

# The Crystal Clarion

## Our PETS™ Newsletter

Issue 1

Editor-in-Chief  
Yolanda the Yarnspinner

Fall 2004



### From the Editor's Desk

Greetings, everyone!

After months of talk, this is it!! Welcome to our premier issue of the PETS™ newsletter. All of us here in Crystal Pond Woods are very, very excited about sharing our ideas through this new forum.

As many of you know, the PETS™ (or *Primary Education Thinking Skills*) curriculum introduces elementary students to those higher level problem-solving strategies used in convergent, divergent, visual, and evaluative thinking. In the years since Dudley, Sybil, Max, Isabel, Jordan, and I first developed this program, we know that many teachers across the country have not only tweaked our original ideas (improving them immeasurably, we're sure), but have also created wonderful, new activities. And our inquiring minds want these ideas, too!!!

So we decided to start a quarterly newsletter. We're inviting teachers around the world to share their ideas with the rest of us. Wouldn't that be the best? Then, in each issue, we'll spotlight one or two of these ideas. We're also planning to include a question and answer column: you ask and we'll see who has an answer!

Sheba, Sammy, and Pras at Pieces of Learning agree with us that this is such a great idea that anyone whose ideas are **In the Spotlight** will receive a **\$20 POL gift certificate**. You *know* it doesn't get any better than that!



### Clarion Contributors

Fall 2004



#### Judy Leddy

Carroll ISD  
Southlake, TX

#### Dodie Merritt

Genoa-Kingston Schools, IL  
POL Consultant

#### Beverly Pryor

Roberts School  
Bay City, TX

#### Deb Slothower

Riverdale Elementary School  
Port Byron, IL

#### Sandy Wyatt

Prairie Hill Elementary School  
South Beloit, IL

### Spotlight YOUR Ideas

You can e-mail your PETS™ enhancements to me at:

**yarnspinnr@hotmail.com**

or snail mail them to me at this address:

**The Crystal Clarion**  
c/o Dodie Merritt  
17618 State Route 72  
Genoa, IL 60135

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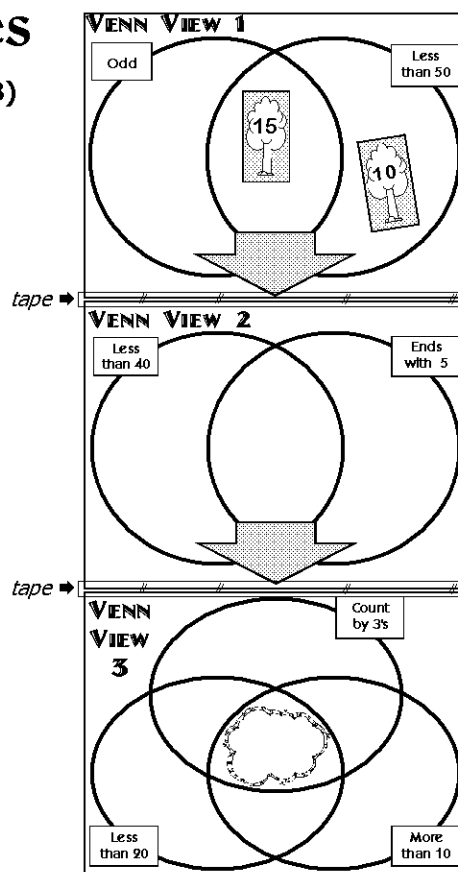
## Dudley's Dog Bones

(From *PETS™ the Red Book* — p. 48)

Halfway through my first small group session with this activity, watching students enthusiastically cutting, pasting, and losing more little pieces of paper than I ever want to see again, I knew I needed a new approach. The result has been laminated game boards with movable pieces. Each view is a laminated 8.5" x 11" piece of cardstock. The three views are then taped together so you can fold up the board for storage. Store the tree cards in an envelope taped to the back of one of the boards. If you have several game boards, run off each set of tree cards on a different color of paper.

As a result, management of this activity is infinitely easier. There's also much more discussion among the students and the "fear factor" of pasting some animal in the wrong place is reduced tremendously. This, of course, opens up channels for more risk-taking and discussion. What a difference!!

Contributed by Dodie Merritt



I do these Venn activities as a whiteboard activity. I enlarged the Venn categories, laminated them, and put magnets on the back. I draw the Venn loops on the board and place the categories in their proper places. I find that this is a great deal more user-friendly for first graders, as they ALL enjoy coming to the board AND they can easily move their answers if they think they want to change them from where they put them originally.

