

RAID THE SUPPLY CLOSET

Creative uses for
common
classroom
items



By Matt Miller
and members
of the Ditch That
Textbook
community

DITCH
THAT TEXTBOOK
Matt Miller

FREE
YOUR TEACHING AND
REVOLUTIONIZE
YOUR CLASSROOM





Are binder clips your jam? Are sticky notes your love language?

If a new Sharpie will make you smile -- or if you love the smell of a fresh pack of construction paper in the morning -- this ebook is for you.

Members of the Ditch That Textbook blog community submitted their creative uses for standard school supplies.

There's some great stuff here. Let's dig in!

Matt

Name: Lindsay Foster

On Twitter at: @BSGSCSFoster

What supplies do you use? Binder Clips; Post It Notes

How do you use them creatively? I use binder clips for cord management. It keeps the cords neat and they fit inside the large side binder clips. When you have multiple devices it really prevents tangling.

I use mini Post-It type notes to recreate pixel art generated in Google Sheets (or Excel). It is a great real life example of scaling by multiples for mathematics and can be used to create beautiful art as well. If you want an extension on this, use plastic Solo type cups and recreate your art in your playground chain link fence.

Any advice for us when buying them? I prefer Solo cups - they are heartier and well worth the extra pennies since they hold up and the plastic is thicker. Buy the larger (1" gauge or bigger) binder clips.

Name: Craig Klement

On Twitter at: @craigklement

What supplies do you use? Play Doh & floss to study cross sections, Paint stirring sticks for a Davinci Bridge Activity, Large Post It Paper, Side walk chalk for those days it's just to beautiful to be inside, class set of clipboards to get out of our seats

How do you use them creatively?

Any advice for us when buying them? For my paint stirring sticks, I went to a local hardware store and told them about my project. They donated 100+ sticks!

Name: Lindsay Foster

On Twitter at: @BSGSCSFoster

What supplies do you use? Washii tape

How do you use them creatively? I use Washii tape (or duct tape) to mark my "practice" keyboards (those that have sticky keys are have been obsoleted) for my PreK and Kinder students. They practice matching shapes, letters and numbers AND they are learning keyboard navigation. It doesn't have to be connected to a monitor (although they get immediate feedback

if it is) but it's a great station, quiet, or waiting (in the hall) activity. Help these students learn to log in by color coding their log in and having them practice touching the keys.

In the same vein, I make a life size number pad keyboard using clip art from https://www.wpclipart.com/computer/keyboard_keys/. Print each key on 8.5x11" paper and laminate; you can also glue to bulletin board/butcher paper and laminate for a full life size keyboard. Put on the floor or the wall and let kids move and jump while saying letters and numbers. I even gave a set to my P.E. teacher so that the students would encounter the same "style" no matter where they went.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Lindsay Foster

On Twitter at: @BSGSCSFoster

What supplies do you use? Takeout boxes

How do you use them creatively? Create a keyboard by cutting foam take out boxes in half and writing the keys of the keyboard. Make a bulletin board wall display that students can touch and you can use to demonstrate keystrokes like holding down the SHIFT key plus a letter to create a capital letter.

Any advice for us when buying them? Get the smaller size that would hold a sandwich. The larger "whole meal" size ones take up an entire wall!

Name: Lance McClard

On Twitter at: @drmcclard

What supplies do you use? Ivory soap and a paperclip

How do you use them creatively? This lesson came from my mentor, Jane Wessel. When studying Lewis and Clark we took time for students to make a canoe out of soap. They shaped and dig out the canoe with a paperclip. Next they drew Lewis, Clark, and others on the Voyage of Discovery to place them and retell the story.

Any advice for us when buying them? Ivory is much easier to carve.

Name: Heather Sanders

On Twitter at: @koolteecha

What supplies do you use? post-it notes, babyyyyyyyyy!

