

**Title of Session:** Math Transformers - Tangram Tales

**Moderator:** Patricia Chen

**Guest Speaker:** Dianne de Las Casas

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Room: Math Transformers Group

**BjB** : Welcome, everyone, to today's Math Transformers

**BjB** : I am honored to be able to have Dianne as our guest speaker for this discussion.

**PatriciaCh** joined the room.

**ShawnL** joined the room.

**DianneD**: Thank you. It is my pleasure.

**BjB** : Hi, Pat!

**DianneD**: Glad you're here!

**BjB** . o O ( you had to fight the crowds )

**PatriciaCh**: Welcome!

**BjB** : everyone please give a brief intro so Dianne knows who is in the audience

**JohnB** : John: 5th grade GT teacher

**SaraCa** : Hi! I'm a kindergarten teacher in Alexandria, VA

**JohnN** : I'm a math education major at Franklin College

**MirabaiK**: Hello. My name is Mirabai and I am a second grade teacher in Woodbridge, VA

**BrinaL**: Brina- 1st grade student teacher in Spring ISD

**KatieEH**: Katie, 4th grade, Falls Church, VA -- mixture of Gen Ed and ESOL students

**JennyG**: Jenny..Student Teacher Math 6th Grade Houston,TX

**PatriciaCh**: Pat ..7th grade math teacher in Florida ...and thank you Dianne

**HollyMC:** Holly, Kindergarten teacher in Arlington, VA

**RocioR:** I'm a student teacher from UofH currently teaching Math and science in 4th grade

**TwylaL:** Twyla... I am a student teacher in kindergarten in Houston, TX.

**ShawnL:** Shawn, 3rd grade, Falls Church, VA

**AlweenaD:** Alweena, 4th grade student teacher at spring, TX

**DianneD:** Is that everyone?

**PatriciaCh:** I think so

**DianneD:** I am Dianne de Las Casas, author & storyteller and the author of Tangram Tales: Story Theater Using the Ancient Chinese Puzzle

**AmyPer:** hello, I am Amy and currently teaching in a first grade classroom. Is this math transformers?

**BjB:** welcome, Peter. Please do a brief intro and then Dianne will get started

**BjB:** yes, Amy, you're good

**PeterK:** Hi! I'm an EdTec student at San Diego State, in Bernie Dodge's class.

**DianneD:** I am so glad to see all of you here. BTW, Happy St. Paddy's Day!

**SusanR:** Susan from Ottawa Ontario Canada and facilitator of the K to 3+Great Resources sessions here at Tapped In!

**ClaudiaD:** I'm completing a Tech portfolio for SCSU in Ct

**ClaudiaD:** Same to you!

**BjB** listens intently...I'm so excited that Dianne is here with us today

**BrinaL:** Happy St. Patty's Day to you too

**PatriciaCh:** If you have not introduced yourself, please do so at this time

**DianneD:** I am excited to be here, BJ & Pat

**PatriciaCh:** I am excited to have you here to chat with us

**ClaudiaD:** Yes, me too.

**PatriciaCh:** Would you like to start

**DianneD:** Let's get started!

**DianneD:** Pat, do you have some questions for me or would you like for me to just delve right in?

**PatriciaCh:** Please share with us ...your inspirations ... or just delve right in

**BjB** thinks that Dianne might give a brief description of Tangram Tales...and how it is so cross curricular

**PatriciaCh:** we will have questions at the end of the sessions

**DianneD:** Great

**DianneD:** As I said before, I am Dianne de Las Casas. I am a full-time professional storyteller and author of Tangram Tales.

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales is my 5th title with Libraries Unlimited/Teacher Ideas Press.

**DianneD:** I use the medium of storytelling to connect across the curriculum.

**DianneD:** I was inspired to create Tangram Tales because I was trying to find a resource that had traditional folktales illustrated with traditional Chinese Tangrams.

**DianneD:** As you know, Tangrams are an ancient Chinese puzzle that uses 7 geometric pieces: 5 isosceles triangles, 1 parallelogram, and 1 square

**DianneD:** These various shapes can be rearranged into literally thousands of figures

**DianneD:** When I couldn't find a suitable resource, I decided to write one! LOL

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales contains 25 stories illustrated with different Tangrams throughout the story

**DianneD:** The stories are formatted in a story theater form so that everyone in the classroom has an opportunity to participate.

