## Differentiation made Easy: Low-prep Potpourri

with Lisa Van Gemert

### A. Anchoring Activities (do when done, beginning of day, stuck & waiting for help)
- DEAR time
- journal/learning log
- math problem of day (on board; jar of something to guess)

### Altered Books


### D. Day to be the Teacher: have a student start the class
- bring in quote and run discussion
- recap yesterday’s work
- introduce new vocabulary
- work a homework problem

### E. Ears: listening stations (music, podcasts, books on tape; [bit.ly/itunesued](https://bit.ly/itunesued); dual language books)

### F. Flexible grouping (flow; jigsaw it [give different pieces to different groups]; collaborative; circle; four corners)

### G. Games ([mindware.com](http://mindware.com); Equate; Boggle; Upwords; 20 questions; [bit.ly/mgwinnners](https://bit.ly/mgwinnners); [mensaforkids.org](http://mensaforkids.org)), really good puzzles (try Cobble Hill Puzzles – [cobblehillpuzzles.com](http://cobblehillpuzzles.com)).

| **K.** | Kagan chips: [kaganonline.com](http://kaganonline.com) |
| **L.** | Library – read and respond: give list of books (use list at [mensaforkids.org](http://mensaforkids.org) for a guide by grade) Have them demonstrate understanding with one of these ideas:  
- **3-Part Harmony written summary:** What happens in the beginning/middle/end? What is the most critical moment? How else could the author have ended the story?  
- book moment with you  
- book box – various items that represent key objects in the story (not a diorama) – give written or oral explanations  
- “pitch it” – pitch the book to a Hollywood producer for a movie (written or oral)  
- annotate a section of the text  
- **Sociograms.** Students create a visual representation of the relationships among characters. The central character in a work is placed at the center of a page and all the other characters are placed around him/her; spatial relationships, size, shape, color, etc. are all used to represent their relationship to one another. (See end for example.) |
| **M.** | Magazines: [bestdealmagazines.com](http://bestdealmagazines.com)  
*Smithsonian, National Geographic, sports (ESPN, Sports Illustrated for Kids)*  
| **O.** | One-minute Master: write for one minute most significant (useful, meaningful, awful, disturbing, effective, helpful) thing they learned. Trade with a partner and respond (agree/disagree/build). |
| **P.** | Place (a.k.a. centers).  
Interest center/subject center. Activities and resources. Doesn’t have to be labor intensive. Use library to cycle stuff.  
Example:  
Alphabet Center (after semi-colon is for higher-level learners)  
- magnetic letters to put letters in ABC order/sort by capital and lowercase; use magnetic letters to spell words and then write them  
- use pasta letters to put letters in ABC order; spell words  
- string alphabet beads in ABC order; spell words |
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|   | • ladle out letters from a pot of “alphabet soup” and write or draw pictures to illustrate words that begin with those letters; write words beginning with those letters and then put in alpha order
|   | • high level only: create and write alphabetical sentences in which the words are in alpha order (Cats do easy feats.)

Have an assortment of books in the center

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|   | word/picture books alphabet books with themes
|   | riddle books alphabet books in other languages

**Q.** Questions – multiple levels of questions

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|   | • make cue cards for yourself (or posters) with Bloom’s/Anderson’s/Costa’s or other questioning level stems
|   | • laminate cards for kids (can put on metal rings; color code by level)

**R.** RSQC2

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|   | • In two minutes, students **recall** and list in rank order the most important ideas from a previous day’s class
|   | • In two more minutes, they **summarize** those points in a single sentence
|   | • Next, they write one major question they want answered
|   | • After that, they make a **comment** on what they’ve learned
|   | • Lastly, they identify a thread or theme to **connect** this material to the course’s major goal

**S.** Share – trade with other teachers, rotating books, magazines, and other materials to keep them fresh

**Summarizing - Triad Summarizing (see below)**

**T.** Tic-tac-toe (or shapes (triangle, circle, square) assignment choices

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|   | • blackout
|   | • see below for examples

**TED** [ted.com](http://ted.com) (try TED Connections at [mensaforkids.org](http://mensaforkids.org))

**V.** Vocabulary:

**FRAYER MODEL**

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|   | Definition (in own words) Draw a picture
|   | Examples (from own life) Non-examples (from own life)

**USING SENTENCE STEMS TO DESCRIBE A WORD**

**How Can I Describe This Word?**

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|   | It’s kind of like a _________________________________.
|   | It looks like a _________________________________.
|   | It’s when you _________________________________.
|   | It’s where you go to _________________________________.
| W.                      | Writer’s Antithesis:  
|                        | Students take a passage from the text they are reading and rewrite the passage reversing one or more of the writer’s choices: the tone, characterization, writer’s voice, point of view, setting, etc. |
| Wordle: [wordle.net](http://wordle.net)  
| Y.                      | You own the word:  
|                        | • individualized spelling list  
|                        | • word art  
|                        | • illustrated dictionary  
|                        | • acrostic poems |

