



See It. Say It. Do It! The Parent’s & Teacher’s Action Guide to Creating Successful Students & Confident Kids

Book by Dr. Lynn F. Hellerstein
HiClear Publishing, 2010
Reviewed by J. Mark Bade

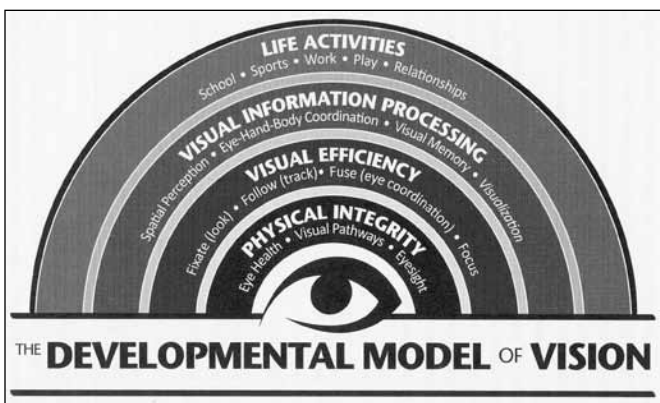
Dr. Lynn Hellerstein is a developmental optometrist, which she describes in her book as “an expanded area of optometric practice that uses a holistic approach in the treatment of vision and vision information processing problems”; developmental optometry incorporates vision therapy. In her practice, she helps clients who have learning-related vision problems, vision perception deficits, or a need to improve visual performance.

What this Book Is and Is Not

This book is not about “sight,” which Hellerstein says refers simply to visual acuity, where 20/20 is the standard. Hellerstein notes that many of the patients she treats may have passed a vision screening test and are presumed to be 20/20 — even the patients who admit, when questioned, to seeing double.

This book is also not strictly about vision, which Hellerstein says is “seeing, processing, and responding to visual information.” Even vision therapy, as such, takes up just four pages of an appendix.

This book is about *visualization*, which is incorporated into a developmental model of vision as shown in this illustration from Hellerstein’s book:



The model shows that visualization is a vital part of visual information processing (VIP to Hellerstein), which in turn is critical to the core set of life activities in the outer ring of the model. Visual information processing consists

of “understanding what we see, where things are in space, [the] integration of visual information with other senses, eye-hand-body coordination, visual memory, and visualization.”

Hellerstein has made activities a big part of this book, integrating them into every chapter. Her intent is for parents or educators to guide children through the activities. Hellerstein developed or adapted these activities to use in her practice to help her achieve success as she worked with clients who had difficulties in areas such as:

- Learning and processing
- Vision efficiency
- Completion of homework (even in gifted children) because of visual/motor problems
- Athletic performance
- Vision after a brain injury.

More broadly, Hellerstein also applies her visualization model (explained next in this review) to children who:

- Struggle in school
- Are less than enthusiastic about learning
- Stress out over tests
- Lack self-esteem
- Aren’t performing to potential
- Could use empowerment to develop their own learning strategies.

Four Parts to the Book

Hellerstein’s goal is to make sure her patients, and the readers of her book, are able to visualize well. The main topic of the first part of this book is visualization, “the ability to imagine, sense, become aware of, move, manipulate, and expand the pictures in your ‘mind’s eye’ and the feelings or senses in your body, thereby developing new perspectives and creativity.” It’s the type of visualization used in sports psychology.

Visualization plays a key role in another of Hellerstein’s models, one that gave the book its title. Visualize a goal. Declare that goal. Act on it. The result of those three steps is a transformation. Another way to characterize this model is VDAT, for *visualize, declare, act, and transform*. This model underlies everything in Hellerstein’s book and is introduced in the second part of the book.



See It. Say It. Do It! continued

In the third part of the book, Hellerstein applies the VDAT model to school readiness and school skills with activities to assess and develop skills such as motor sequencing and auditory sequencing. This part of the book also contains exercises for developing VIP skills, using such tools as colored, geometrically-shaped parquetry blocks, along with strategies and activities to help children read, spell, write, and do math. Part 3 also addresses school stressors such as homework and tests, along with ways to improve performance in sports and music.

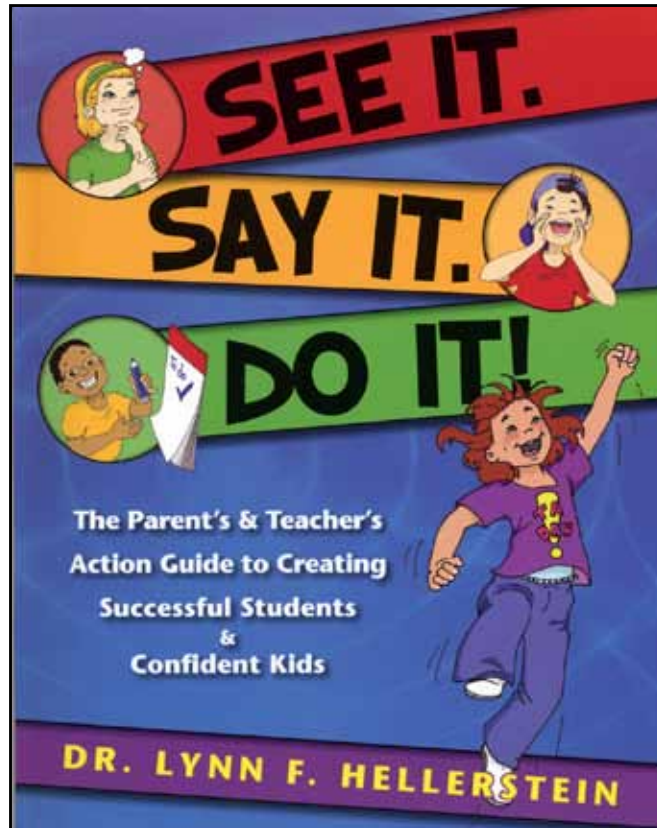
Here's an example of one of the many activities in Hellerstein's book. The goal of the activity is learning to spell words, and it shows the role that visualization plays. A parent or educator instructs a child to use colored markers to write a spelling word on an index card in big, colorful letters. Then the adult holds up the card for the child, asking the child to pretend that he/she has a camera and to take a picture of the word in the child's mind. Next, the adult asks the child to describe the picture — colors, size, texture, etc. Finally, the child "draws" the letters of the word in the air with a hand or wand or sword. The activity tells what to look for in the child's responses and explains what to do in case of difficulties.

Part 4 of the book deals mainly with building self-confidence and using the *See It. Say It. Do It!* model for personal growth.

Inspirations for the Book

The book draws on a variety of sources. Those who have read works by Linda Silverman, for example, will recognize familiar concepts in Hellerstein's discussion of learning styles. She incorporates belly breathing from yoga into activities for stress reduction. And she draws on baseball, movies such as *Field of Dreams*, and literature such as the Harry Potter series for examples and metaphors.

But most of all, Hellerstein draws on her own experience helping patients. The activities and strategies were, after all, developed for them. Throughout the book, Hellerstein recounts feedback she's received from patients about their successes in using the various techniques



described in her work. And on the back cover of the book comes testimony from two professionals known for their work with twice-exceptional children, Drs. Brock and Fernette Eide, who call the book "a wonderfully practical look at learning how to learn."

Netting It Out

If you raise or teach a young gifted or 2e child who faces certain potential blocks or challenges in learning, Hellerstein's book *See It. Say It. Do It!* should be useful in working with that child to address his or her challenges. Those challenges might relate to visual processing, but they might also be along the lines of dealing with stress, building confidence, or learning how to achieve overall at school. ☐