How do you use them creatively? Yes, this is kind of "old school," but I used sticky notes to leave a "3-word Reflection" at the end of the class period. I had a "3-Word Wall" right by the door, and I had students leave their sticky note on the wall on their way out. Sometimes I'd give specific direction in regards to their 3 words, but mostly I just allowed them to sum up their learning in 3 words. The next day, we kind of did the opposite. On their way INTO class, students looked at everyone's 3 words, and we used that as an intro to our lesson/discussion.

Any advice for us when buying them? Not really! :)

Name: Megan Hacholski

On Twitter at: megan_hacholski

What supplies do you use? Sticky notes

How do you use them creatively? We use sticky notes for gallery walks to introduce units. I set up display stations around the room, and students spend a short amount of time at each. At each station, they use a sticky note to leave a message about their thoughts on the display. Sometimes I give them a more direct question to think about for their response. At the end of the unit, we do the gallery walk again, but the students' responses are tied to summative assessment - what have they learned about that display? Being able to see their classmates' answers is really powerful - and the tables covered in sticky notes at the end is messy, but awesome!

Any advice for us when buying them? The more colorful, the better! Any brand works.

Name: Rayna

On Twitter at: @rlfreedm

What supplies do you use? Called a casino. They just throw out dice and cards so as long as you do not mind holes in them as they punch a hole.

How do you use them creatively? Card towers, math games, used as supplies for Rube Goldberg machines or other design thinking activities,

Any advice for us when buying them? Call casinos LOL

Name: Sarah

On Twitter at: @kunkel_sarah

What supplies do you use? Fruit/various foods, rocks, sticks, feathers, leaves, flowers, and sound clips (or videos) of animals.

How do you use them creatively? Use any natural item to discuss descriptive writing involving the senses.

Any advice for us when buying them? Have the students help gather items outside or bring a food item from home.

Name: Dr. Laugh (aka Harris Deutsch)

On Twitter at: @harrisdeutsch

What supplies do you use? Scotch Tape

How do you use them creatively? If I run out of fidgets to give a student, I tear off a small piece of tape. one sticky side goes to their thumb the other sticky end to their index finger. Open and close like digits.

Any advice for us when buying them? Any brand will do. I like Scotch.

Name: Heidi Long

On Twitter at: @trtlpwr

What supplies do you use? Socks

How do you use them creatively? My 5th graders use them as erasers for individual white boards that we use for math. They find it endlessly hilarious when I say, "Get out a slate, marker, and a sock!"

Any advice for us when buying them? I like large men's athletic socks. Lots of surface area, can be bleached when they get too funky.

Name: Katie Powell

On Twitter at: @beyond_the_desk

What supplies do you use? Well, there's a lot of them. Painters' plastic is a favorite. I also use ball pit balls, matchbox cars, paper airplanes, mega blocks, men's socks, plastic sleeve page protectors, and even just creative use of our desks/room arrangement

How do you use them creatively? Good golly, that'd take a lot of characters. Sorry. Maybe it's easier to just check them out here:

<https://www.teachbeyondthedesk.com/worksheet-busters-od83e> Some are under construction (still need to add the photos) because they're new. I'll be working on that today (assuming life goes as planned...).

Any advice for us when buying them? If I'm going to spend my family's money on something for school, I want to be able to use it for more than one activity. So think of variations or use it in a way that's versatile enough to use multiple times in a school year. I like to use things that are very unexpected for classroom use--that novelty and curiosity really sets the stage for amazing learning! Amazon is great for finding good deals. And chrome extensions like <http://www.getinvisiblehand.com/> help find cheaper deals.

Name: Amy Storer

On Twitter at: @techamys

What supplies do you use? Pool noodles, Legos, Bean Boozled, Poster Board, Pipe Cleaners, Dry Erase Markers, Copy Paper, Index Cards and Yarn

How do you use them creatively? Pool Noodles and Legos (can be used for a fraction lesson), Bean Boozled (can be used for probability), Poster Board (I used this for a PBL experience about force and motion called Roller Coaster. The students constructed their roller coaster out of poster board and tape.), Pipe Cleaners and Dry Erase Markers (I used both of these supplies to practice angles. With the dry erase markers, the students drew stick figures and then measured the angles within the figure with a protractor.), Copy Paper (We used this for "Snowball Fight" to review topics.), Index Cards and Yarn (The students were each given an index card with a decimal or whole number and had to put them in order on the yarn that was hanging in our classroom,

Any advice for us when buying them? Anything goes! If I think of anything else, I will submit some more!