**DianneD:** I use Tangram Tales to teach math to grades from preK to middle school

**DianneD:** <http://storyconnection.net/blog/2009/01/13/tangram-theses-residency-strehle-elementary-day-1-monday-january-12-2009/> Here you can see samples of how I used Tangrams in the classrooms with various grades

**DianneD:** This was a 10 day residency in which I worked with an entire school, grades PK to 5

**DianneD:** Each day is documented with pictures. The residency culminated in Grades 3-5 performing Tangram Tales

**BjB** checks to make sure everyone got the url

**BrinaL:** are we supposed to go there?

**BjB :** yes, please, Brina

**MirabaiK:** should we go to the website and quickly look at it?

**DianneD:** You can if you want or look at it later

**JohnB :** Great pics!

**DianneD:** Thank you!

**JennyG:** I can't get there for some reason

**BjB :** did you hold down ctrl, Jen?

**DianneD:** I use Standards and benchmarks from IRA, NCTE and NCTM for Tangram Tales

**BjB .** o O ( if you can't open the url, not to worry )

**JohnB :** Love the tangram crowns

**BjB :** the url will be in your transcript and you can look at it later

**DianneD:** Thanks, John

**PatriciaCh:** You will have the url in your transcript

**DianneD:** Those were created impromptu for those teachers!

**BrinaL:** The kids in my class would love doing these

**DianneD:** I should add those to my workshop!

**DianneD:** Last week, I was in South Carolina, where I taught teachers how to use Tangram Tales

**MirabaiK:** My kids would also have fun doing these.

**HollyMC:** These look great.

**DianneD:** The great thing about Tangram tales is that the math is inherent and the storytelling aspect makes the math manipulatives accessible to the students

**DianneD:** They never seem to tire of working with Tangrams

**BrinaL:** so true

**DianneD:** I wish I could show you some video

**DianneD:** I don't have any online yet (permissions)

**KatieEH:** It's such a low-risk activity, too -- this would be very motivating for some of my struggling kiddos who usually have a hard time in math

**KelseyP:** ooooo, video would be nice

**BjB :** maybe you can share them later, after you get permission, Dianne

**BjB :** good, Amy

**DianneD:** I have video but can't post them because of permissions issues

**AmyPer:** sorry, thanks

**PatriciaCh:** Yes it would be nice

**DianneD:** But there are lots of pictures in my blog

**DianneD:** Along with detailed commentary

**DianneD:** The legend of the Tangram goes like this:

**BjB** claps her hands gleefully

**JennyG:** would Tangrams Tales work for 6th grade, too? I don't know what you count as middle school

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales works with 6th grade, absolutely

**DianneD:** The Legend of the Tangram

**JennyG:** yay

**PatriciaCh:** I teach 7th ... and I would like to do this with them

**DianneD:** Legend says that there was once a Chinese man named Tan.

**DianneD:** His greatest possession in the world was a beautiful square ceramic tile he created.

**DianneD:** On his way to show the Emperor his creation, Tan tripped.

**DianneD:** The tile fell and broke into seven pieces.

**DianneD:** Tan spent the rest of his life trying to form his perfect square but never succeeded.

**DianneD:** His efforts, however, created many beautiful shapes that have inspired people since.

**DianneD:** The End.

**BjB** sighs happily

**PatriciaCh:** Happy Ending :)

**MirabaiK:** Very interesting

**ClaudiaD:** That was great. What have administrators focused on when you've visited their school?

**BrinaL:** That's cute

**DianneD:** I love telling a Tangram tale to the students - their eyes pop out of their heads every time they see the shapes transform into pictures.

**KatieEH:** I had never heard the actual legend before -- thanks!

**FeD:** What a beautiful tale! I know you teach children to make up their own stories with these tangrams. Can you share some recent AHA moments they have had with this?

