



Second and Third Grade Student Center Activities



Teacher Resource Guide

Teacher Resource Guide

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Introduction

This Teacher Resource Guide accompanies the Second and Third Grade (2-3) Student Center Activities developed by the Florida Center for Reading Research and funded by Just Read, Florida!. It is designed to assist teachers in implementing the independent student center activities that support skill building in each of the five components of reading. This Guide is accompanied by a Professional Development DVD which discusses and illustrates important elements when implementing student centers in a classroom.

During the spring 2004 Florida *Reading First* school site visits, staff from the Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) determined that teachers may benefit from classroom materials that would be immediately useful in implementing independent student center activities.

In 2004-2005, a team of teachers at FCRR collected ideas and created materials for use in kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

During 2005-2006, FCRR developed Student Center Activities for second and third grades (2-3 Project). The 2-3 Project includes a DVD containing Professional Development and three books:

1. Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Student Center Activities
2. Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension Student Center Activities
3. Teacher Resource Guide (accompanied by a DVD)

The first two books contain Activity Plans and Activity Masters ready for immediate use in classrooms. The third book is an informative guide offering important insight on differentiated instruction and how to use the Student Center materials.

When considering Florida's formula, 5 + 3 + ii + iii = No Child Left Behind, please note that each reading component is covered in the Student Center Activities. In addition, the activities will directly support your efforts to provide effective initial instruction, because they will help you to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of every child.

The Student Center Activities (K-3), Teacher Resource Guides, and accompanying Professional Development DVDs can be accessed online at www.fcrr.org.

I hope you and your students enjoy these activities,

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

The Five Components of Reading Instruction

This section provides a definition, a goal, and a brief description of how the Student Center Activities support growth in each of the five components of reading (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension).

Research has made great strides in identifying critical skills that consistently relate to reading success. Based on a comprehensive review of reading research, the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) concluded the need for systematic and explicit instruction in the following five components of reading:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

Considered core elements of successful classroom reading instruction, these five components are a fundamental part of the *Reading First* Initiative, which is the reading portion of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Reading programs that are aligned with current reading research include systematic and explicit instruction in the five components. Systematic instruction is the direct presentation of skills/concepts in a pre-specified sequence taught in a logical, defined order. For example:

- Skills and concepts begin with the most simple and move to the most complex
- Student objectives are clear, concise, and driven by ongoing assessment results
- Students are provided with appropriate practice opportunities which directly reflect instruction

Explicit instruction is taught directly through teacher modeling, guided practice, supported application, and independent practice. For example:

- Teacher models and explains
- Teacher provides guided practice
 - Students practice what the teacher modeled and the teacher provides prompts and feedback
- Teacher provides supported application
 - Students apply the skill as the teacher scaffolds instruction
- Independent practice

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Phonemic Awareness

Phonological awareness is defined as one's sensitivity to, or explicit awareness of, the phonological structure of words in one's language. It encompasses an awareness of individual words in sentences, syllables, and onset and rime segments as well as awareness of individual phonemes in words. Phonological awareness is considered an "umbrella" or broad term, which covers aspects of sound identification and manipulation in spoken language. In the K-1 Project, the Student Center Activities for phonological awareness are based on a progression of skill difficulty (i.e., rhyme, alliteration, sentence segmentation, syllable, onset and rime, and phonemes). Teachers may refer to those activities if needed.

The Student Center Activities for the 2-3 Project focus on Phonemic Awareness. The goal of phonemic awareness instruction is to develop an awareness that words are composed of individual sounds, or phonemes, and to develop the ability to manipulate sounds in words.

The Phonemic Awareness section of the 2-3 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific Phonemic Awareness skills and are sequenced from simple to complex by the difficulty level of the skill. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Phoneme Matching, Phoneme Isolating, Phoneme Blending, Phoneme Segmenting, Phoneme Segmenting and Blending, and Phoneme Manipulating (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Phoneme Matching

Students practice matching initial, final, and medial phonemes in words.