When we're done, I give each student the Dudley card with "Ask me what I did in Thinking Skills today!" while we review what we actually did. I help them verbalize what we accomplished so they can share it at home.

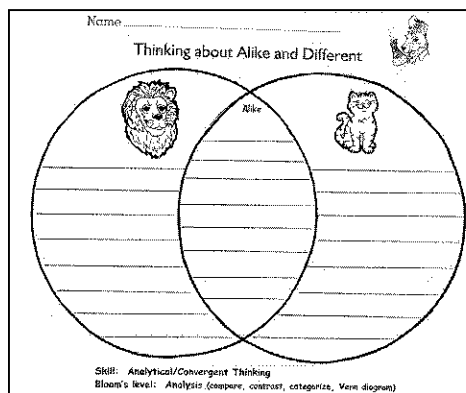
Contributed by Sandy Wyatt

## Friendly Clues

Use clip art pictures of each of the animals in *Friendly Clues* to make picture cards that the students can move around on the Venn diagrams until they find the solution.

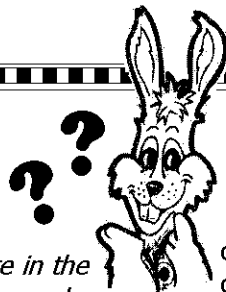
## Thinking about Alike and Different

These make great Venn diagrams!



Contributed by Beverly Pryor

## Inquiring Minds ? ? ?



Dear Yolanda,

*ALL my students want to participate in the small group pull-out sessions and are sad when they're never "the most ready at small group selection time for more challenging activities of the same kind." Is there some way to soften this blow to their self-esteem?*

*Sincerely, Margo R.*

Deb Slothower writes that each semester after three units are completed, she schedules another week of small groups for those students who never "make the cut."

*I feel they still need the pullout time, as they do not realize that this is a "gifted identification tool." They just love the work and the friends ... The "spare" group gets the spiel that they are last because it is the hardest session. They have to think like all 3 friends.*

She uses Rotation Dominoes from *PETS™ 2* (p. 136) with her "spare" fall semester second graders and emphasizes the analyzing aspect. With her spring semester "spare" first graders, she reads *The Warlord's Puzzle* by Virginia Pilegard that tells the story of an artist who dropped a tile that broke into 7 pieces (a tangram). Visual puzzle solving is this group's focus.

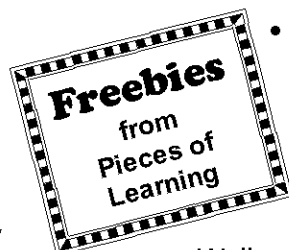


Send in YOUR questions and let's see how other *PETS™* users have resolved your predicament!



What would YOU suggest to Donna R. who wrote:

"Is there any movement on a sharing of *PETS™* adaptations in various learning communities: I love the program but the language is a little problematic when working with underserved Hispanic children. Any [ideas] for me?"



## From the Trenches

*PETS™ 3* is my curriculum for our 4th grade pull-out. I love the way the Evaluative section has the criteria grids that feed right into my Future Problem Solving Program for 5-8th graders.

Contributed by Deb Slothower

When we are ready to screen children for the GT program, I have them learn the rules such as "no talking" or "trying your best on the hard puzzles" during "Sybil's Secret Puzzles" (which is actually whatever ability test we are administering). I made markers for the test booklets with a picture of Sybil with her finger up making the "Shhh" sound. I give certificates to the children when they are done testing and then they are official members of "Sybil's Secret Puzzle Club." When the kindergarteners see me in the hall, they make the special sign (the Shhh sign) and that tells me that they are in the SSP Club. It also keeps them quiet in the halls!

Contributed by Judy Leddy

## Now ... to sum it all up ...

YOU can be a part of all this fun simply by ...

