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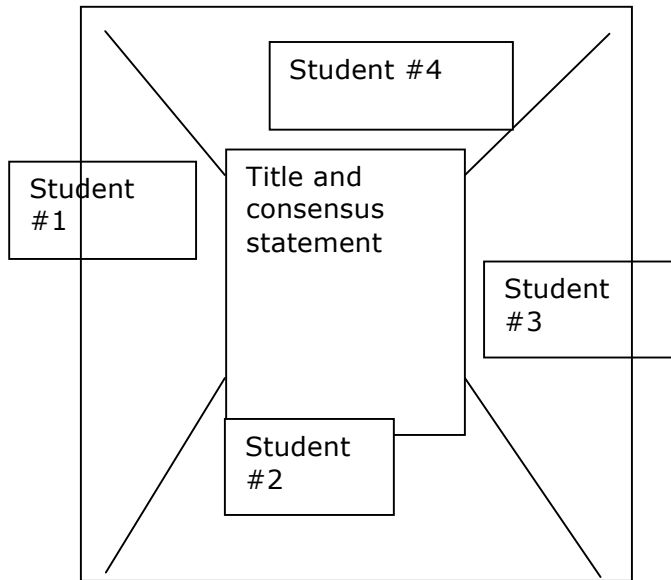


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**Sincerely,
Karen Haag**

Consensus Board Demonstration Lesson --- Theme



Here's a **consensus chart idea** from Kathy Short, author and presenter at Pathways at Western Carolina, NC. Four students read the same text. A "board" is created from construction paper or bulletin board paper. Draw a box in the center of the board. Write the title of the book in the box. Divide the paper into 4 sections. Students can work on the "board" at the same time in their individual space. After they read the text, they draw their personal connections to the text. They talk through their pictures with one another. After sharing individual connections, the group reaches consensus on the theme, big ideas or main idea they believe is represented in the book. The consensus statement is written in the middle box. I see different students using consensus boards to explore all content, lots of discussion flowing and comprehension building as students reach consensus on what they write in the middle of the board.

ENGAGE --- Gather students to the floor.

Tell a story. In the movie *Shrek*, the author chooses a main character that's an ogre. An ogre is green and ugly and mean --- not very appealing. He runs into a beautiful princess and falls in love with her. But the princess has a secret. By day, she is a lovely princess. By night, she turns into an ugly ogre. When Shrek finds out, he loves her any way and marries her at the end of the movie. (Pictures... page 3 or bring in your DVD jacket.)

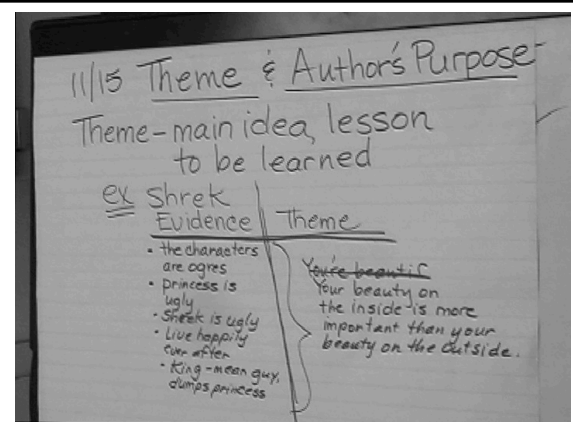
- THINK-PAIR-SHARE: Now here's a puzzle readers LOVE to think about: Think fairy tales. Snow White? Beautiful princess. Sleeping Beauty? Beautiful princess. Princess Bride? Beautiful princess. Why would the author deliberately decide to use an ogre as his main character? What is he trying to say even though he doesn't come right out and say it?

EXPLAIN

1. Share a summary of this story: A prince discovers he's in love with another ogre who he thought was a beautiful princess while on his journey to save his property.

Materials

- Heterogeneous groups of 3-4.
- Be ready to show picture of Shrek (page 4).
- One piece of bulletin-board paper per group drawn as a Consensus Board (See visual this page and page 4.)
- Table or desks pushed together for the groups to work together.
- Markers in a container in the middle of each group.
- A text copy of *The Gift of Nothing* or other book with a strong theme.
- Type a text copy of the book you use.
- One piece of bulletin paper for teacher taped on the front board or SmartBoard



2. Write the definition of *theme* in the middle of the chart paper or SmartBoard.
3. Explain theme. Theme synonyms – author’s message, lesson, advice, slogan, unifying idea that ties the story together; the theme can be different depending on the reader.
4. The theme for the book is something like, “Love people for what they are on the inside not on the outside.” Write this theme on the right side of the double-entry journal.
5. Tell the students the evidence that makes you think so and write it on the left side of the chart.
6. Explain that students don’t have to agree with you. Different people take away different themes from books.

STUDENTS EXPLAIN

Students share their understanding of theme with their shoulder buddy.