**Sociogram Directions:**
The sociogram is designed to get students thinking about the relationships among the characters of a story. (Can be used for elements of a system as well.) To do:

- Place the central character(s) at the center of the diagram
- Let the physical distance between characters reflect the perceived psychological distance between the characters
- Let the size/shape/symbol of a character metaphorically represent each personality, importance, one’s power or lack of, etc.
- Show the direction of a relationship by an arrow, line, and its nature by a brief label
- Represent substantiated relationships with a solid line and inferred relationships by a broken line.
- Circle active characters with a solid line; circle significantly absent characters with a broken line.
- Place the characters that support the main character on one side of a dividing line, and antagonistic characters on the other side.
- Illustrate the tone and or theme of a piece by the use of color or visual symbols.
- Explore creative ways to represent a character’s motivation.
Sociogram Examples
Triad Summarizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUND</th>
<th>#1</th>
<th>#2</th>
<th>#3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
<td>MAIN IDEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>SIGNIFICANT LINE</td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
<td>ASK QUESTION RELATED TO TEXT</td>
<td>READ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
<td>COMMENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>IMPORTANT POINT</td>
<td>READ</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>SUMMARIZE</td>
<td>MOST INTERESTING POINT</td>
<td>READ</td>
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Tic-Tac-Toe

Directions: Choose activities in a tic-tac-toe design. When you have completed the activities in a row, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally – you may decide to be finished. You may also decide to keep going and complete more activities.

I choose activities # __________, # __________, # __________, # __________

Do you have ideas for alternate activities you’d like to do instead? Talk them over with your teacher.

I prefer to do the following alternate activities:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Spelling Tic-Tac-Toe
Name __________________________ Date ____________

- Choose three assignments to complete a tic-tac-toe.
- All three assignments must be finished and turned in by _________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story words-</th>
<th>What's missing-</th>
<th>Ransom words-</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write a short story using all of your spelling words.</td>
<td>Find a partner to write each spelling word on a piece of paper. When doing so, your partner must leave out a letter in each word. You then have ten seconds to catch each mistake.</td>
<td>Spell out your spelling words by cutting out letters from a newspaper or magazine.</td>
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<tr>
<td>*The story must have a plot and characters. *Underline the spelling words used in the story.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create an Activity-</th>
<th>BCA order-</th>
<th>Silly sentences-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling creative? Make up your own spelling activity.</td>
<td>Write your spelling words in reverse alphabetical order (Z-A).</td>
<td>Use all your spelling words in ten funny sentences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture words-</th>
<th>Pyramid words-</th>
<th>Other handed-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Draw a picture using each of your spelling words.</td>
<td>Write your spelling words adding or subtracting one letter at a time. The result will be a pyramid shape for each word.</td>
<td>If you are right-handed, write a list of your spelling words using your left hand, or vice versa.</td>
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</tbody>
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Activities for Tic-Tac-Toe
- add chapter to a book
- book jackets
- booklets
- conversations
- data table
- definitions
- demonstrations
- designs
- detective story
- dialogues
- dialogues
- diary entries
- dictionaries
- dioramas or displays
- directions
- bumper stickers
- captions
- cartoon or comic
- case study
- chart or collage
- cereal boxes
- children's book
- commentaries
- drama scripts
- drawings or illustrations
- editorials or essays
- event chains
- experiments
- explanations
- fables or fairy tales
- fact sheets or books
- family tree
- flag
- flow chart
- folk tales
- friendly letter
- games / puzzles
- game boards
- graffiti
- graph
- group project
- guidebooks
- historical (I was there)
- idea webs
- interviews
- inventions
- invitations
- jokes
- journals
- jump rope jingles
- labels
- legends
- letters
- lexicons
- lies
- lists
- lyrics
- magazine page
- manuals
- maps
- math problems
- memoirs
- memories
- menus
- models
- movie scripts
- murals
- museum projects
- music video
- musical instrument
- mysteries
- myths
- newscasts
- newspaper articles
- obituaries
- opinions
- oral presentations
- oral reports & visuals
- pamphlets
- peer editing
- petition
- persuasive writing
- photo album
- plays
- poems
- position statements
- postcards
- poster
- proposals
- puppet shows
- reader’s theatre
- reading journal
- recipe
- reports
- requests
- research report
- responses to literature
- resumes
- retellings
- reviews of books
- rules of etiquette
- scale models
- scenery for play
- science display
- scrapbook
- sculpture
- shadow box
- short story
- signs or sketches
- skits
- songs
- speeches
- story problem
- summaries
- survey
- telegrams
- television scripts
- terrarium
- Thinking Map
- time capsule
- timeline
- tribute
- Venn diagram
- videotape
- weather map
- writing fiction
- writing nonfiction
- wishes
- written debates