Name: Stephanie Gregory

On Twitter at: @Mrs_SGregory

What supplies do you use? binder clips and popsicle sticks

How do you use them creatively? I use this as a team building activity. Students are in groups and given a certain number of binder clips and popsicle sticks. Their goal is to see which group can build the tallest free-standing tower. The students always love this activity. Another variation I use which is more difficult is using clothes pins instead of binder clips.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Amy Storer

On Twitter at: @techamys

What supplies do you use? How did I forget this! Construction Paper

How do you use them creatively? This simple supply that classrooms get every single year from their student supply list can be used for things like four frame, story building, vocabulary review, sketchnotes (my fav), books, to represent fractions, to represent shapes, to build things like a food pyramid and a "staplesless book" (super cool). Kids tend to love using construction paper and markers over paper and pencil any day!

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Jackie Hersh

On Twitter at: @JHJhersh

What supplies do you use? Post It's

How do you use them creatively? I use post its with my students when introducing a new idea or vocab. word. We call them "chalk talks". First you write the word on the board/computer, then on the post it's they have to write/illustrate what that word or concept means to them, what they know about, what it makes them think about etc.. They place them on the board and then I have the kids make categories of their peers answers. Soon enough we have a beautiful concept map of that vocabulary word/ idea!

Any advice for us when buying them? I like a variety of colors - I think the kids appreciate it when I throw in some new colors with the season :)

Name: Stephanie Gregory

On Twitter at: @Mrs_SGregory

What supplies do you use? copy paper and masking tape

How do you use them creatively? This is a team building activity. Students are given a stack of paper and a roll of masking tape. The work together in their groups to see which team can build the tallest chair that will hold an object. I use a potato head since they have some weight to them but are not too heavy.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Jonny

On Twitter at: mrjlevin (rarely used)

What supplies do you use? Post-It

How do you use them creatively? Not crazy creative, but super useful. I teach in a computer lab and I keep a post it on the side of each computer. If a student has a question, they move the post-it to the top of their computer. This keeps their hands free to continue working and often they solve their own problems by the time I get to them. I learned this from Google's CS-First Program

Any advice for us when buying them? The smaller post its are usually better and more environmentally friendly.

Name: Sonia Remy

On Twitter at: SraRemy

What supplies do you use? Index cards (2 colors)

How do you use them creatively? As a vocabulary and grammar practice/review I combined two ideas. This is a combination of "Scoot" and "Matching". I put the vocabulary terms for the chapter on the index cards; Spanish term on one color card and English term on a different

color card. I mix them up and hand each group of students (my desks are arranged in groups of 4) about 10-15 cards of the terms in Spanish depending on the chapter. First they must take turns verbally creating complete sentences with each vocabulary term incorporating a designated tense. Next I hand them a set of the cards with the English term. They are to match up as many as they possibly can in a given time limit (I used 2 minutes). Once the time is up, they take their matches AND the unmatched remaining Spanish terms and "Scoot" to the next group of desks where they will find more English term cards to match with their set of Spanish cards. To keep it moving after the first matching session I give them only a minute after which they "Scoot" again. The first group to match up all of their Spanish terms wins the round. Depending on time it can be done again.

Any advice for us when buying them? Nothing really but I will say that the bright neon colors add more life to the party!

Name: Nicole Shannon

On Twitter at: @LonghornNic

What supplies do you use? sentence strips

How do you use them creatively? Writing out numbers in expanded form. The students write the number in expanded form and then fold the sentence strip so the number appears in standard form. They can then shift between expanded and standard form of the number. Drives home a stronger understanding of place value.

