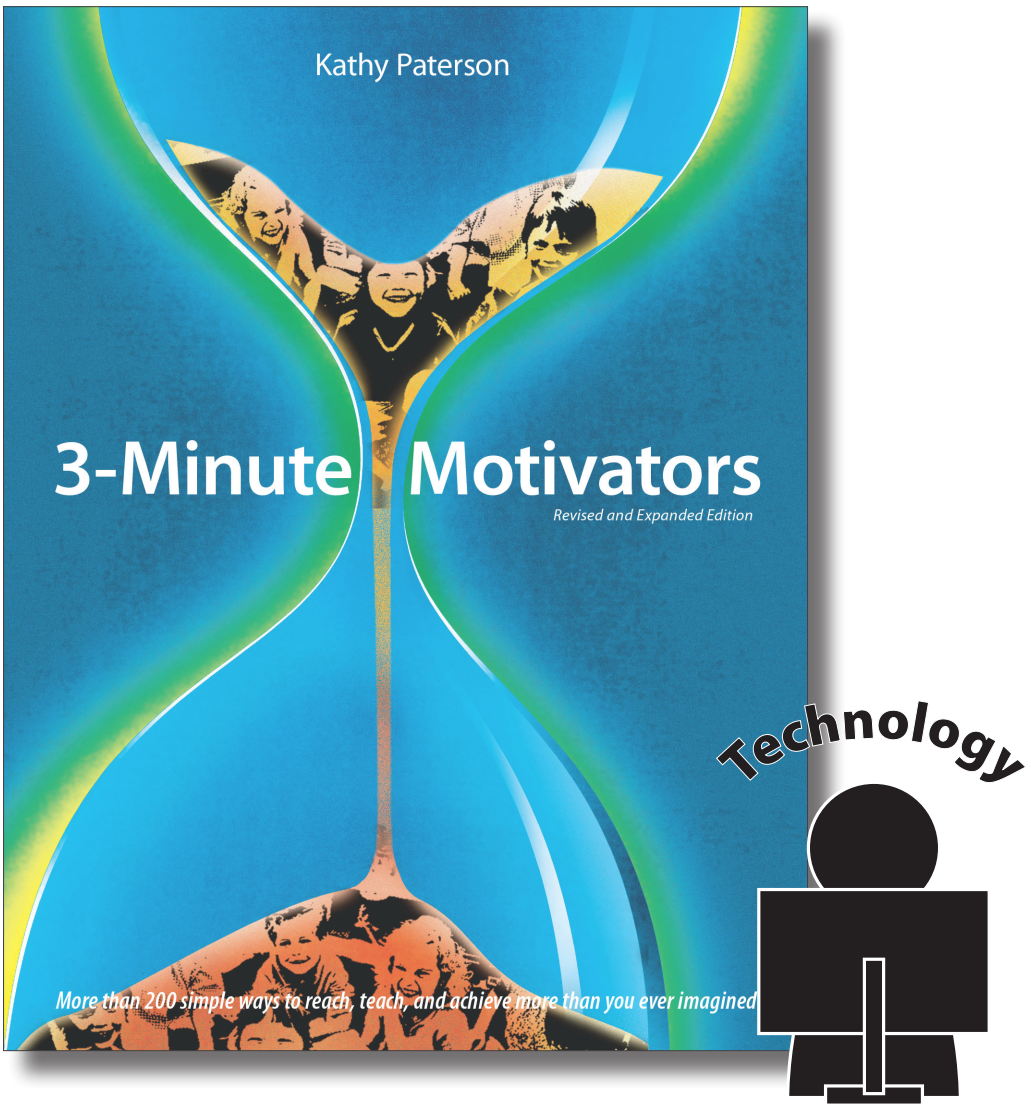
Tech Tools

Pembroke's Friday Freebie



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Today and Tomorrow

Some activities in Today and Tomorrow follow the established format for 3-Minute Motivators; others have a more personal in- or out-of-class approach.

In this chapter, new to this edition of *3-Minute Motivators*, consideration is given to the world of today's technology, in which all our students are immersed; also explored is the timely issue of dealing with the stress or anxiety associated with kids' overfilled agendas, both in and out of school. The new challenges and tensions students face today have impact on how children manage learning and living, as students and adults. In giving our students (and ourselves) quick and easy techniques for coping, we are doing everyone a great favor.

