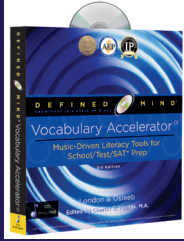


Golden Lamp Award Winner



Company Name
Defined Mind

Product Mission
Vocabulary Accelerator builds literacy and comprehension skills by combining vocabulary lessons with music.

Market
Grades 9-12

Publication Year
2005

Product Website
www.defmind.com

Key to Success

The development team wanted to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, while also maintaining a high standard of musical quality. They hired professional musicians from New York City, who perform in different genres, to write the songs. The musicians worked with the team to make sure the word usage was correct and would be suitable for the lessons. In addition to having superior music that caters to the diverse of tastes of the audience, the musical variety provides another bonus: It helps the CD avoid monotony.

Category: Books

Turning Vocabulary on its Ear

Vocabulary is the foundation upon which all communication skills are built. However, it is also often one of the most difficult subjects in which to hold students' attention. Recognizing and addressing this problem was the goal of Keith London, Publisher of Defined Mind, who felt there was a lack of effective ways to teach the subject. London was looking for a new method that would excite kids and make them active participants in learning. The result is *Vocabulary Accelerator*, which combines SAT-level vocabulary words with music to teach vocabulary, literacy, and comprehension.

"Kids can't remember lists of words, but they can remember songs and jingles," said London. "We learn many basic skills through song like the ABCs. I thought, why can't music encompass greater academic content?"

But first, Defined Mind had to secure funding. The development team researched studies on music and retention to establish a statistical base for pursuing their idea. They wanted to be able to show investors that their product was based on a sound theory—music provides multiple cues for recall—and that *Vocabulary Accelerator* would actually cater to the brain's physiology. Precedents were found in papers on cognition and mnemonics, which are still prominently positioned on Defined Mind's website so that parents, students, and educators will understand why the product works.

The next challenge was to make sure that the methodology engaged the students in the learning process. Defined Mind's philosophy is, "Low Stress Breeds Success." It was imperative that the program encompasses that mission.

For example, the instructions stress that being right isn't as important as learning why another answer is correct. All of the answers are in the book, and the students are encouraged to look them up, understand where they come from, and try again. A student is never simply just wrong.

Most important, each song has six lessons in the accompanying book, including a listening exercise, synonyms, and a crossword puzzle, that use the words in new a context. With multiple opportunities to learn, the students also have multiple opportunities for success.

"*Vocabulary Accelerator* encourages students of all capabilities to feel successful," said London. "In many programs, students see something once and move on, but our product gives them a chance to accumulate knowledge while building their self-esteem."

Judges' Comment: This product brings the outside world into the classroom in an engaging way and puts the "fun" in the fundamentals of vocabulary.