Any advice for us when buying them? I typically used the plain (manila) strips and let the students use colored markers for their numbers

Name: Kellie Boucher

On Twitter at: @Boucher6thELA

What supplies do you use? pool noodles cut into pieces

How do you use them creatively? I use pool noodles to help my students put together compound and complex sentences. I cut the noodles into pieces, so they end up looking like a doughnut. I use a sharpie marker to write on the pieces. I use one color pool noodle for coordinating conjunctions, a color for subordinating conjunction, a color for commas and semi-colons, a color for dependent clauses, and a color for independent clauses. Then, the students receive a bucket of pieces at their table. They find pieces that will create a sentence. For example: Independent clause + comma+ coordinating conjunction+ independent clause.

***Hint - I actually write those words on the pool noodles. The students are responsible for writing an example of an independent clause. The students can record answers on Padlet, Google Form, whiteboards, paper, etc.

At the beginning of the year, sometimes we just toss the pool noodle pieces around and students have to record an example for that word, For example, if a student got a piece that said dependent clause, they might write: Since I missed the bus, .

Any advice for us when buying them? Get them at Dollar Tree! Use a utility knife (not scissors) to cut them.

Name: Susan

On Twitter at: senorabuffa

What supplies do you use? Poster board.

How do you use them creatively? Students work in groups to trace a map of a Spanish-speaking country (could be done with ANY geographic region). They trace, cut it out and recycle scraps. Then, working in groups they turn it into a jigsaw puzzle. I break kids into groups of 5 or 6 and have 2 poster holders, 2 tracers, 1 or 2 cutters (everyone gets a job). If you have an odd number, change the numbers of kids doing each job. Doesn't really matter. The important thing is everyone has a job. My classes are large so I have 6 groups. After the shape of the country is cut out, the kids work in groups to create a jigsaw puzzle of 15 - 20 pieces (number of pieces depends on size of the poster board and on grade level). Then they cut the pieces apart, put them all in a Ziploc baggie (how did people teach before baggies were invented?) labeled with the name of the country, the number of pieces and then trade baggies an try to solve each other's puzzles. Makes a great spare time activity to leave in the back of the room, too.

Any advice for us when buying them? Give each group a different color posterboard (lighter colors work best). Use Gallon size baggies

Name: Julie

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? sticky notes

How do you use them creatively? One of the most powerful moments I ever had in a class involved having students read their personal essays aloud, and then having other students write

positive comments about the essay (and student) on sticky notes. (I emphasized POSITIVE comments!) When everyone was finished, they walked around the room distributing the sticky notes to each other. (This was toward the end of the year, when we had already established community.) One student told me later that he kept all of those sticky notes, and looked at them whenever he was having a bad day.

Any advice for us when buying them? Costco has them for cheap(er)

Name: Mike Glennon

On Twitter at: @glennontech

What supplies do you use? Old file folders

How do you use them creatively? I am an elementary computer technology teacher. I cut off the file tab from the folder and have kindergarten students cut and glue a paper keyboard and a paper screen inside to make their very own "laptops." I have them color the keys used to log in. They take these with them and use them in centers and at home to practice finding the keys they use to log in.

Any advice for us when buying them? If your school has used, unwanted file folders, this is a great way to recycle them!

Name: Kevin White

On Twitter at: @KevinWhiteSD

What supplies do you use? (1) 8 ½ x 11in Paper (3) Paper clips (3) Standard Popsicle Sticks (2) Jumbo Popsicle Sticks (6) Noodles of Pasta (optional) (1) 12 in. Strand of Masking Tape

How do you use them creatively? Student Introduction: Using the following constraints and materials, you will need to develop a structure that can be pushed off of the edge of a table and land in tact with the tallest point pointing upward.

Challenge: Engineer a tower like structure that can both withstand a drop and land with its tallest point pointing into the sky after being dropped.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HYCYOYNdqyacPQcdjIE_7VOLpIvRQD51-8FMK5ehB2U/edit

Any advice for us when buying them? Never use painters tape or cheap masking tape, I prefer scotch brand, it sticks real good! Amazon is great for class supplies.