Tech Too

Today's students have been raised in a digital environment with computers in their hip pockets, so to speak. They are very familiar with all things technological, so it makes sense to have refocusers that work within this seemingly dominant aspect of their lives. Like all other refocusers in this book, the Motivators in this chapter are quick and easy activities that excite and stimulate students, and provide brief interludes from whatever lessons are being taught.

Tech Too activities all focus to some degree on the digital environment. They are directly related to awareness, understanding, and appreciation of technology in the classroom.

- The activities marked Digital Fingertips require computers with Internet access, making them great refocusers for use *during* a computer-based class. Even with the natural motivation attached to computer-based lessons, students can become restless, distracted, or off-task. All you need to do is cue for attention and have students save what they are working on and close the page. Then they will be ready for the refocuser. It's true that these motivators can take more than three minutes, but if you adhere to time suggestions strictly, they can fit that time allotment.
- The refocusers marked Digital Desks are technology-related, but can be carried out right at students' desks. This makes them easy to incorporate into any lesson, using students' interest in and understanding of technology to help them come back to the lesson with new enthusiasm. All except one are done with partners, so communication skills as well as cognition and memory are reinforced.
- All activities in this section challenge students' understanding of the application of technology and invite them to recall, relate, and even reinvent what they know.

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Where activities are marked as *Individual*, please remember that it is simply a suggested guideline.

- Many of these 3-Minute Motivators are individual pursuits, but they can be adapted to address socialization simply by having students work with partners or in small groups

Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of facts; Research

Individual

Prep: Collect true/false facts

Note: This is a wonderful refocuser that also can help students obtain new knowledge or reinforce what is already known, as well as providing practice in research skills.

187. Fact or Fiction

Objective: To do a digital search to determine fact from fiction.

- *We are going to take a few minutes for a change of focus right now.*
- *Stop what you are doing. Close and save your work.*
- *Now listen carefully to the statement I read. You have 60 seconds to try to find out if it is true or not true; that is, whether it is fact or fiction.*
- *You can use your computers to search.*
- Cue to start and to stop, even if not all students have found the answer.

* * *

Sample True/False Facts

- A stranger who stopped to change a tire on a disabled limo was rewarded for his efforts when the vehicle's passenger, Donald Trump, paid off his mortgage. (False)
- A police officer promised a waitress half his earnings if he won the lottery. He won. He gave her half. (True)
- Breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. (Unverifiable)
- Rain that falls during a sun shower brings good luck. (Unverifiable)
- Creating a phony entry in your address book will stop viruses from mailing themselves out from your computer. (False)
- The Stanley Cup was once left in a snowbank. (True)
- Disneyland used to deny admission to long-haired male guests. (True)

Sample Content-Area True/False Facts

- The Great Wall of China is the only human-made object visible from the moon. (False)
- A lightbulb manufactured in 1901 burns brightly to this day. (True)
- A convex (outward) quadrilateral with one pair of parallel sides is known as a trapezoid in the US and a trapezium in other parts of the world. In both instances it comes from a Greek word meaning "little table." (True)
- The sun supplies all energy needed for life. (False: certain microscopic organisms don't get their energy from the sun, but from inorganic sources.)

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Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of facts; Research

Partners

Prep: Compile a list of subject ideas

188. Then & Now

Objective: To do a digital search to discover the roots of a modern tool or appliance.

- *I think we can all agree that we live in an ever-changing environment, with new gadgets and appliances and tools appearing daily.*
- *For this game you are to work together to figure out what we used to have or use before an item we have today. We'll call the current item the* today-tool.
- *We will call what came before the current item* past-tools. *For example, if the today-tool is a flat iron for hair, the past-tool might have been* _____. Allow some responses; e.g., clothes iron, ironing board.
- *Use your computers to research for possible past-tools.*
- *There might be more than one past-tool for the today-tool, so keep searching until I cue you to stop.*

* * *

Sample Today-Tools

- computers
- tablets
- smart phones
- iPods
- iPads
- notebook computers
- e-mail
- social networks: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.
- e-reader
- ear buds
- flash drive
- podcast
- digital photo story
- blog
- cyberbullying

Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of facts; Research

Small Groups

Note: For sample technologies, see samples for Then & Now above.

