

# Using Literacy Centers to Differentiate in the World Language Classroom

**Nathan Lutz**  
**Kent Place School**



# DO NOW

**Jot down one lesson/activity that is difficult for you to implement in class either because of your class size or the range of proficiency levels of your class.**



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**For handouts from today's  
session, please go to  
[www.nathanlutz.org](http://www.nathanlutz.org)**



“Differentiation isn’t a  
strategy.

It’s a way of thinking about all  
you do when you teach. . .”

~ Carol Ann Tomlinson





You want me to do  
**WHAT?**

# Scenario 1

Traditional Approach



The Real World



# The Scenario

No two students enter a classroom with identical abilities, experiences, and needs. Learning style, language proficiency, background knowledge, readiness to learn, and other factors can vary widely within a single class group.





# The Scenario

Regardless of their individual differences, however, students are expected to master the same concepts, principles, and skills. Helping all students succeed in their learning is an enormous challenge that requires innovative thinking.



# Scenario 2



# If the sky were the limit...

- Have you ever wanted to teach a small group of 4-5 students?
- Do you think students need greater opportunity to become independent workers?
- Does “one size fits all” not work for your class?



# Small Group Instruction

- Targeted direct instruction
- Assessment
- Opportunity to re-teach / enrich
- Get to know students better – academically and socially

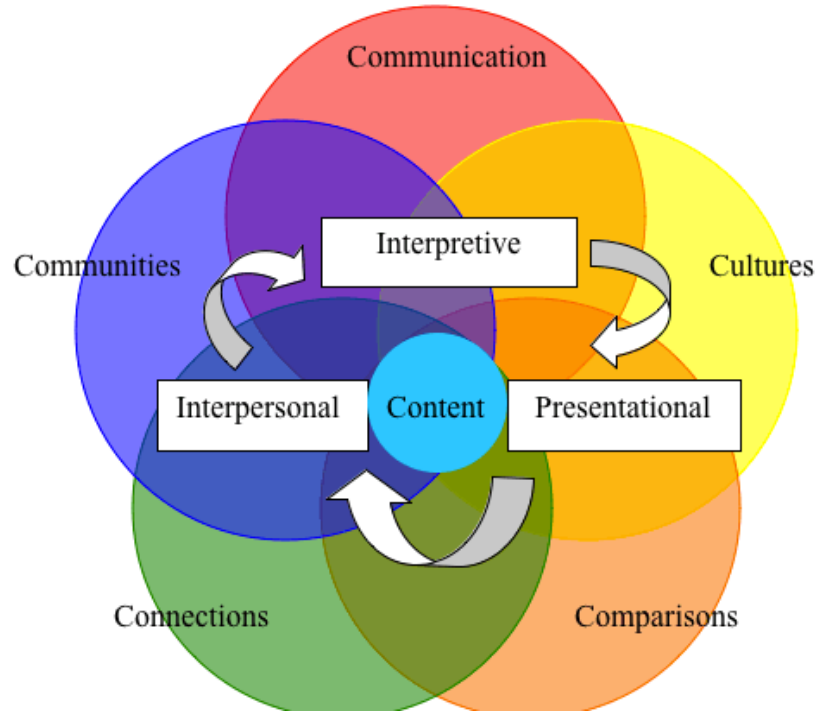


# Independent Learning or Small Group Work

- Students work independently at their instructional level
- Foster work ethic
- Develop independence
- Foster collaboration



# Our Task as World Language Teachers





# Establish your goals

Practice a skill

Extend knowledge about a subject

Reteach content to struggling students

Review material prior to an assessment

Produce a project



# Setting Up

1. Design activities
2. Set time limits
3. Group students
4. All materials organized and made available
5. Clear expectations that are posted
6. Explain, Model, Rehearse, Rehearse, Rehearse



# Setting Time Limits

Whole class

1/2 class

1/3 class

1/4 class

...