Name: Katie Rolf

On Twitter at: @Mrs_Rolf

What supplies do you use? Nontraditional: Peeps, Cake, Cereal Boxes, cardboard boxes, MinecraftEDU Traditional: Sticky Notes for Exit Tickets, graphing (results, answers), colored paper

How do you use them creatively?

for dioramas (used in poetry unit), cake and cake decorations for illustrating topics (building a brain, a story chapter or book review), clay for creating Stop Motion, MinecraftEDU for lessons in Science, Math, Social Studies, cardboard boxes for sound recording booths, clay for claymation and stop motion videos

Traditional: Sticky Notes for Exit Tickets, graphing (results, answers), colored paper to have students write something that makes them happy (that way they always have a happy place in the room),

Any advice for us when buying them? I make a sheet cake and ask for donations for the toppings, and the students make a video that explains the items on the cake. Polymer clay is reusable and won't dry out, so that is what I purchased

Name: Kelsey Halfen

On Twitter at: @halfendhs

What supplies do you use? Double Dutch jump ropes and mini-whiteboards

How do you use them creatively? I use them with my AP Econ classes to create life-size interactive graphs. Students create the graphs, label with whiteboards, then practice shifting the curves.

Any advice for us when buying them? Five Below! Summertime \$5 for a set of 2 ropes. Doubledutch are way better than regular. Yarn could work too.

Name: Bonnie Campbell

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? large Pringles Can, black construction paper, white map pencil, paper clip, hammer, nail

How do you use them creatively? Trace the bottom of the can on black construction paper. Inside the circle, draw a constellation (Orion, Leo, Scorpio, Hydra) placing dots for the stars. Using the paper clip punch a hole in the location of each star. Cut the circle out and place in the clear plastic lid of the Pringles can. Punch a hole in the center of the metal bottom of the can (about 1/2 inch in diameter). Look through the hole and see the constellation.

Any advice for us when buying them? PRINGLES can works best! Must be black construction paper. All other supplies are generic.

Name: Sara C

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? sticky notes, sharpies, dry erase markers

How do you use them creatively? Sticky notes: exit tickets -- have them answer questions or a prompt on the sticky note, then stick on an exit sign on my classroom door

Sticky notes: chapter summaries -- write a summary of each chapter of a novel, then combine them onto a manila folder and decorate for a book summary (usually the novel we are doing as a class)

Sharpies: for blackout poetry -- have them use black at first then go back and add in some color to their drawing

Dry erase markers: they use on their desktops -- answer questions, ask teacher questions, leave notes for other classes, and I have even used them for close reading -- while we read an article, they write things that they wonder, things that stand out to them, etc. on their desk -- it cuts way down on paper and I can grade it on the spot! I also have individual dry erase boards that were donated to me --

kids answer questions and hold up board when asked.

Any advice for us when buying them? sticky notes: post it are best but most other brands I have found work just fine -- the ones from Dollar Tree don't stay for the chapter summaries though. Sharpies: Sharpie brand is absolute best. Bic brand is second but not nearly as good. Dry Erase: without a doubt Expo is best. Crayola dry erase markers are TERRIBLE. Quartet brand are iffy at best for board but will work for desktop writing.

