



CENTER-BASED LEARNING

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WHAT IS CENTER-BASED LEARNING?

- Center-based learning is where students can work by themselves or with others to process the information learned in the classroom.
- It allows them to access a variety of learning materials in an interesting and productive manner.
- Centers are designed to enhance the learning of concepts, skills, themes, or topics.
- This learning can take place after a topic is presented to students, during the course of presenting important concepts, or as an initial introduction to explore a new concept.



WHAT IS CENTER-BASED LEARNING CONTINUED...

- Teachers utilize learning centers primarily between Pre-K and fifth grade to enable children to learn independently through hands-on activities.
- Many students enjoy learning centers because they can move around the classroom from center to center and interact with the lessons and other children.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CENTER-BASED LEARNING?

- Promotes independence.
- Helps students become more responsible.
- Allows students to learn through self-discovery.
- Provides teachers with time to pull students one-on-one or in small groups to target specific academic skills, modify and enrich curriculum, and better meet the needs of individual students.



HOW DO WE PLAN FOR CENTER-BASED LEARNING?

- Identify a standard or skill you would like to reinforce through centers
 - A standard/subject/skill taught and modeled during whole group instruction
 - Aligned with Common Core State Standards
 - Assessment data: used to identify the appropriate level of challenge for your students within the center



ESTABLISHING A CENTER ROUTINE

○ Grouping

- Based on pre-assessments
- Reading levels
- Skill
- Heterogeneous- Heterogeneous (mixed ability) groups lead to higher –quality experiences for all children.

○ Transition

- Rotation routine: folders, charts, schedule, color
- Signals: clapping, chimes, songs
- Directions: Clear, concise, kid-friendly, example
- Materials: clean up, designated shelves, center bins
- Accountability: folders, checklist, reflection,



WHEN CAN YOU USE CENTERS?

- Reading centers can be created to fit just about any topic.
- Generally, a reading center is focused on independent, peer, or shared reading, or it is connected to skill activities taught prior to the center time.
- Some classrooms include centers that focus on reading the walls; reading books, magazines, or posters that go along with topic; or are connected to a listening center.
- The centers may include a pocket chart, the use of the SMART board, a word wall, or vocabulary review.
- Skill centers may include activities that use graphic organizers, posters, flashcards, phonemic-awareness letter tiles, or other manipulatives.



WRITING

- Centers addressing this area should include writing for pleasure, to share information, or to convey meaning.
- Types of tasks used in the writing center include story starters; short-answer response, graphic organizers, poetry, or responding to a writing prompt.
- Students may use writing centers to create books, cards, stories, poems, recipes, lists, newspapers, or directions.
- A writing center can be used in virtually any content area.



SOCIAL STUDIES

- Centers addressing social studies themes are extensions of units.
- Literature activities, role-playing, and drama are great extensions to reinforce themes.
- Other ideas to enhance social studies units include WebQuests, reading or creating maps and globes, creating a postcard after reading about various continents, creating a skit to imagine the life of a child labor, and playing any type of money games to reinforce economic standards.



SCIENCE

- Using literature during a science center is a great extension of a science unit.
- Be sure that the activities also involve observing, hypothesizing, or experimenting with the subject of study.
- Students should be encouraged to ask "What if?" questions on a regular basis.
- Vocabulary or word study is also a natural inclusion in a science study area. Also, using a hand lens to investigate is always a favorite with children.



MATH

- Ideas for enhancing math centers mainly call for the use of manipulatives.
- Some topics that are easily reinforced during center time are data collecting and analysis; sequencing of items by size/number or by time elapsed; learning to tell time; counting money or other manipulatives; taking measurements; or learning one-to-one correspondence.



HOW TO PLAN A DIFFERENTIATED CENTER

- Differentiated centers provide opportunities for students to practice skills and strategies at their level and based on their needs.
- Activities are based on student assessment data.
- Students work with multilevel resources.
- Students are engaged in their learning.



HOW TO PLAN A DIFFERENTIATED CENTER (CONTINUED...)

- Levels of support based on student need are incorporated into the design of each center.
- Tiered activities include varied responses for each skill or strategy.
- Plan for center activities to include varied ways to demonstrate knowledge so that all children can step forward at different times to take on the responsibility of initiating discussions, explaining, modeling, and problem solving.



IDEAS ON HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE WITHIN A CENTER

- Students can follow a simple coding system to select activities within their instructional zone.