**AlweenaD:** that was a great tangram tale

**AmyPer:** very interesting!

**DianneD:** **FeD**, I had a first grade student, Carlton, who created a Tangram that made a picture 3 ways: a rocket, a fish and a candle

**BjB** : Dianne, do you have to be on a schools artist in residence list to be invited to do your workshops?

**RocioR**: I think that the students would find it very interesting how it came to be called tangrams

**BjB** . o O ( that would answer Claudia's question )

**DianneD**: When you see students use their creativity and when they are engaged to their full capacity, it's always an "Aha!" moment

**DianneD**: I travel worldwide with my work

**AmyPer**: My first graders would like this too!

**DianneD**: I have been hired by school districts, individual schools, organizations...

**DianneD**: Amy, yes they would!

**JennyG**: So in your book there are 25 stories like that one you just told.

**DianneD**: That story was just an intro

**BrinaL**: Can we order your book online?

**DianneD**: There are 25 full stories illustrated with several Tangrams in each story

**BjB** nods to Brina

**JohnB** : Does the book come with the templates I see on your Bolg?

**DianneD**: Yes, my books can be ordered at any major online book retailer

**BrinaL**: Yeah, I have to get it!

**FeD**: I love the pictures you have posted on your website. All the students clearly enjoyed the process and having you there.

**DianneD**: The book comes with all the templates AND a free rubbery Tangram set

**KatieEH**: how have you seen lower performing students react to this activity? and on the flip side, how have more advanced learners reacted to this?

**RocioR**: I'm interested in getting your book. The kids and I would enjoy it!

**DianneD:** Thank you, Fe.

**JohnB:** Woo Hoo!

**PatriciaCh:** In the book, Dianne also includes the links to curriculum as well as instructions and curriculum based instructions

**SaraCa:** that sounds great!

**DianneD:** Katie, to answer your question::

**PatriciaCh:** I have the book .... I see many possibilities

**JohnB:** do you offer grade level suggestions/activities?

**FeD:** The links are so helpful! As a teacher, it is one less thing to think about. Everything I need is already included! Thanks, Dianne!

**DianneD:** Advanced learners not only use the Tangrams, they create their own as well as stories to go with them.

**BjB** nods to Pat...and the lessons are linked to NCTM and NCTE standards

**DianneD:** I see about 100,000 students a year

**JohnB:** great tie to language arts!

**RocioR:** I love that Idea

**KelseyP:** how does someone get you to come to their school?

**DianneD:** I really try to help teachers reach across the curriculum using non-traditional methods

**DianneD:** My website is <http://www.storyconnection.net>

**TwylaL:** it seems like this can be used for multiple subjects.

**DianneD:** Information about my programs as well as fees are listed

**DianneD:** I also have a ton of FREE resources for teachers!

**KelseyP:** Great!

**MirabaiK:** What would a standard lesson be like?



**JohnB**: we ALL love free...

**DianneD**: Check out the Resources section.

**DianneD**: There are about 50 stories available. I add a new one every month.

**DianneD**: A standard lesson...

**DianneD**: For Grades 3 and up, I tell a Tangram tale.

**KatieEH**: if it's free it's for me!

**FeD**: It is so wonderful to find a math resource that crosses across curriculums! It is a rare find indeed!

**DianneD**: Then I discuss the geometric properties of the Tangram.

**JohnB**: the boy who drew cats is great!

**DianneD**: Next, I pass out Tangrams for the students to work with.

**DianneD**: So they can learn how to work with the manipulative aspect of the puzzle.

**MirabaiK**: do you give them any direction?

**DianneD**: I give them a sheet of Tangrams that they can choose from.

**KatieEH**: this would be a great tie to the geometry unit I'm starting in a few weeks

**DianneD**: They make the Tangrams on the sheet.

**DianneD**: For older students, I instruct them how to create a Tangram without a pattern.

**DianneD**: This is also in the book.

**MirabaiK**: They need to copy the Tanagram on the sheet?

**SaraCa**: are the tangram sheets provided online as well?

**FeD**: How long does the lesson take?

**PatriciaCh**: It is in the book

**BjB**: and you can fold a sheet to make the tangram pieces

**RocioR**: That is a great way to challenge them. To do it w/o a pattern

**PatriciaCh:** That will be good for the middle schoolers

**DianneD:** Mirabai, yes they copy the Tangrams on the sheet and I encourage them to create their own as well

**KatieEH:** a great extension!

**KelseyP:** What is the title of the book?

**DianneD:** The full lesson takes 3 class periods.

**PatriciaCh:** Tangram Tales, Story Theater

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales: Story Theater Using the Ancient Chinese Puzzle

**KelseyP:** Thank you

**DianneD:** published by Libraries Unlimited/Teacher Ideas Press <http://www.lu.com>

**FeD:** While you are in the classroom, is the teacher helping facilitate? Do you work with the teacher ahead of time to go through how the lesson is going to go?