# How to group?

Homogenous



Heterogeneous



# Organizing Your Centers

Make a space for your students to work

Provide all materials

Color coding and/or use boxes/bins/folders

Display clear and concrete directions

Provide means to collect work/accountability sheet





# Rehearsal

Display groups & movement chart

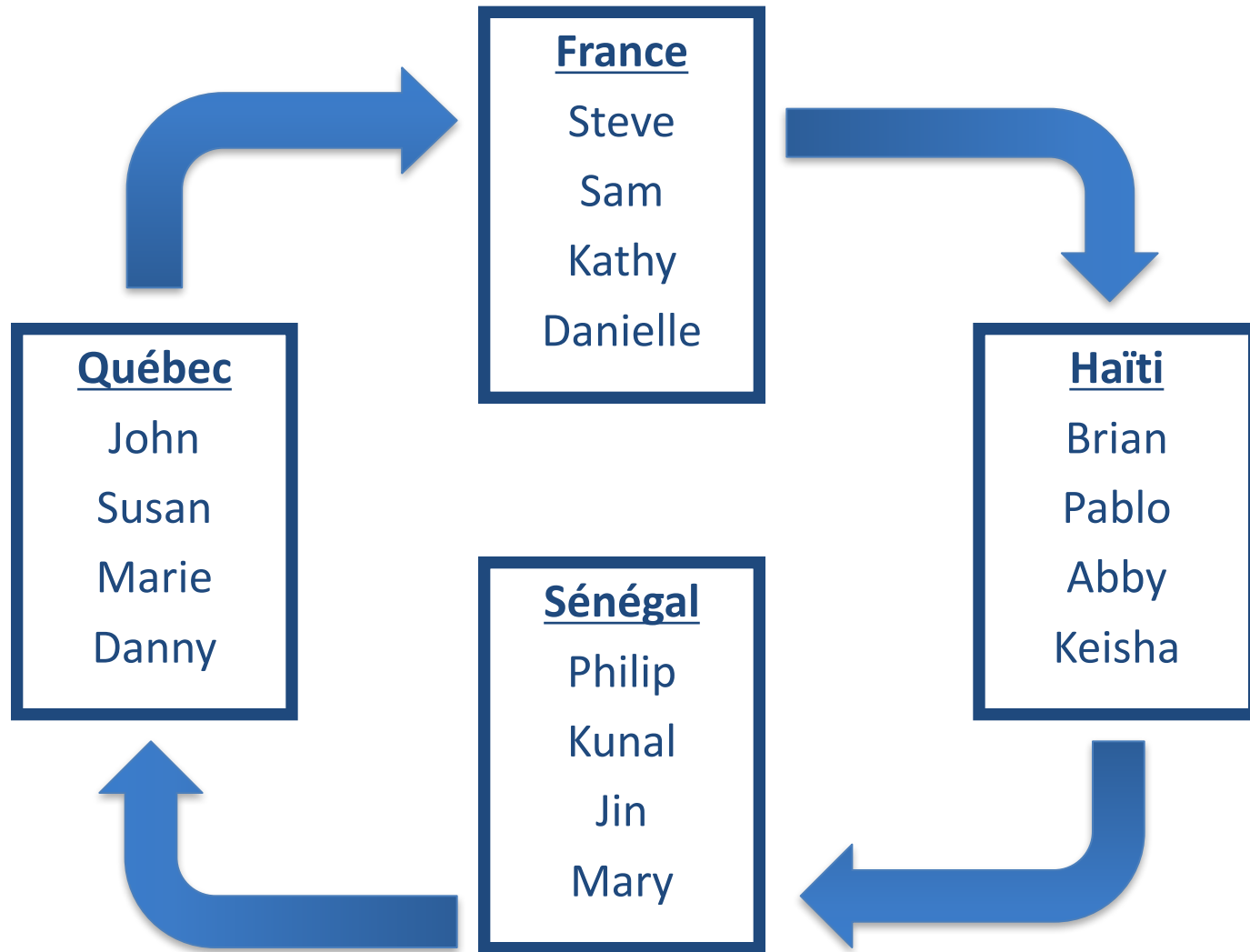
Dry run through the centers

Model orderly behavior for movement, quiet, etc.

Initially do games at centers – reinforce the fun!

Require resetting the center – tidying up





# Types of Centers

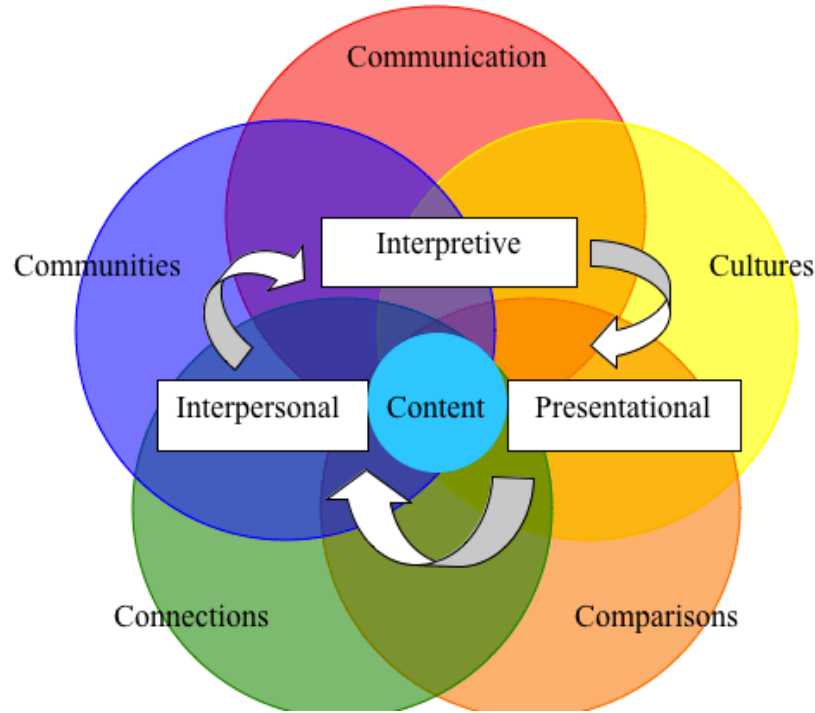
The sky is the limit!

