

The M.E.S.S. Model: a tool to Simplify Mathematical Problem Solving

M.E.S.S. (Model. Equation. Scratchwork. Sentence.) is a systematic approach that helps students organize their thoughts as they solve word problems. This approach is used when a model is the problem-solving tool of choice. M.E.S.S., which I often call “Visual Algebra,” offer several benefits:

- Difficult problems are simplified
- Given information is formatted into a visual representation, which often clearly reveals quantitative relationships
- Concrete thinking skills which grammar students excel in are used to solve word problems that traditionally have required algebra

Example problems will be offered for each level (3rd – 6th), and a variety of models will be depicted.

If you desire a versatile tool that helps your students see problems from more than one perspective and builds flexible thinking, giving them a framework to more clearly communicate their thinking and solution, then I look forward to seeing you soon.