

Differentiation made Easy: Low-prep Potpourri

with Lisa Van Gemert

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A.	Anchoring Activities (do when done, beginning of day, stuck & waiting for help) • DEAR time • journal/learning log • vocab development (bit.ly/superkidsvocab; wordcentral.com/home.html; merriam-webster.com/word-of-the-day) • math problem of day (on board; jar of something to guess) • brain teasers (bit.ly/classbraintease)
	Altered Books • bit.ly/altbookhow • bit.ly/altbookhow2 • bit.ly/altbookhow3
B.	Bookmarks - bookmarks-elem or bit.ly/bookmarks-ms
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; dual language books)
F.	Flexible grouping (flow; jigsaw it [give different pieces to different groups]; collaborative; circle; four corners)
G.	Games (mindware.com; Equate; Boggle; Upwords; 20 questions; bit.ly/mgwinners; mensaforkids.org); really good puzzles (try Cobble Hill Puzzles - cobblehillpuzzles.com).
I.	Independent Study Project (kid tested, teacher approved) bit.ly/iim-method

	Introduce: Spend time introducing students to the textbook or material. Create a scavenger hunt, a “tour”, or simply flip randomly through it, commenting, reflecting, and using stories to connect to it.
K.	Kagan chips: kaganonline.com
L.	Library – read and respond; give list of books (use list at 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 <i>Smithsonian, National Geographic, sports (ESPN, Sports Illustrated for Kids)</i> Find list of magazines for kids at: bit.ly/maglist
	Made to Stick: Use SUCCEs model to make instruction “sticky” - heathbrothers.com/resources
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

	• 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 <table> <tr> <td>word/picture books</td><td>alphabet books with themes</td></tr> <tr> <td>riddle books</td><td>alphabet books in other languages</td></tr> </table>	word/picture books	alphabet books with themes	riddle books	alphabet books in other languages		
word/picture books	alphabet books with themes						
riddle books	alphabet books in other languages						
Q.	Questions – multiple levels of questions • 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) • essential questions (bit.ly/esquest)						
R.	RSQC2 • 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 • blackout • see below for examples						
	TED ted.com (try TED Connections at mensaforkids.org)						
V.	Vocabulary: <table> <tr> <td>FRAYER MODEL</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>Definition (in own words)</td><td>Draw a picture</td></tr> <tr> <td>Examples (from own life)</td><td>Non-examples (from own life)</td></tr> </table> USING SENTENCE STEMS TO DESCRIBE A WORD How Can I Describe This Word? It’s kind of like a _____. It looks like a _____. It’s when you _____. It’s where you go to _____.	FRAYER MODEL		Definition (in own words)	Draw a picture	Examples (from own life)	Non-examples (from own life)
FRAYER MODEL							
Definition (in own words)	Draw a picture						
Examples (from own life)	Non-examples (from own life)						