Name: Tia Miller

On Twitter at: @MissMillerAP

What supplies do you use? Index cards

How do you use them creatively? Orient them in the usual way for writing and cut two small slits on the top and two on the bottom of the card. Don't cut all the way through the card. The slits work best if they are not too far from the edges, maybe 3/4" in from the edge. With several cut this way, you can use the slits to build a tower by slipping one slit into another. It can be used for organizing writing. Main points/evidence/support go on the bottom, thesis on top (because your points "support" your thesis). You can use it to talk about strongest/weakest points (strongest might go on the bottom because we want a good foundation). Or use it to talk about organization (the tower proceeds downward from thesis to first point/support, to second, etc.). You can also use it to analyze someone else's writing. Give them an article, essay, etc. and have them identify the thesis and the support that the author uses and build that author's tower. Again, you can talk about weak/strong points or overall organization. It's a slightly more kinesthetic way of getting them to think about evidence and organization. If you laminate the cards, the tower will be a bit sturdier and your cards will have write on/wipe off surfaces, but it absolutely isn't necessary, and in truth, it makes the cards a little slippery so they are (in my opinion) harder to put together in the first place. Sturdier once you get them together, but a little more frustrating to get to that point. You can also use different colors if you want, to visually reinforce different things. For example, thesis in one color, main points in different colors. Or if you were trying to reinforce different types of evidence, you could put those in colors (statistics in green, quotes from experts in yellow, personal narratives in blue, etc.). I haven't tried that personally myself, but now that I type it, I'm thinking it could be another good way of analyzing an author's offered support.

Any advice for us when buying them? Regular index cards; colors if you want.

Name: Bonnie Campbell

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? 3x5 note cards, colored pencils, 1 to 2 inch spiral leg bands

How do you use them creatively? Using the note cards retell a play scene by scene and act by act. Include a title/author card for the play. Also on the card draw a icon/sketch that shows the basic idea of the scene. (MACBETH - Act 1, scene i - line drawing of three witches on rocky point). Can use other materials such as cloth, plant material, sand to help convey meaning of

scene. Cards are held together with rings through holes punched in the same corner - usually upper left.

Any advice for us when buying them? If you cannot find spiral leg bands at feed store, use (latching) key rings

Name: KC Tonelli

On Twitter at: @k10elli09

What supplies do you use? fly swatter

How do you use them creatively? For review, I make a word bank on the board. Students play a game by spinning around and smacking the correct answer before their opponent.

Any advice for us when buying them? Dollar store!

Name: Leslie

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? sheet protectors

How do you use them creatively? Instead of purchasing expensive dry erase boards for every child, I pass out a sheet protector and have the kids put a blank piece of paper inside. They are able to use this over and over again when we are doing practice work, and it fits right inside their folder. When I have a graphic organizer I want them to use, they slide it in and can use it more than once as well. Over time we have quite the collection of useful papers inside this one sheet protector that can be switched around in seconds.

Any advice for us when buying them? Buy the cheapest ones. They work great!

Name: Anabel Gonzalez

On Twitter at: @amgonza

What supplies do you use? Sticky notes

How do you use them creatively? What stuck? Sticky notes make perfect exit tickets.

Any advice for us when buying them? The cheaper the better, especially vendor promos.

Name: Christina Mendez

On Twitter at: @senoramendezkms

What supplies do you use? iPads

How do you use them creatively? Play Heads Up! Create Google Slides with vocabulary words. A student puts the iPad up to his/her forehead (like Ellen's game of Heads Up!) and his/her partner gives him/her clues to guess the word. We play this game with Spanish vocabulary words.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Peggy Sue

On Twitter at: trained2teach

What supplies do you use? post it notes

How do you use them creatively? editing remarks, spelling, suggested synonyms for composition.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Rachel McClaran

On Twitter at: rachel_mcclaran

What supplies do you use? 1) parchment paper 2) painter's tape

How do you use them creatively? 1) have students draw any graphs on them to allow them later to be used to explain transformations 2) so many uses on the floor or wall ... for studying angle types, learning to use a ruler, protactor. As a graphic organizer or mindmap - you can write on waxed floor tiles with dry erase marker.

Any advice for us when buying them? Nope

Name: Christina Mendez

On Twitter at: @senoramendezkms

What supplies do you use? Shower Caddies

How do you use them creatively? I fill a shower caddy with supplies such as tape, scissors, glue sticks, markers, expo markers, permanent markers and slide it under the student's desk. I have 1 caddy for 4 students.

Any advice for us when buying them? Measure to ensure it will slide under the student desks.

