



# Why I Do What I Do?

Did you ever hear the phrase "There's method behind the madness"? Well that applies to my "organized chaos" should you happen upon my classroom activities. I don't do art for the sake of doing art unless I'm nailing at least 5 report card standards. I can rattle off at least 3 extra things my skill sheets are covering that you won't notice at first glance too. So in case you're interested or need to have answers should "higher powers" ask why you're doing what you're doing this is why I have some of the other skill sheets I invented for your units:

## Dot-to-Dots.

- Students are counting silently or quietly as they go.

- They are counting by 1's, 5's and 10's depending on the sheet and time of year.
- They are seeing the sequence of numbers.
- They are holding a pencil correctly.
- They are making a line.
- They are listening and following directions.
- They are doing an activity related to a theme.
- They are not hard, I don't have to explain them.
- If they stay on task and finish early they get to color the picture.
- These are report card standards that are being reviewed in a fun way. ☺ My students enjoy them.

## Stamp a Group/Set:

- My students LOVE stamping. To get them to slow down and not stamp away is a skill.
- They need to know how to count and make a group or specific set of something. So I let them stamp it!
- They are counting as they stamp and having fun.

- I make them self-check and cross out any (subtract) if they've made too many. Or stamp a few more (addition) if they don't have enough. Then I check their work.

## Bingo Dot A Group/Set:

- This is pre-addition at its finest!
- I start with 3 basic equations.  $5 + 5$  again,  $5 + 5 = 10$  I do this rhyme and show them with their fingers and then we clap.
- And  $4 + 1 = 5$  and  $3 + 2 = 5$  because we are working with one hand (give me a high five!) and 2 hands (give me 2 high five's!)
- At calendar time I'm always "flashing fingers" I challenge my students to tell me how many fingers I'm flashing.
- In the beginning they have to count the fingers. In a few weeks they know how many fingers I've flashed without counting!
- The same concept applies with the groups & sets. Once they've latched on to these basic 3 equations they can add any of the other single digit numbers! ☺

- I don't know how, I just give them the bingo dot sheets and through the magic of fun and repetition a day rolls around when they say: "Mrs. Henderson  $6 + 1$  is 7 or  $4 + 2$  is 6" !
- I'm also always raising the bar. As soon as I know they know, I'll say: "OK now go make a different equation, or go figure out a different set and the beauty of it all is they WANT to and actually get EXCITED about the adventure!

Symmetry:

Patterning:

Similarities & Differences:

Mazes:

- They all are related to math skills in being able to see differences and similarities
- Hand-Eye coordination
- The kids love being detectives and zapping the spy! It's different! It's fun.
- The crazy creatures my students draw when completing the pictures are just too cute!

- The children are CRAZY over MAZES! I read a few articles that had done studies that it's great exercise for the brain, and helps children again see similarities and differences that will enable them to pick apart math equations and words for reading. With a bit of clip art they fit any theme.
- Completing a pattern is a report card standard. I could not find pattern skill sheets so I made up my own. They only had to do an ABAB pattern. I raise the bar as soon as I "know that they know." My kids can do anything I throw at them by the time June rolls around. 😊

TRACE To PRE-WRITE's  
 Look I Can Write My Name  
 Find Your Name & Circle It  
 Stationery Shape  
 Door Knobber

- These are all fun ways to get my students to write their name, which can get pretty boring after awhile and is certainly labor-intensive when you're first learning how.

- The door knobber serves a dual purpose as I can also have them color it to help strengthen finger muscles, and reinforce proper holding of a writing utensil. I also have them stamp groups/sets of things on the inside.
- They can write their name on the shape stationery in the beginning and words or a sentence later on.
- They are learning to recognize their name as one of our report card standards and this seemed like a fun theme-related way to do that. I can also whole-group assess at a glance who can and who can't in just a few moments.
- My students enjoy doing trace-to pre-writes. They look colorful and lovely when they are done, they are listening and following directions, increasing fine motor skills, strengthening finger muscles, learning how to hold a writing utensil correctly, writing from left to write and enjoying the process while doing so.

## I Spy A Letter

- My students have to differentiate numbers and letters as a report card standard. This

is a fun way to learn how. This is also a great way to learn letter identification and differentiate them from other letter-look-alikes.