**BUT. . .**

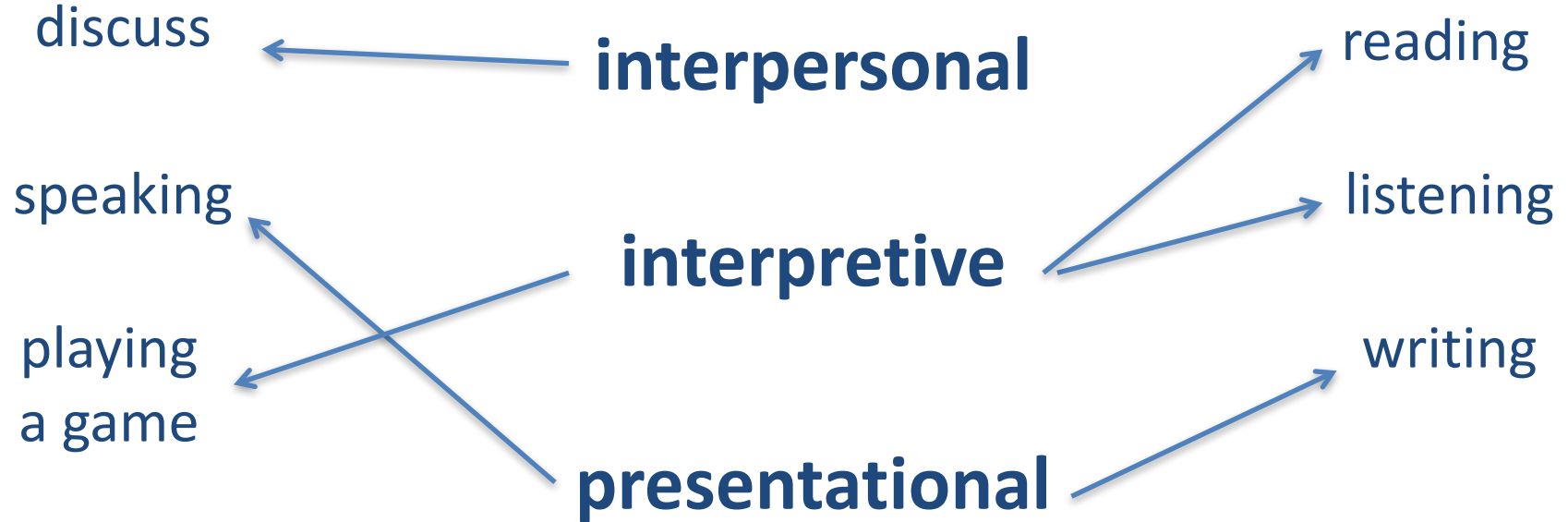
Keep it simple  
until the students learn the routine



# Our Task as World Language Teachers



# Variety





# Keep in Mind. . .

- What are the objectives of this unit? What do students need to know and be able to do?
- What learning and practice would best be done at the teacher table?
- What experiences are best done in small groups or individually?
- What skills really need extra practice or support?
- What are engaging realia, videos, etc. for this unit?
- What materials and technology do I have access to?
- How shall I group students to maximize learning?



# Accountability

- For individual work: Turn in a worksheet/checklist
- For games/experiential work: Turn in a slip or fill out a group sheet
- Staying in the target language



# Examples of Centers

- Reading Center (interpretative communication)
- Guess Who? (interpersonal communication)
- Information Gap (interpersonal communication)
- Guess Where? (interpersonal communication)



**Think back to your “do now” – the lesson/activity that is difficult for you to implement in class either because of your class size or the range of proficiency levels of your class. . .how can you solve that issue with a learning center?**



**NOW IT'S  
YOUR TURN**





# Parting Words

- Start small
- Strive for a balance of modalities/activities
- Share/collaborate with a colleague
- Centers can be portable: use file folders



¡Gracias!

Merci!

谢谢

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# References

Blaz, Deborah. Teaching Foreign Language in the Block. Eye on Education: 1988.

Diller, Debbie. Literacy Work Stations, Making Centers Work. Stenhouse: 2003

Ford, M.P. & Opitz, M.F. “Using centers to engage children during guided reading time: Intensifying learning experiences away from the teacher.” in The Reading Teacher: 2002.





**TPR; Yes/No; one word answers**



**Simple sentences**



**Organizing sentences**



**Spontaneous speaking**



**Retelling a story**



**Creating a story**

**PROFICIENCY  
TRAJECTORY**