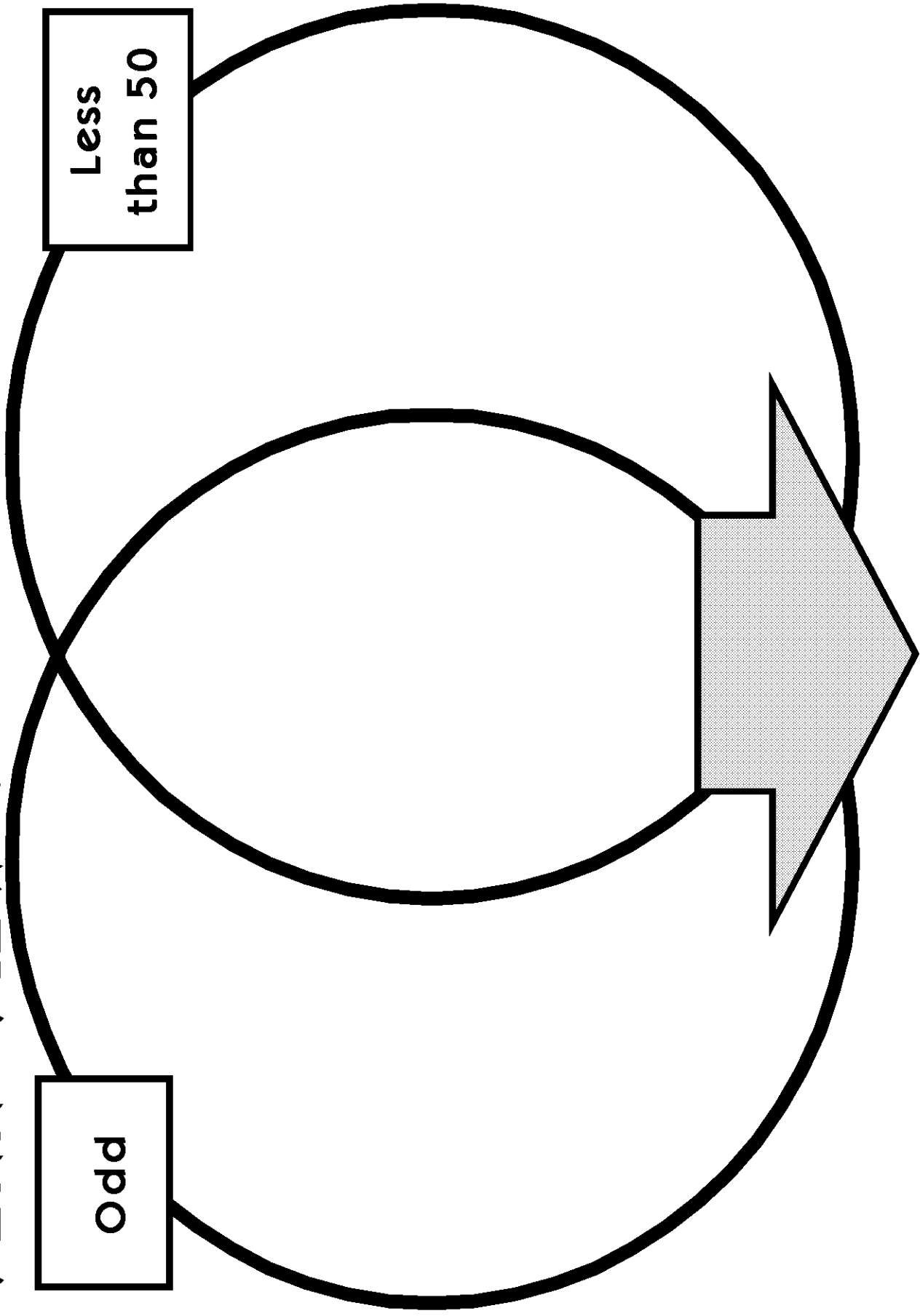
- using *PETS™* in your classroom
- reading this newsletter
- giving us feedback:
  - Is this the format that you wanted?
  - Should there be more full lessons or brief bytes?
  - Sending us your email address if you want to be notified directly when each new *Clarion* issue is posted on the POL website.
- sharing your ideas!!! To recognize your support of colleagues-in-need:
  - POL is offering a **free literature guide of your choice** (by N. Polette) to anyone whose ideas are used in **Brief Bytes**.
  - POL is offering a **\$20 gift certificate** for ideas used **In the Spotlight**.

Well ... what are you waiting for ... ???

# VENN VIEW 1

Odd

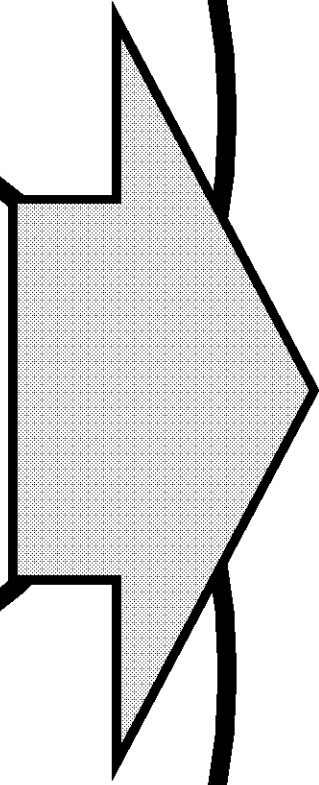
Less than 50



# VENN VIEW 2

Less than 40

Ends with 5



# VENN VIEW 3

