



Building a Teacher's Tool Box
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What do Black Jack, Scat, Rummy, and Solitaire have in common? They are all card games that my sons have learned to play over the summer! Now, don't go thinking that I am raising card sharks! In the online multiple intelligence and differentiated instruction course that I took over the summer, one of the stressors that was being made is that the activities that we do in class just can't be done "just for fun"~there needs to be a measurable outcome for the activity.

So, because it was summer, and I did not want to experience "mushy brain" either by myself or my boys, we learned how to play those games to reinforce math skills, sequencing, patterning, and number order. We have been passing the time in the morning and in the evening hours with these math games. I tell you, what a great way to continue to do math over the summer! And the best thing is, they don't even know that they are doing math! My sons are entering their third day of school, and math review facts have been a breeze so far! Thank you, Black Jack, Scat, Rummy and Solitaire! Might you be tempted to try it out in a math class? If so, let me know how it goes. I will set up a topic space in my blog and if you give it a try, please post it there. My address to my blog is:
<http://nhldnews.wordpress.com>

Now my older son is telling me that I have to teach him poker! I am not the person for that! I only know the basics, but maybe if I can learn the rules, I will see a math purpose in poker too! I have found though, a purpose for poker chips for class room management and also for beginning readers, so why not math?

For the idea of classroom management and poker chips, you give out a certain number of poker chips to each student. Each student needs to use "x" amount of poker chips during class discussion. Once the chips are gone, the student can no longer participate. You may have to finesse the

explanation to the students since some will use them all up in the first 5 minutes of class and then “tune out”, and some may hold out until the end. Breaking tasks into segments might be one way to utilize the poker chips. Many newsletters back I had talked about the poker chip idea. Did anyone use it? If so, go out to my blog and let me know what you did and how it went. If you have not done so yet, and this idea intrigues you, again, please give it a try and head out to my blog and post.

In regards to beginning reading and poker chips, I have one color represent consonants and one color represent vowels. I then say a word, such as “cat” and have them visually represent the sounds that they hear in the word. This works well to reinforce the sound-symbol correspondence of letters and helps to increase their spelling skills in the process.

In this newsletter, I hope to provide for you some ideas for the start of school. On page ,you will find a writing tip, and on page , you will find a reading comprehension tip.

Now that school has resumed and there is a much more formal routine at the Letendre household, although I am not sure that having fun, discovering, swimming and camping is not a routine that I would love to have more of, newsletters will be coming out much more regularly. I had a difficult time sitting down in front of the computer and completing this task this summer. There was always a more enticing offer from my sons!

My address to my blog is: <http://nhldnews.wordpress.com>
Blogging has been quiet this summer, and rightfully so. No one should be “stuck” with the computer during the summer. I am glad for you if you have been able to enjoy the wonderful summer. There is plenty of time for blogging once the weather cools off and the nights come quicker! If you would like to try out the blog, let me know what you did this summer. This will be an easy way for you to get into the blog and see that it is manageable and worthwhile.

As always, if you are not comfortable with going out to my blog, please email me and let me know what you did this summer. I would love to hear from you. I will get back to you via email, and with your permission I will post what you said to me.

You can also access my blog from the Adult Education website, which is: www.nhadulted.org

I wish all of you a wonderful start to the year and I hope that many of you can take the time to participate in the blog. It is a wonderful way to share ideas and to get to know each other.

As always, if you have an idea that you would like to share with the readers of this newsletter, please pass it along to me. I will incorporate it into the next newsletter and I will give you credit for the idea.

I hope to make the newsletter more of an exchange of ideas between you, the readers, and myself. We all have so much to share with one another, and this is just one forum to do so.

Enjoy the rest of summer and rest up for the upcoming start of the school year!

Writing Acitivity Biopoem

A biopoem is a type of poem in which the subject is the writer of the poem. The poem will follow the format below.

This is a great start of the year activity in which students get to review their writing skills, but also share something about themselves in a non-threatening way.

This ideas was taken from: **6 Ways to Teach the 6 Traits of Writing**. Hollas, Betty, Crystal Spring Books, 2006.

Line Number	Description	Example
1	First name of the author	Paul
2	Four adjectives to describe the author	Athletic, brave, considerate, gentle
3	Relatives of the author (list 3-4)	Cousin Rachel, brother Brad, Aunt Martha
4	Lover of...(list 3-4 items or people)	Lover of pizza, baseball, ice cream, movies
5	Who feels (list 3-4 emotions)	Excited, happy, confident
6	Who needs (list 3-4 items)	Friends, family, TV, sports
7	Who fears (list 3-4 items)	Snakes, striking out, oversleeping
8	Who gives (list 3-4 items)	More than 100%, time to friends, volunteers for the SPCA
9	Who would like to see (list 3-4 items)	Fenway Park, world peace, female president
10	Resident of	NH
11	Last name of the author	Marsh

Reading Comprehension Strategy

Talk with F.R.E.D

This strategy allows a whole group to participate in discussion. F.R.E.D stands for:

- F:** facts
- R:** reflection
- E:** evaluation
- D:** decisions

To utilize this strategy, you will have to use the questions listed within the explanation.

Questions must be open ended to engage the class in higher order thinking skills.

At each step of questioning, you should spend 3-4 minutes discussing.

Ask students to elaborate on their answers by giving some specific examples.

This strategy can be used with large or small groups.

Facts

- What scenes or images do you remember?
- What bits of conversations do you remember?
- What facts do you remember?
- What other things did you observe?
- What facts do you know about _____?

Reflections

- What was your first response to the scenes, etc?
- Were you excited? Curious? Nervous?
- How did you feel when you watched the video or read the text?

Evaluation

- What were the most significant events?
- Was this book or video important to you? Why or why not?
- What was your greatest insight or what was the biggest thing you learned?
- What was the most interesting part for you? Why?

Decisions

- What would you say about this text or video to someone who's not here?
- What decisions would you make now that you've read this text or watched this video?
- Would you recommend this to another student? Why or why not?