what his kindergarten teacher did for him. His immediate response: "When she writes 'WOW' on my papers". That is powerful evidence of hope via feedback! Other feedback can include: "That's awesome!" "You've got skills!" "I love how you did that! Where did you come up with that idea?" "I've seen kids like you before, you have a

gift and it is awesome!” or a pump up like: “Correct, you have not done well lately, but, remember that I’m on your side and I have some tools we can use to get you back up to speed!”

**Adapted from these Sources:**

Vesting... Its how we feel is what’s real. It’s the link to what we think. – Jensen, Eric (2003)

Vesting primes the brain for learning. –Adcock et.al. (2006)

Brain chemicals motivate behaviors. –Schultz, W. (2002)

Prediction of rewards drives behaviors. -Peterson, R.L. (2005)

Mental efforts manage our vesting and learning. –Krawczyk et. Al. (2007)

How vesting and affect influence cognition –Ashby et. Al. (1999)

Home environment influences vesting – Gottfried et. Al. (1998)