Example: Star colors: depending on levels based on pre-assessment

- Must Do...Can do...
- Pick “Challenge” work



TYPES OF CENTERS~ LISTENING CENTER



- **Directions:** After listening to the selected story in the listening center, students will sequence events in the retell of a story using transitional words: first, next, then, and last using the Story Retell activity sheet. Students will use pictures from the story (shopping, cooking the food, setting the table, and friends asking to come to the party) as well as language cue cards (first next, then , and finally) to retell the major events of the story.
- **Differentiation-**
 - * For **struggling students**, they will have picture cards to assist them in retelling the events of the story. Additionally, there will be a prop supported retell available in which props representing a shopping cart, stove, table, and door will assist the students in retelling the story.
 - *For students who need a **challenge**, there will be spaces under the pictures available for students to write the events of the story.



TYPES OF CENTERS~ WORD STUDY



Directions: Each student will have a list of word study vocabulary words. Students will be responsible for generating two synonyms for each word to record in their word work notebooks. Students may utilize a thesaurus to assist them in completing the work.

Differentiation:

- ***Struggling students:*** students should use the vocabulary words in sentences to monitor understanding of the word. Students can also create pictures that align with their vocabulary words.
- ***Advanced students:*** Students should generate two antonyms for each vocabulary word. Students can create crossword puzzles with clues for identifying the vocabulary words for the Word Study words. Students should use antonyms, synonyms and other clues for creating the clues for the crossword puzzle.



TYPES OF CENTERS~ WRITING



- **Directions:** Students will pretend that they are the Country Mouse and they are going to invite the City Mouse to stay with them in the country. They will reread the book City Mouse and Country Mouse with a partner. As they are reading, they will write down the things that the Country Mouse would include in her letter to try to get the city mouse to stay with her. They should think about what activities the Country Mouse likes to do in the country that the City Mouse would also enjoy. They will write a letter to the City Mouse inviting her to spend time in the country.

- **Materials:** Friendly letter graphic organizer, book City Mouse and the Country Mouse, “Things to do in the Country” graphic organizer; example of how to write a friendly letter, second grade sight word list

- **CAN DO:**
 - Create a poster for the Country Mouse inviting people to visit the country. Include things from the book that would be fun to do in the country.
 - Create a skit in which either the City Mouse or the Country Mouse invite each other to the city or the country.
 - -Create a poster for the City Mouse inviting people to visit the city. Include thing from the book that would be fun to do in the city.
 - -Change your letter into a comic strip using the Country Mouse and the City Mouse as your characters.
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TYPES OF CENTERS~ SOCIAL STUDIES

- **Directions:** Students will work together and identify the continents and oceans on the puzzle by putting together the continent and ocean puzzle pieces. They can use the globe, world map, and atlas to help them find the continents and oceans. Then they will use the puzzle and the reference materials to complete the **The World on A Map** activity sheet.
- **CAN DO:**
 - Write about which continent you would like to visit and why. Include what you would also do on that continent.
 - Draw an outline of a continent and have a partner guess which continent you drew.



TYPES OF CENTERS~ SCIENCE



- **Directions:** Read chapter 3 “Electricity on the Move” in the book **Snap, Crackle, and Flow** with a partner. When complete, find 4 new vocabulary words found in the book, list and define them using context clues. You can also use the glossary in the back of the book. Then draw and label a picture of an open and closed circuit diagram using the bulb wire, battery and battery holder and/or the pictures in the book. Finally, think of questions you had after reading the book.

Extension: You and your partner will explore how different materials can be used to control electricity and light a bulb. Gather the materials listed on your **Go With the Flow** activity sheet, *observe* the wire, the battery, and the bulb. Use the *magnifier* to take a closer look at the inside of the bulb. List the properties of each material in the table on the activity sheet.



TYPES OF CENTERS~ MATH

- **Math center:**

- Egg cart addition with numbers & fun erasers
- Nonstandard measurement around the classroom



- **Fact practice center:**

- Play dough numbers
- Hot Dots pen & cards

- **Exploration center:**

- Fractions circles
- Building with solid and plane shapes

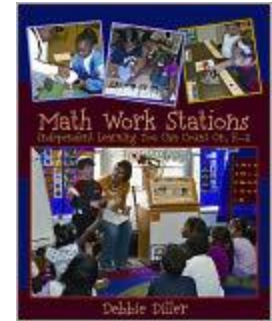
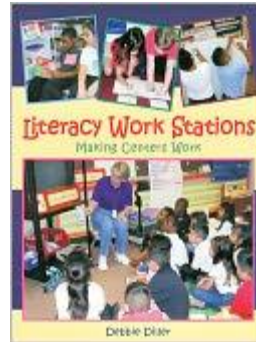


RESOURCES USED TO CREATE CENTERS

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○ Books

- Fountas & Pinnell
- Evan-Moor
- Debbie Diller
- *Differentiated Literacy Centers* by Margo Southall



○ Online

- Teacher blogs
- Teachers Pay Teachers



TEACHERS pay TEACHERS
an open marketplace for educators

○ Other teachers

