Brain-Powered Strategies
to Engage All Learners

Think and Inquire

Think and Write

Think and Move

Think and Organize
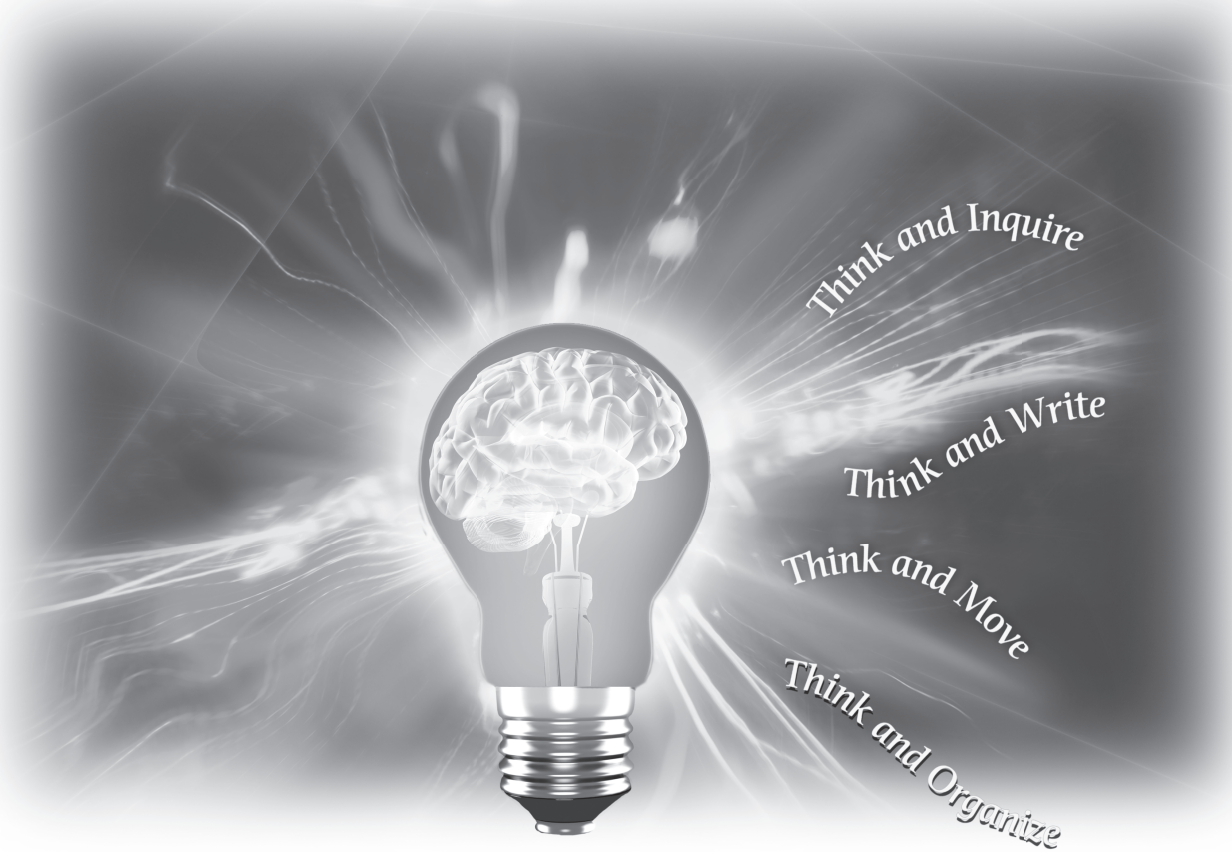
Author
LaVonna Roth, M.S.Ed.

Foreword
Eric Jensen

🐚 SHELL EDUCATION

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Movement is crucial to learning. We must move because the "sit-and-get" method is overused and not as effective as when we have the chance to increase our oxygen intake and shift the activity. Although there is no exact science as to the number of minutes that elapse before we should move or change direction, no more than 20 minutes is an adequate amount of time for learning to occur before we do something with what was learned (Schenck 2005). Our working memory can only hold so much information before it becomes fatigued or bored (Sousa 2006). Thus, implementing the suggested 20-minute time frame into teaching should help teachers to remember the importance of chunking material and allowing time for the brain to process material being learned.

We know what a web is on paper, but what is a Kinesthetic Word Web? It is a strategy that gets students up and moving with the content of the lessons. Picture a word web on paper. Now turn the outer ovals on the word web into students and imagine their arms touching the person's shoulder in the center oval. That is a Kinesthetic Word Web.