**DianneD:** when I perform a residency, my contract states that a teacher must be present at all times.

**DianneD:** Mostly for liability purposes

**MirabaiK:** Thanks. These can easily be done with my students.

**DianneD:** I send a letter to all the teachers at the beginning of the residency explaining what we will be doing

**BjB:** I think that most schools require that anyway, Dianne

**BrinaL:** How would you go about using this with younger children, say pre-k to second?

**DianneD:** Yes, especially if you are a contractor

**DianneD:** Brina, for the younger grades, I tell a Tangram Tale and then have the students work with simple Tangram Puzzles

**BrinaL:** Thanks

**DianneD:** Younger students are just mastering their motor skills and spatial development

**AlweenaD:** I think it is a great way to engage students by connecting visual images, and storytelling especially in math

**DianneD:** Working with Tangrams are a great way for them to master these skills

**BrinaL:** that makes sense!

**DianneD:** Try getting a kindergartener to flip a parallelogram!

**KelseyP:** Good, or reflect

**FeD:** Just getting a kindergartener to say parallelogram is a big feat! :)

**DianneD:** hahaha

**KelseyP:** true

**ShawnL:** Do you find the younger grades to be more engaged than the older grades?

**DianneD:** It is also called "Rhombus," which some schools teach

**SaraCa:** Tangrams helped my kinders to understand that a square turned on its corner isn't a diamond

**DianneD:** I find all the grades to be equally engaged because of the story connection

**KelseyP:** a rhombus must have 4 equal sides

**DianneD:** Thank you for that, Sara

**RocioR:** Dianne are there any challenges that you face when teaching a lesson of tangrams?

**FeD:** It is wonderful for them to be able to connect the intangibility of geometry to the tangibleness of making pictures.

**DianneD:** Kelsey, try telling that to some of the schools I've been to!

**KelseyP:** I know

**KatieEH:** Do you ever have the older grades you're working with make stories that you then share with the younger grades?

**DianneD:** In my book, a parallelogram is a parallelogram

**BrinaL:** Oooh, that's a good idea

**KelseyP:** At least everyone in this room will know

**KatieEH:** Thanks, Kelsey! :)

**KelseyP:** Katie, good idea

**PatriciaCh:** Thank you ...some elementary teachers use the term interchangeably

**DianneD:** Rocio, challenges:

**PatriciaCh** frowns

**DianneD:** With the younger ones, lack of developed motor skills can be an issue when manipulating the puzzle

**DianneD:** But the more they do it, the better they get

**DianneD:** For older students, many of them are reluctant to perform

**PatriciaCh:** why is that?

**DianneD:** But once they see that everyone is doing it, it all works out

**JennyG:** that's what I would be worried about

**KelseyP:** This would be a great opportunity for the older kids to think about how to make things easier for the younger ones

**ClaudiaD:** Me too

**DianneD:** The "coolness" factor

**KatieEH:** And you become better at doing something by teaching someone else how to do it!

**DianneD:** But that's why I designed the story theater method - to combat that issue

**ClaudiaD:** Yes, and they see manipulatives as "babyish"

**KelseyP:** My kids love tangrams, I teach 5th, but I can see how this might be a problem in high school

**JohnB:** my 5th graders love manipulatives

**JennyG:** some of my kids are too big for their breeches and they think they don't have to

do things

**DianneD:** They don't see manipulatives as babyish when I show them the power of the Tangram

**DianneD:** The story theater method actually builds trust and pride

**KelseyP:** I incorporate tangrams in my math menu, tangrams is an option that most of the kids choose to do

**DianneD:** Everyone has a part and they encourage each other

**KatieEH:** I think it also depends on the school - many schools now (mine included -- and many in Fairfax County) use manipulatives on a regular basis so the kids are used to it