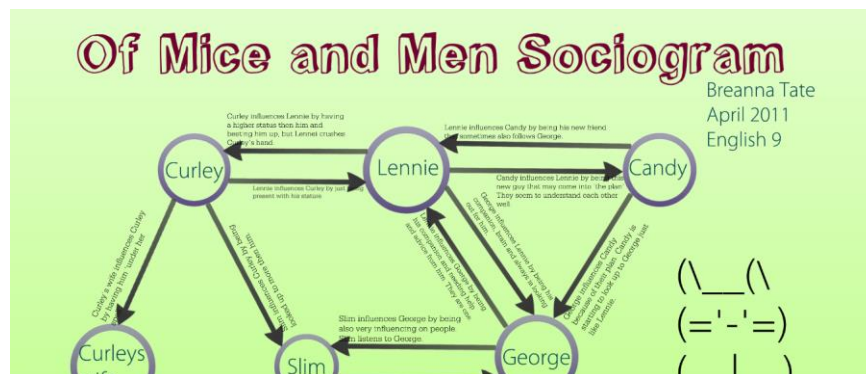
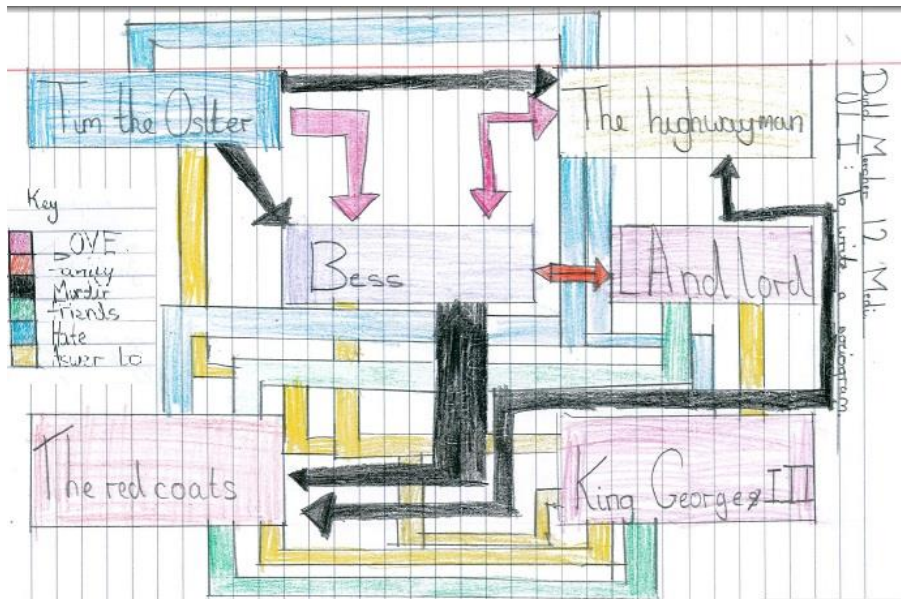
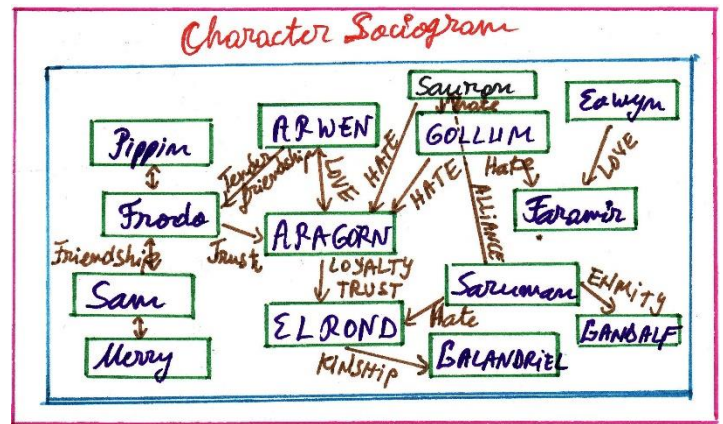
	It smells like _____. You use it when you _____. DEFINITION WORD CHART Word: Things I know about the word: General category this word might belong in: Examples or other related words: My definition:
W.	Writer's Antithesis: Students take a passage from the text they are reading and rewrite the passage reversing one or more of the writer's choices: the tone, characterization, writer's voice, point of view, setting, etc.
	Wordle: wordle.net ideas for using in class: bit.ly/wordcloudsinclass
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

ROUND	#1	#2	#3
A	READ	SUMMARIZE	MAIN IDEA
B	SIGNIFICANT LINE	READ	SUMMARIZE
C	SUMMARIZE	ASK QUESTION RELATED TO TEXT	READ
D	READ	SUMMARIZE	COMMENT
E	IMPORTANT POINT	READ	SUMMARIZE
F	SUMMARIZE	MOST INTERESTING POINT	READ

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 _____.

Story words- Write a short story using all of your spelling words. *The story must have a plot and characters. *Underline the spelling words used in the story.	What's missing- 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.	Ransom words- Spell out your spelling words by cutting out letters from a newspaper or magazine.
Create an Activity- Feeling creative? Make up your own spelling activity.	BCA order- Write your spelling words in reverse alphabetical order (Z-A).	Silly sentences- Use all your spelling words in ten funny sentences.
Picture words- Draw a picture using each of your spelling words.	Pyramid words- Write your spelling words adding or subtracting one letter at a time. The result will be a pyramid shape for each word.	Other handed- If you are right-handed, write a list of your spelling words using your left hand, or vice versa.

Activities for Tic-Tac-Toe

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| ○ add chapter to a book | ○ book jackets | ○ conversations |
| ○ advertisements | ○ booklets | ○ data table |
| ○ anecdotes | ○ bulletin board | ○ definitions |
| ○ announcements | ○ bumper stickers | ○ demonstrations |
| ○ audiotape | ○ captions | ○ designs |
| ○ autobiographies | ○ cartoon or comic | ○ detective story |
| ○ awards | ○ case study | ○ dialogues |
| ○ ballad | ○ chart or collage | ○ diary entries |
| ○ billboards | ○ cereal boxes | ○ dictionaries |
| ○ brochures | ○ children's book | ○ dioramas or displays |
| | ○ commentaries | ○ directions |

- 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