Clarify any questions they have in order to move forward.

NOTE:

Discuss *theme* when talking about *fiction*.

Discuss *main idea* when talking about *nonfiction*.

State LEARNING TARGET: Say, *We’re going to read a story with the theme in mind. Listen to the story to see if you can figure out what you think the author’s message is.*

EXPLORE

1. Assign students to groups. Ask them to sit at the tables or desks arranged for this lesson.
2. Read *The Gift of Nothing* aloud or read a book that has a strong theme.
3. Ask students to draw in their spot on the Consensus Board whatever comes to their minds as they listen to the story being read.
4. Ask students to compare the pictures they drew. Talk about what they notice.
5. Handout text copies of the book so students can read the words.
6. Ask students to discuss possible themes for the book using the text and what they wrote on their spot on the Consensus Boards as evidence.
7. Ask students to combine their ideas and articulate a theme for the book. Ask them to see if they can come up with an idea that everyone can agree on - reach consensus.
8. Ask students to raise their hands so I can come over and tell them what to do next.
9. When students share with you what happened, tell them what to do next:
 - If students agreed on a theme, tell them to choose one person to write it in the middle of the Consensus Board.
 - If students could not agree on their theme, tell them to each write their theme in their spot.

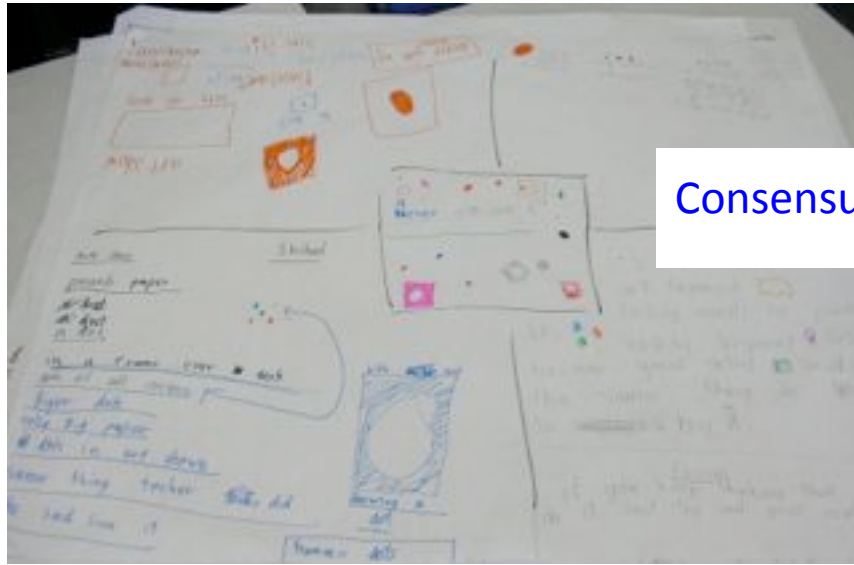
EVALUATE

Come back to the rug and share themes. React to discoveries.

EXIT SLIP → Students draw a symbol to stand for theme. Share drawings.

EXTEND

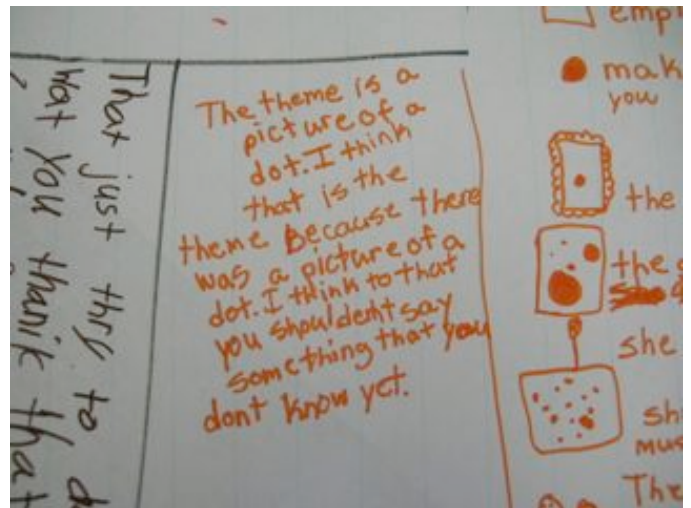
1. Now that students know what they’re doing, try the activity again with a different text.
2. Use Consensus Boards for any topic – main idea, main character, author’s purpose, content word students need to understand like “culture,” solving a math problem, etc. Students read and gather evidence before they come to the boards. Instead of drawing, they write their theories and their evidence in their space. They take turns sharing their initial thinking. Then, they discuss with their group members, reach consensus, and write the agreed-upon ideas in the center box.
3. Post the consensus boards in the hall where everyone can see them.



Consensus Board

Strong understanding

Weak understanding



Evaluation: One child's conception of theme.

