

The Crystal Clarion

Our PETS™ Newsletter

Issue 9

Editor-in-Chief

Yolanda the Yarnspinner

Summer 2007



From the Editor's Desk

*It's summertime!
And while for many of
us that means fun, fun,
fun in the sun, it's also that time of
the year for reflecting on what worked
in our classrooms last year, what
didn't, and what kinds of improvements
we want to make in our curricula for
next year.*

*As many of you go through this
annual cleansing and restructuring, I'm
hoping that you'll keep an eye out for
those additions to your PETS programs
that you've tried and have proven true
because I REALLY need some more
ideas for this newsletter! I've received
some great feedback from teachers
around the country saying that they
love this way of sharing ideas ... but
my teacher contribution files are
getting pathetically thin, I'm afraid.
Don't be shy — please try — reach for
the sky — send a piece of your pie!*



YOUR IDEAS ARE WANTED!!

Isabel's Magic Powder

*Don't miss this — you're gonna LOVE this idea
from Vicki Phelps in IL:*

I recently worked with a group of first graders on the first whole class lesson of divergent thinking. I have a very limited amount of time with each class, and it is important to me that each student has ample time to work on the *Bubble Bonanza* sheet, so I came up with a new idea [to save time]. I incorporated into the story that **Isabel has special brainfocal powder** that she sprinkles on her brainfocals to make them work. I then had a "special" bag that contained the "magic" brainfocal powder* that I could sprinkle on students' hands. I told the students that the power was SO magic that it never would go away. All they would ever need to do was to rub their hands together to activate it. The students then rubbed their hands together and formed "human brainfocals" by forming circles with each hand and holding their hands to their eyes like binoculars. The students loved it, and even commented that they could feel it working! As they worked on the *Bubble Bonanza* page, as soon as their ideas began to fade away, they would rub their hands together again to reactivate the powder on their hands to look through their human brainfocals again ... [since then] I have seen the students at recess, lunch, and in the halls, and they all rub their hands together and look at me through their "human brainfocals." I now realize that they are empowered to use this at **anytime** and **anywhere**. It has proven to be a very powerful idea.

Note from Yolanda: SO magic that human eyes cannot even see it!! So powerful that you must be careful to sprinkle just a little bit on each student's hands. That's right — it's just an **empty bag!*

In the Spotlight: Divergent Small Group Nametags p. 2

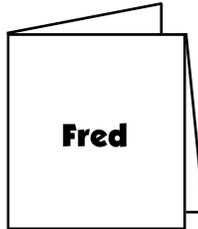
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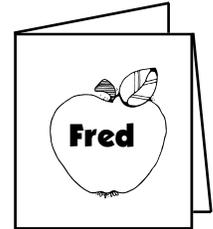
There are those in the teaching profession for whom mastering the names of many, many children poses an interminable challenge — for whom nametags are the ultimate blessing! As a charter member of that group, I even have my small group students make nametags — but I tweak them a bit so that they reflect the kind of thinking we'll be doing in each series of small groups. Here are the divergent small group nametags:

1st grade

1. As a group, let's brainstorm all the things we like — to see, to do, to have, to eat ...
2. Write your name in the middle of your card. Leave white space all around it.

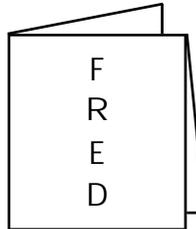


3. Now draw a picture of something around your name that tells me something about you. Be ready to explain your choice.

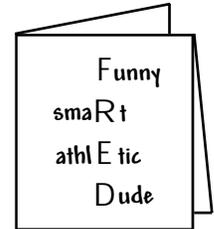


2nd grade

1. As a group, let's brainstorm words we'd use to describe someone we know and make a word bank on the board.
2. Write your name down the middle of your card — one letter over the other. Trace over it with a marker.



3. Wrap words around the letters of your name — use only words that tell something about you. Use a pencil for these words.



3rd grade

1. Start the same way as in 2nd grade with the word bank on the board.
2. Write your name down the middle of your card in the same way, too. Trace over it again with a marker.



3. Wrap words around the letters of your name, creating one, or more, statement/s that tell something about you. Use a pencil for this step. No extra words can be added.

Award certificates for: **fluency**
flexibility

the most letters in a name used
the most wraps
(words not starting with a letter in the name:
Friendly is not a wrap; *wriTEs* is a wrap)

originality
elaboration

the most unique personal statement
the longest statement



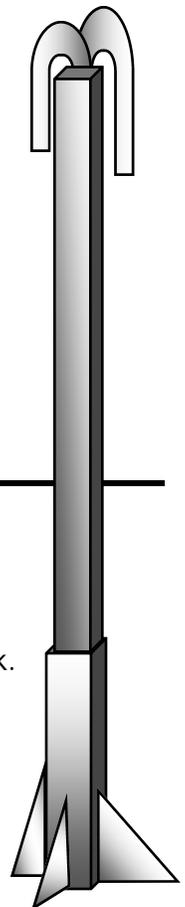
Isabel's Great Paper Tower Building Tournament

(PETS™ Blue Book, pp. 115-117)

The purpose of this activity is to create the tallest free-standing paper structure from one sheet of paper. Awards for the tallest and the most creative are provided in the book.

Of course, EVERYone wants an award, so Isabel has created a few more for you to share with your students — see pp. 5-6.

If you white-out the adjective on one of these (so it reads, "A Very _____ Tower"), then students can create their own awards!



From the Trenches

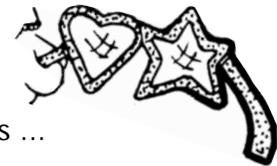
This moving letter captures the joy of PETS™ programming. Having just purchased the books at her MS state conference, Gail Reed wrote:



Today was my first day with my 2nd grade gifted class. I have one student in my class who is deaf and has never entered into a class discussion in his entire life. We have learned signs, and tried to motivate in a number of ways. TODAY HE RESPONDED. He loved Dudley. He has raised his hand and been so enthusiastic pointing out answers using the clues. It makes your heart sing to see a response like that!



*It makes MY heart sing to receive a letter like that!!!
Thanks, Gail!*



More on Isabel's brainfocals ...

There is an **eyeglasses die** that fits the popular diecut machines that are found in many schools. I use ours to cut out Isabel's brainfocals for students to decorate and take home.

If funds are available (sometimes your PTA can come to the rescue) inexpensive magnifying glasses and sheriff's badges memory triggers are a huge hit with students. I order mine from Oriental Trading, but I have seen them at "Party Stores" as well.

Contributed by Deborah Grmla



Spotlight YOUR Ideas!

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

- using PETS™ in your classroom and
- **sharing your ideas!!!** Then, to recognize your support of colleagues-in-need:
 - POL is offering a **\$20 gift certificate** for ideas used **In the Spotlight ...**
 - or a **free literature guide of your choice** (by N. Polette!) to anyone whose ideas are used in **Brief Bytes**.



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

yarnspinnr@hotmail.com

- or snail mail them to me at this address:

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Clarion Contributors

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????? Got Qs ??????

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

Isabel the Inventor









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