Name: Diana Olds

On Twitter at: beehappy3000

What supplies do you use? Sticky notes, sharpie markers, 3 by 5 cards, etc.

How do you use them creatively? I use sticky notes for a variety of things. I have students evaluate books; they place the directed eval. on the sticky note and place it on top of the book for you and all to see. They could rank or rate the book, add adjectives to describe it, add a summary sentence, etc. I also use sticky notes as a way to see what they know or what they've learned - as a way to check in. They place their notes on a schema chart; this is terrific to see what misconceptions may still be lurking. I use sticky notes to graph data as well. Sticky notes can be placed in plan books, on computers, library books, etc. They're great to display thinking, ideas, questions, etc. 3 by 5 cards can also be used to make learning visible; students can take notes and display their notes in various ways. Create a mobile, a poster of sorts, sort and classify information, or a standing visual with slits in the sides to link together.

Any advice for us when buying them? I like to buy the super sticky notes, they will display longer. Be careful, they will really stick to paper if left too long. I only buy 3 by 5 cards when they are on sale. :)

Name: Nicole

On Twitter at: @nicole_nowlin

What supplies do you use? Plastic cups (red, yellow, green)

How do you use them creatively? Stacked one on top of the other when working on projects (I mostly use them for tech heavy projects). Green-I'm good to go, yellow-? But I can keep working Red-I can't go on w/o help (I have a photo if it helps)

Any advice for us when buying them? Red, yellow and green-The Solo type hold up the best over time

Name: Jennifer Fischer

On Twitter at: @JenFischer18

What supplies do you use? Multi-Colored Post-Its Notes

How do you use them creatively? Multi-Colored post-it notes are a game-changer when trying to tackle differentiated groupings in the classroom! When grouping students based on need or skill, assign each group a post-it note of a specific color. Write the name of each student on a separate post it of that color. On chart paper, create a column for each group and label each column with a letter. Place the colored post-it notes in the appropriate columns. Now, here's the best part: looking at each column, you will have HOMOGENOUS groupings of students (I call these "Letter Groups.") And...looking across each row, you will have HETEROGENOUS groupings of students with varied skill levels (I call these "Rainbow Groups.") Depending on the classroom activity, have students refer to the chart to figure out their group for the day.

Confused? I promise that this picture will help:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BwfaT3Y2AsekeWdTOW9OS3E5SEU>

Any advice for us when buying them? Post-It Note brand, SUPER STICKY! This way, the notes will not fall off when you need to rearrange the Rainbow Groups.

Name: Mark Grundel

On Twitter at: @MGrundel

What supplies do you use? Plastic or tin cans/containers (these we got from local restaurants) pencils, balloons, rubber bands.

How do you use them creatively? We cut the bottom off the balloons and stretched over the cans and held down with the rubber bands. This turned into a drum circle and conga line.

Any advice for us when buying them? Get a variety of containers for your drums, tin worked great. Also different size balloons are helpful or just get the largest you can. I have pics and videos too!

Name: N. Parker

On Twitter at: @nparkerlearning

What supplies do you use? socks

How do you use them creatively? I use the socks as dry erase board erasers, plus they are a great place to hold other desk supplies like pencils, highlighters, and markers.

Any advice for us when buying them? Buy black socks to camouflage the residue from dry erase markers.

Name: N. Parker

On Twitter at: @nparkerlearning

What supplies do you use? Beach chairs

How do you use them creatively? I use sand chairs for flexible seating.

Any advice for us when buying them? They are more comfortable than bean bags, inexpensive, and easy to store. Choose ones that are low to the ground and foldable.

Name: N. Parker

On Twitter at: @nparkerlearning

What supplies do you use? Washi tape and circle magnets

How do you use them creatively? I use the tape to create a coordinate plane, or number lines, on the white board. The magnets can be used as markers to place points on the number line or grid.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: N. Parker

On Twitter at: @nparkerlearning

What supplies do you use? Paperclips and Post-it notes

How do you use them creatively? Paperclips are fun to use when working with perimeter, while Post it notes are an easy way to model area. At the end of a lesson, students can use the post it notes to write an exit ticket, to explain their understanding, or express a wondering.