189. The Good, The Bad, and the Really Awful

Objective: To express subjective opinions about technology.

- *Have you heard someone say that technology today is bad, harmful, causing more problems than it's worth?* Allow a few responses.
- *In this game, you get to make a group decision about specific forms of technology.*
- *I will name a technology. You will decide if it's bad, good, or really really awful. You might even decide that it's a bit of both bad and good.*
- *The catch is that the group must come to one decision, and you have only a few minutes to convince each other.*
- Name a technological device or technologically based behavior.

* * *

Sample Behaviors

- online/video game playing
- online chat/dating/sharing of personal information
- use of e-mail/social networks
- online banking/shopping/business
- unlimited exposure to web pages/specialty sites/adult-only sites

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Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of words; Research

Partners

Props: Word-search software

Notes:
- This is a great way to reinforce and review content vocabulary. Completed projects can be printed and used later in class.
- This 3-Minute Motivator can be returned to repeatedly for brief intervals as several refocusers.

190. Tech Search

Objective: To do a word search based on technological (or subject content) words

- *With your partner, you are going to do a word search using as many technology/science/math words as you can think of.* You can have them search generally for subject words, or more specifically for content-area words.
- *First you will have to use your computers to find a good program for making word searches.*
- *I will allow you only three minutes, so you will have to work quickly.* The amount of time can be adjusted according to the situation.
- *When I cue you to stop, save your work and we will return to it later.*

Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of facts; Research

Small Groups

Prep: Prepare a list of devices/ technologies

Note: Students love this activity. If they can't find an object's history, allow some creativity and imagination on their parts and have them make it up.

191. Going Back

Objective: To think backward from a current technology to work through its history.

- *For this game, each group will work on one device or technology.*
- *I will choose a device or technology for you.*
- *Your job will be to think backward from that item, and try to get as far back into history as possible. For example, if the item is a smart phone, you might first go back to a cell phone, then to a cordless land line, then…* Allow a few responses.
- *You can use your computers to search back. You might have to get creative.*
- *Have one group member record all the steps back.*
- *Go as far back as you can in the time allotted.*

* * *

Sample Technologies

- interactive whiteboards
- e-readers
- e-mail
- microwave ovens
- indoor grills
- home theatres
- talking vehicles
- self-parking vehicles
- DVD burners
- robot for surgery
- voice answering systems
- tablets
- tappable credit cards and card readers
- digital gas pumps
- computer servers
- search engines

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Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of words; Research

Partners

Props: Online crossword program

Note: Like Tech Search, this 3-Minute Motivator can be broken down into small bursts of work and returned to on several occasions.

192. Tech Cross

Objective: To create a crossword puzzle using only tech (or subject-content) words.

- *With your partner, you will make a fun crossword puzzle, but you can use only words that are related in some way to technology/science/math.* You can have them use general subject words, or more specific content-area words.
- *First you must find a crossword-puzzle maker online.*
- *Collect a list of words.*
- *Remember that for every word, you will need a definition. That's how users of the crossword puzzle will figure out the words. So have succinct, short, accurate definitions of your words as clues.*
- *Use the crossword maker to make your words into a puzzle.* This refocuser can be done without the crossword program; have students link the words together as if they were going to place them in a crossword.

Digital Fingertips

Subject: Any as source of facts; Research

Partners

Prep: Compile a list of unusual words. There are many Internet sites for weird and wonderful words. Have a volunteer or older student research a list for you.

Note: This is usually a very quick activity with hilarious results. You can give a different word to each partnership, so that the results are more entertaining when shared.

193. Unusual & Unique

Objective: To do a digital search to identify unusual or unique words.

- *With your partner, you are going to search the Internet for clues about words provided by me.*
- *The words might be for things, or people, or situations. But they are all unusual or unique.*
- *You must jot down any information you find, and also indicate what is unusual or unique about the word.*
- *The catch is that you can use only ten to fifteen words for each word—no lengthy definitions. You have to keep it short and concise.*
- Give one word at a time, allowing only a few minutes for researching.
- You can take this a step further by inviting students to find unusual or unique items/people/situations and to report back on these.

* * *

Sample Words

- jackalope
- knucker
- haberdasher
- interrobang
- rannygazzo
- rumbledethumps

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