**TwylaL:** my aunt teaches 8th grade math and she says the students love using manipulatives.

**TwylaL:** it beats doing book work.

**ClaudiaD:** I like the multicultural aspect of it.

**JennyG:** So you don't even hand the tangrams out until you have already read the story

**DianneD:** I do grade wide story theater presentations

**KatieEH:** Claudia - I do, too! I teach in a very diverse school and it's awesome when you can tie other cultures to the curriculum

**DianneD:** as well as presentations for the younger students

**FeD:** That is awesome!

**DianneD:** 3rd grade classes perform for 3rd grade classes and younger grades, and so forth

**MirabaiK:** I am always looking to tie the students' cultures into what I am teaching. I can't wait to get your book.

**ClaudiaD:** Yes, we are very big on Courageous Conversations and this would be a great tool to spark conversation and reflection

**FeD:** After the experience, do the students want to perform again for the next time you come to their school?

**JeffC:** Tapped In can really facilitate that online as well Dianne.

**KelseyP:** V-SOL 3rd and 5th teach about Ancient China, this is a great tie in

**JohnB:** I see the multicultural aspect in the story collection. It is great that you list the origin of the story.

**DianneD:** Because there is a performance aspect in my method, the students love sharing their work with other students

**DianneD:** The stories in Tangram Tales are from all over the world

**ClaudiaD:** Wonderful!

**KelseyP:** And you add a new one every month?

**DianneD:** This is the first book of its kind, integrating a collection of folktales with traditional Tangrams

**MirabaiK:** I bet students are really proud of themselves.

**BrinaL:** I can't wait to get this book

**DianneD:** I add new stories to my website every month

**KelseyP:** Are the new stories free?

**JeffC:** This Saturday from 10-12a.m. Pacific I'll be helping classrooms collaborate via Tapped In (and other methods for audio/video). Classroom creation and collaboration will be dealt with. The K-12 Campus here is the safest and most secure on the Net that also allows for collaboration with other classrooms.

**JohnB:** Where do you find the inspiration for where you find your stories?

**MirabaiK:** wow. that is great..

**DianneD:** whoa!

**DianneD:** I am trying to answer everyone...

**KelseyP:** No worries

**BjB** asks everyone to stop asking questions for a few minutes

**JeffC:** No need to answer me Dianne... I'm going afk... just wanted that for everyone's transcript.

**JohnB** ok

**DianneD:** John, my inspiration comes from my worldwide travels, my multicultural family and the diverse students I work with

**JohnB** :)

**DianneD:** Yes, the stories on my website are free!! Free! Free!!

**DianneD:** LOL

**KelseyP:** Awesome!

**BrinaL:** I love FREE

**JohnB** :) :)

**PatriciaCh:** Thank you :)

**FeD:** Yes! Free is good in these economic times...wait...free is good all the time! :)

**AlweenaD:** =) thanks

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales is what you would call "Engaged Learning"

**ClaudiaD:** Brain Based Learning

**RocioR:** I agree

**BjB** cheers for engaged learning!

**DianneD:** If you email me at [dianne@storyconnection.net](mailto:dianne@storyconnection.net) ...

**DianneD:** I will be generous and send you my Tangram Tales handout

**KelseyP:** done deal

**DianneD:** which includes several Tangram tales

**MirabaiK:** wow. Thank you!

**AmyPer:** thanks!

**RocioR:** I sure will thanks

**ClaudiaD:** Thank you

**DianneD:** But you still have to buy the book... hahahaha

**BrinaL:** Awesome :)

**ClaudiaD:** I will!

**SaraCa:** thank you very much!

**PeterK:** Thank you!

**MirabaiK:** I will still do that.

**ShawnL:** Thank you

**PatriciaCh:** The book is worth it!

**DianneD:** You are all very welcome

**RocioR:** oh I will get the book

**DianneD:** Thanks, Pat!

**BrinaL:** I will be getting the book

**AlweenaD:** me too

**DianneD:** I think you will love the combination of language arts, social studies and math

**JennyG:** I definitely plan on buying the book it would be great

**PatriciaCh:** Lots of ideas ...and possibilities even for 7th grade math

**DianneD:** Pat, yes, the Tangram Vocabulary alone...

**JennyG:** I love tangrams

**DianneD:** Tangram Tales would make a great self-assessment rubric

**DianneD:** In fact, in the book, I list self-assessment criteria

**ClaudiaD:** Yes, I was thinking of how to assess the children using this

**MirabaiK:** How?

**ClaudiaD:** Rubrics



**DianneD:** Did the students fulfill the tasks?

**DianneD:** Did the students enunciate the lines clearly?

**FeD:** I will be getting the book too! Thanks, Dianne! It has been great chatting with you. I can't wait to go on your website and take advantage of all your resources!