Any advice for us when buying them? Paperclips should be of equal size (color is fun), and post it's should be square units.

Name: Jill Perfect

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? Sharpies

How do you use them creatively? I put up chart paper around the room with the themes of the novel we are studying. Students each have markers and go around the room adding "proof" or support from the text that supports each theme. We then do a walkabout where we read all of the comments. The students love this activity because it gets them up and moving around, and I love it because I can easily see the group's understanding of the themes. Occasionally, I will call out, "What about this event?" or "What about this character?" It helps students understand analysis and helps them develop internal support for themes. We leave them up for a week or so.

Any advice for us when buying them? Use lots of colors--they love to be able to choose!

Name: Jill Perfect

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? Post-it notes and post cards, turn and share

How do you use them creatively? I ask my students after about ten minutes of practice or lecturing of new information to take a post-it note and put their questions on post-its and put them on the white board and then I collect them. This gives me feedback about possible misunderstandings they may have about the text. I have students pair-share three important things they learned or put it on post-it notes and collect them so that I know what they understand or what they think about a particular day's learning.

Any advice for us when buying them? 3X3 post its are best size.

Name: Jennifer Denslow

On Twitter at: @JenniferDenslow

What supplies do you use? Aluminum Foil

How do you use them creatively? In my speech and drama classes, I pass out squares of this at the beginning of the year and ask students to make something that represents who they are. We get in small groups and share what they've made and why. Foil is also good for crafting costumes and props when we are reading plays or doing improv games!

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Meredith Phinney

On Twitter at: @phinthink

What supplies do you use? Sticky notes

How do you use them creatively? I use sticky notes for questions that students have at the end of a chapter. Students write their question or questions and we stick them to the wall for discussion over the course of the week. Students will choose the ones they are most interested in discussing or I might pull one that I am especially interested in discussing. Sometimes I pick them off the wall and hand them to small groups to begin the class the next day. Students will review the questions and discuss. I also use sticky notes as exit tickets. For example, I might ask students to find a quote to support a question that was proposed at the beginning of the class. They write their answer on the sticky note and put it on the door before leaving.

Any advice for us when buying them? Any colour of medium sized sticky notes.

Name: Elizabeth Stracener

On Twitter at: @quilterliz

What supplies do you use? bright post-it notes, sharpies, and wide paper on a roll

How do you use them creatively? My students (in groups of 3) created concept maps during our evolution unit. Terms were written on Post-It notes, sharpies connected thoughts. Each connected ideas differently. Then each group talked about how they connected their terms.

Any advice for us when buying them? Sharpie all the way, bright colors for any of my supplies!

Name: Sarah Fink

On Twitter at: @finksa

What supplies do you use? Empty tissue boxes

How do you use them creatively? My students made models of musical instruments that could be wired to a Makey Makey kit and played via Scratch programming. Tissue boxes make great guitar bodies!

Any advice for us when buying them? Save those empty boxes and let students be creative!

Name: Gail Metcalf

On Twitter at: @GailMetcalf3

What supplies do you use? Colored popsicle sticks or lollipop sticks if you are English

How do you use them creatively? It's called Pick the Stick....I write each name of the students in my class on a different stick. I put the sticks in a pot and pull out the sticks at random if there is a comment to be made or a question to be answered. It gives everyone a fair chance and helps engagement and participation.

Any advice for us when buying them?

Name: Neith Moore

On Twitter at:

What supplies do you use? A2 brown card (200g) + black pen (any)

How do you use them creatively? Every student must put their netbook/device on this thick brown paper. It's used as a mouse pad AND to draw/make notes on - called an 'infographic'. When full, it's handed in (together with the digital work) as 'evidence' of research involvement. I guess it's 'blended learning' AND good for slow bandwidths.

Any advice for us when buying them? Cheapest thick brown paper. Ordinary black pen used for class writing.