## Sorting:

- "I can sort by size, shape and color". are report card standards. My students can also sort by category by the end of September.
- I see them do this on a daily basis with all the fun Tummy Tubby Time activities, but if I ever had to "prove" it if challenged what was I supposed to do short of "showing" them the child and a tubby.
- When I asked my kindergarten team what skill I could really work on with my Y5's that would help them in kindergarten they said cutting and gluing because they had to have a "paper trail" of all sorts of assessments. Children who had not mastered the art of cut and paste were already a few strikes behind. Here was the perfect opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Develop some "sorting skill sheets".

# Tally Marks & Ordinal Numbers:

- I do them everyday in some form of explanation on the white board with directions and in graphing so why not throw it in a few skill sheets. They will be seeing more of it in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade too, and my students enjoy making the slash #5 and doing the "listening activities" of ordinal numbers because they get to put on their "thinking caps" and get rewarded with stickers or something special. 😊

# What's Missing? And Fill in the Alphabet & Number Counting Grids

- I don't do these with my Y5's. I designed them for K and above.

# Snip & Cuts:

- It's a report card standard. They like the snipping and cutting. It's quick and easy



and with a bit of clip art added it's theme related. I don't have to dream up an art project to have them practicing with a scissors every day. And they need that practice on a daily basis to increase their finger muscles and hand coordination.

- I added the jagged cutting skill sheet to raise the bar when children have mastered straight lines.

## Number Fun & Trace the Spatial Direction Words

- Helps tie in both writing & reading. Number words and spatial direction words are part of my vocabulary and reading word lists. If they see it on paper, and write it every week it's getting into their head and being reinforced in a fun way.

## Punctuation & Writing Prompts:

- Have fun 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades

- I LOVE writing! It's easy for me to think of fun prompts to get kids motivated and excited about reading, so even tho' I don't do them with my little ones I wanted to provide them for yours!
- Let me know if you need more on different topics and I'll BLOG them.
- Punctuation is a MUST! When I taught 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> and student taught 3<sup>rd</sup>, there just wasn't enough of that out there so I tossed in a themed sheet for this too. Enjoy!
- When I taught 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> I put 5 sentences on the board each day and as part of my "Morning Routine" I called on the 1<sup>st</sup> student to take a piece of colored chalk and correct the first sentence.
- They then called on another student to make any corrections they forgot and then they called on another person to do sentence number 2 and so on.
- It was an easy and fun way to get some extra punctuation/Capitalization/Spelling practice in. 😊

# Body Part Identification & Theme Pokey:

- My students have to identify their body parts as a report card standard. They obviously know where their eyes, ears and nose is, so I raise the bar to include some "weird" stuff as my students call it: wrist, pulse, shin, thighs, throat, hips, waist. It's hilarious to ask them to show me where that body part is and have them slap an area that is no where near it!
- To help them learn that I have them put whatever art project we made for the day on that body part!
- We also do a version of "Heads-Shoulders-Knees and Toes" with the manipulative.
- We do a Spatial Directions thing too. Put your \_\_\_\_\_ behind, above, beside etc.
- The children enjoy this so I included a page in every theme incase you have this as a report card standard too. Even if you don't your students should know their body parts so they don't put their hands on their forehead when the gym teacher says: "Put your hands on your hips!"

## Do the Pokey!

- Doin' the Pokey is just a wonderful way to get the wiggles out. You can do it with every theme by just substituting a few words here and there.
- The children know the tune, you don't have to teach anything, it goes fast, and it gets the wiggles out!
- It's a great way to end Table Top and Centers and send them out to recess or to the bathroom, or transition to something else.

## Certificates:

- I truly believe that positive reinforcement and praise are so important. If you build a child's self-esteem and self-confidence they will enjoy coming to school. They will have a thirst for learning and they will like themselves. You have all that and you can teach them anything.
- If a little certificate lights up their life, gets them to practice writing their name and reinforces the fact that they did a great job

that day, or on a unit well hey it really took no effort on our part right?

- They also get to take it home, mom and dad give some more verbal praise and the ripple effect continues.
- I had a parent that gave her son a scrapbook that he called his pride book. He glued all his certificates in it and brought it for Share and Tell. Another mom simply had her daughter glue all hers in a notebook. I thought these were really cool ideas.
- And that's why I made certificates! 😊
- And that's just a little bit of why I do what I do...

