

Differentiated Literacy Centers in Action

Presented by Margo Southall

Make differentiated literacy centers and uninterrupted small group teaching a reality in your classrooms! This workshop will demonstrate the organization and implementation of literacy centers that meet a range of student needs, increasing the time students spend reading and writing each day. Differentiated tasks will be provided that focus on essential strategies and skills in Reading Comprehension, Fluency, Word Study and Writing. Each strategy or skill is designed with multiple levels of challenge, making standards-based instruction accessible to every student.

The workshop may be presented as a one-day examination of the four core differentiated literacy centers, or as a two-day make-and-take format, where teachers will plan and construct tasks for each literacy center. The make-and-take option is designed to ensure transfer to classroom practice. Both workshop formats include a comprehensive resource book for each teacher participating in the training, including planning guides, tracking forms and center materials.

6 Key Components of the Workshop:

1. Building the Foundation for Success

- Establish ongoing, sustainable literacy centers correlated to differentiated small-group lessons and whole class instruction
- Incorporate multi-level tasks to meet diverse needs with a teacher-friendly system
- Organize your schedule to support small group teaching and independent practice
- Flexibly group students into center teams and implement a rotation system that ensures all students have opportunity to practice and apply previously taught skills and strategies in order to achieve mastery of key concepts
- Design the display of center materials for efficient use of space and student independence
- Learn effective ways to quick-start the set-up of literacy centers
- Solve common behavior challenges that can disrupt centers
- Acquire center tracking forms to simplify management and learn time-efficient ways to monitor and assess student progress

2. The Reading Comprehension Center

- Provide tasks that support the application of comprehension strategies to a range of text structures and genre
- Include reading response tasks that focus on the following comprehension strategies: Making Connections, Generating and Answering Questions (literal, inferential & evaluative), Using Graphic Organizers correlated to different text structures, Self-

Monitoring and Clarifying, Determining Important Information, Retelling and Summarizing

- Integrate visual aids, such as strategy-based bookmarks and charts that are designed to provide students with personal reference tools
- Organize your reading materials to support self-selection of appropriate leveled text

3. The Fluency Center

- Implement fluency tasks that support an increase in the number of accurate words per minute, attention to punctuation and the use of expression while reading in both independent and collaborative formats
- Organize your center into tasks that focus on fluency with words, phrases and connected text

4. The Word Study Center

- Acquire a year-long menu of evidence-based developmental word study tasks that focus on recognition of letter-sound correspondences, high frequency words, common spelling patterns (rimes & syllable patterns) and vocabulary development
- Make your center sustainable year-round with ongoing formats for word building and word sorting using these readily available materials and website resources

5. The Writing Center

- Select multilevel writing center tasks for your classroom that focus on sentence structure, organization of ideas, creating effective beginnings and endings, expanding main ideas, detail and description and the use of literature models
- Connect your writing process instruction to independent practice with these 'revision stations' that make revising motivating and engaging
- Maximize your instructional time with focused practice of specific writing techniques that make the difference in assessments

6. Putting It All Together

- See multi-level tasks that keep students working within their instructional zone
- Plan activities with more than one level of challenge
- Examine how literacy center tasks can be modeled within whole class and small group instruction
- Support independent work habits with picture-cued task menus at each center
- Identify how to sustain the centers throughout the year in a time-efficient manner
- Incorporate center work into your assessment

