Experiential Learning Zones:
Turn your Classroom into a Space for 21st Century Learning

Essential Questions:
• How can we give our students the tools, time and space to have meaningful EXPERIENCES that will enable them to gain the understandings necessary for true learning/mastery of the standards and 21st century skills?

• How can we instill a strong desire for our students to effectively COMMUNICATE their new understandings, both to us and to each other? (Thereby cementing the new knowledge and vocab.)

• How can we differentiate instruction so that each student is engaged, challenged, honored, and excited about their learning?
Paradigm Shift - A new way of thinking about teaching
Planning:
Shift from a focus on “teaching” the standards to a focus on creating experiences that allow students to understand, use and share the standards. Ensure that the experiences are connected to each other, and that knowledge is built upon prior experience.

Classroom Design:
Shift from a focus on several whole group instructional spaces to a focus on creating Zones - each with materials ready for experiencing and encouraging the creative learning process.

Aren’t Zones just a new name for Centers? NO… Here’s why…
When done correctly, Zones incorporate ALL of the following research-based BEST practices:
- Multi-sensory exploration
- Meaningful vocabulary acquisition
- Experiential, Hands-on learning
- Play-based Learning
- Constructive Conversations
- Skill and Strategy Practice
- Thematic, Integrated Curriculum
- Meta-Cognition (Explaining your Thinking)
- Integrated Arts Instruction
- Science Inquiry Model
- Project-Based Learning
- Direct Instruction (EDI)
- Writing Across the Curriculum
Zones:
• have a written goal, learning objective, or challenge to accomplish.
• have materials ready for children to use/choose from.
• can be finished in one session. (usually)
• can connect to other zones by theme or unit of study.
• can be used to practice a skill or standard(s).
• focus on collaboration and teamwork.
• can be differentiated and allow for extension.
• incorporate reading and writing whenever possible.
• should be debriefed afterward to connect learning to activity.
• should have journal prompt/writing activity
• can have explicit vocabulary taught/used.

Need some Zone ideas?
Science Zone          Game Zone
Handwriting Zone      Book/Library Zone
Art Zone              Geometry Zone
Language Zone         Biology Zone
Construction Zone     Meteorology Zone
Math Zone             Geology Zone
Reading Zone          Author Zone
Writing Zone          Illustrator Zone
Listening Zone        Music Zone
Fluency Zone          Rhythm Zone
Puzzle Zone           Puppet Zone
Engineering Zone      Drama Zone
Poetry Zone           Song Zone
iPad Zone             Plant Zone
Computer Zone         Animal Zone
Dance Zone            Letter/Spelling Zone
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