**KelseyP:** What criteria do you put on the rubric?

**JennyG:** Do they fill in the rubric?

**PatriciaCh:** That is one thing you can work with the students on ...so they own the rubrics too

**DianneD:** Did students cooperate and interact with members of the group?

**KelseyP:** Could you email a copy of the rubric? That might be easier than explaining...

**PatriciaCh:** of course ..it is for the older kids that is

**ClaudiaD:** My school is very big on data and data driven instruction

**DianneD:** Were the Tangrams properly assembled?

**DianneD:** There are many ways to assess.

**PatriciaCh:** Claudia ..I think most schools are these days

**JohnB** Kelsey will then fwd it...

**BjB** . o O ( I'd think about what learning you wanted the students to demonstrate )

**BjB** : and then construct the rubric from that

**DianneD:** I like for the students to create their own rubric

**PatriciaCh:** <http://www.rubricstar.com/> check this out

**DianneD:** There is ownership

**BrinaL:** great website

**MirabaiK:** Thanks Kelsey

**JennyG:** I love that website...

**KelseyP:** Me too, does it have something for tangrams?

**BjB :** we are almost at the end of our hour. A reminder that the next Math Transformers discussion will be on April 14

**DianneD:** Wow, that was quick!

**DianneD:** Are there any final questions?

**BjB** hugs Dianne warmly. Thank you so much for joining us tonight and sharing

**JennyG:** yep it sure was

**PatriciaCh:** This is an engaging discussions

**JohnB** check out the study guides on her site!!!

**BrinaL:** thanks Dianne!

**TwylaL:** I can't wait to start using these in the classroom

**DianneD:** John, thank you!

**TwylaL:** thanks

**PatriciaCh:** Thank you Dianne

**MirabaiK:** Thank you so much. It was very informative.

**JennyG:** I can't wait to use the book and awesome resources

**JohnB:** THANK YOU!!!

**AmyPer:** Great topic and discussion thanks Dianne.

**PeterK:** Thank you!

**DianneD:** I am big on helping teachers help students!!

**KatieEH:** Thanks so much -- this was geat!

**PatriciaCh:** Thank you all for chatting

**JohnN:** thank you

**BjB** : and thank you Pat, for inviting Dianne!

**KelseyP**: Are you going to make another book?

**DianneD**: Please email me and tell me how you are using Tangrams in your classrooms

**AlweenaD**: Thank you for a great discussion

**BjB** : what a great discussion!

**SaraCa**: Thanks! This was very informative

**PatriciaCh**: I will

**JennyG**: Thank you Dianne...great chat and resources

**DianneD**: I have several books and yes, there are more on the way

**BrinaL**: yes, thanks Pat and Bj

**JohnB** : will do

**KelseyP**: Great!

**RocioR**: Thank You I enjoyed learning about tangrams in the classroom

**JennyG**: goodbye

**ShawnL**: Thank you Dianne

**KelseyP**: Thank you!

**DianneD**: <http://www.storyconnection.net> is my website again

**DianneD**: Thank you all!!!

**AmyPer**: thanks Pat

**PatriciaCh**: Check it out ..lots of info

**JohnB** : in my favorites

**FeD**: Thank you again and good-bye!

**DianneD**: Awww, John, you're one of my favorites now!

**PatriciaCh:** Please join us again next month

**DianneD:** ;)

**KelseyP:** nice John....

**MirabaiK:** Will definitely visit your site. Free resources!

**DianneD:** Teacher's pet...

**JohnB :**)

**RocioR:** Thank You

**DianneD:** hahaha

**DianneD:** Best wishes and look forward to "seeing" you around!

**SusanR :** thanks again

**PatriciaCh:** Thank you again Dianne ... wonderful discussions

**DianneD:** Thank you, Pat!

**DianneD:** Bye everyone! Time for dinner!

**PeterK:** Thanks for a great discussion everyone! Bye!

**PatriciaCh:** Good bye