Strategy Insight

The Kinesthetic Word Web strategy is designed to take a paper-and-pencil activity and add movement and challenge to raise the level of engagement. As Wolfe and Brandt (1998) stated, "The brain likes a challenge!" It seeks patterns. Patterns are required during this strategy in order to be successful.

Teacher Notes

- Be sure every student has a card. Do not worry about every student fitting into a word web. If a student cannot be a part of a Kinesthetic Word Web because his or her word has already appeared in the web or because there was not an exact number of students for each set, they can explain where they would go and why.

- **Caution**: Some students do not like to be touched, so knowing students and their backgrounds is very important. As an alternative, they can each place a fist on a hip and connect elbow to elbow; they can extend a leg and touch foot to foot; or you can provide 15 inches of string to each student with the center student holding one end of all the strings.

Kinesthetic Word Webs
Strategy Overview (cont.)

Teacher Notes (cont.)

- Feel free to give some students a nonexample. The nonexamples may decide to stand outside a Kinesthetic Word Web for which they are a nonexample or stand apart from all of them if they do not see how they belong to any Kinesthetic Word Web.

- Due to students' own rationales, be aware that the Kinesthetic Word Webs may not form as originally designed at the synthesis level, yet they still work! This is because students may find an alternate connection or justify how they are a nonexample.

Kinesthetic Word Webs Lesson Framework
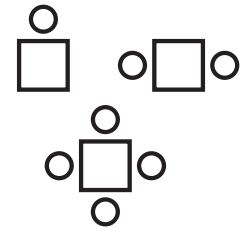
Strategy Overview

This strategy turns a web graphic organizer into an activity that incorporates movement. With this strategy, teachers provide students with content information on index cards and students create a Kinesthetic Word Web.

Materials

- index cards
- *Word Web* (page 61)

Procedures

1. Prior to the lesson, write the lesson's main topic on an index card. For example, in a lesson on weather, the word *weather* would be the main topic.

2. Choose two to five words or phrases related to the main topic and write one word or phrase on each index card. Create multiple sets of index cards so that each student will get one. In the example of weather, one of the following may be on each index card:

| icy | sunny | snowy | chilly | rainy |

Model

3. Provide a hook for the lesson by creating a way to get students excited about the lesson topic, such as accessing their background knowledge with a compelling question, making the topic relevant to them, or creating an air of mystery.

4. As a class, create a web graphic organizer about any topic that they are interested in and display the web so that it is visible for all students.

5. Provide three to five students with index cards, using content from the created web. Be sure one of the cards has the main topic (center oval) on it.

6. Instruct these students to model a Kinesthetic Word Web by circling around the student holding the main topic card. With a straight arm, have students place one hand on the shoulder of the student holding the main topic to show they are related.

Apply/Analyze

7. Distribute to each student one of the index cards created prior to the start of the lesson.

8. Instruct students to walk around the room looking for words related to the words they have and to the main topic. For example, if Student A has *sunny* and they find Student B with *snowy*, they connect together and continue to find more words.

Kinesthetic Word Webs
Lesson Framework (cont.)

Procedures (cont.)

Apply/Analyze (cont.)

9. Once a group believes they have found all of the words, have students form an outer circle and have the main-topic person stand in the middle. The outer circle of students places one hand on the shoulder of the student with the main topic, creating a Kinesthetic Word Web.

Evaluate

10. Repeat steps 7–9, but this time remove some of the main-topic index cards and some of the detail index cards, and replace them with Wild Cards (blank index cards). Ask students to find to which group they belong. Those with Wild Cards can join any group by writing a detail on their cards that places them with an appropriate web. Students with Wild Cards must be able to justify their answers. Have students share with each group how they decided where they belong and why.

11. Debrief with students by discussing questions, such as the following:

    - If the main topic was not on an index card, could you still create your own?

    - Did you discover any words that could appear in multiple webs?

✅ *Checkpoint*

Create

12. Divide students into small groups and have them complete their own *Word Web* (page 61) on a related topic from the lesson. Using index cards, instruct students to write each word or phrase from their web. After each group has completed its set of index cards, collect all of them and randomly redistribute them, providing one card to each student.

13. Have each student walk around the room looking for words related to the word that he or she has and to the main topic. Once a group of students believes they have found everyone, with no duplicates, have them form an outer circle and each place one hand on the shoulder of the student with the main topic, creating the Kinesthetic Word Web.

14. Debrief with students by asking questions, such as the following:

    - What other words could you add to the web?

    - What if we were to add more words to the details or related topics—what could those words be?

✅ *Checkpoint*

Name: _____

Word Web

Directions: Write a vocabulary word in the middle of the word web. Record other words or phrases related to that word in each outer ovals.

Main Topic