Phoneme Isolating

Students practice isolating initial, final, and medial phonemes in words.

Phoneme Blending

Students practice blending phonemes in words.

Phoneme Segmenting

Students practice segmenting phonemes in words.

Phoneme Segmenting and Blending

Students practice segmenting and blending phonemes in words.

Phoneme Manipulating

Students practice manipulating phonemes in words.

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Phonics

Phonics is the study of the relationship between graphemes (letters) and the phonemes (sounds) they represent; it is also used to describe reading instruction that teaches sound-symbol correspondences. The goal of phonics instruction is to help children use the sound-symbol relationship to read and write words.

The Phonics section of the 2-3 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific phonics skills and are sequenced from simple to complex by the difficulty level of the skill. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Letter-Sound Correspondence, High Frequency Words, Variant Correspondences, Syllable Patterns, and Morpheme Structures (see below). Results from on-going assessment and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Letter-Sound Correspondence

Students practice matching phonemes and digraphs to letters.

Students practice blending word parts (onsets, rimes, digraphs, and blends) to form words.

Students practice segmenting phonemes in words.

High Frequency Words

Students practice reading high frequency words.

Variant Correspondences

Students practice identifying variant correspondences in words.

Syllable Patterns

Students practice blending, segmenting, and identifying syllables in words.

Morpheme Structures

Students practice forming compound words and identifying individual words in compound words.

Students practice identifying base words with inflections and blending base words with affixes and inflections.

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Fluency

Fluency is the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression and is the bridge between word recognition and comprehension. Fluency emerges gradually over time through supported and repeated practice in automatic word recognition, and is developed through phonemic awareness, accurate letter sound correspondence, sound blending, and guided oral reading. The goal of fluent reading is to recognize words automatically and read with prosody (proper phrasing, intonation, and expression).

The Fluency section of the 2-3 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of fluency and are sequenced from simple to complex by the difficulty level of the skill. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Letter-Sound Correspondence, Word Parts, Words, Phrases, Chunked Text, and Connected Text (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Letter-Sound Correspondence and Word Parts

Students use timed practices to recognize letter-sounds.

Word Parts

Students use timed practices to identify word parts.

Words

Students use timed practices to read words.

Phrases

Students use timed practices to read phrases.

Students practice reading phrases with prosody.

Chunked Text

Students practice reading chunked text with prosody.

Connected Text

Students use timed practices to read connected text

Students practice reading connected text with prosody.

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to the meanings and pronunciation of words necessary for communication. Vocabulary is often categorized as oral (listening and speaking) or reading (reading and writing) vocabulary. The goal of vocabulary instruction is to provide students with an understanding of the meaning and use of words so that they can comprehend what they are reading and communicate effectively.

The Vocabulary section of the 2-3 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of vocabulary and are sequenced in a logical order based on the difficulty level of the skill. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Word Knowledge, Morphemic Elements, Word Meaning, Word Analysis, and Words in Context (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Word Knowledge

Students practice identifying contractions, synonyms, antonyms, abbreviations, homophones, and homographs.

Morphemic Elements

Students practice identifying the meaning of compound words, affixes, and words containing the same root.

Word Meaning

Students practice identifying and producing the meaning of words.

Word Analysis

Students practice identifying similarities and differences between the meanings of words.

Words in Context

Students practice identifying the meaning of words in context.

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The Five Components of Reading Instruction

Comprehension

Comprehension is defined as the ability to understand and get meaning from spoken and written language and is the ultimate goal in learning to read. The goal of comprehension instruction is to teach children specific strategies to use for understanding text as they are reading.

The Comprehension section of the 2-3 Student Center Activities offers activities that provide practice opportunities for the support and reinforcement of previously taught skills. The Activities are designed around specific skills in the area of comprehension and are sequenced in a logical order based on the difficulty level of the skill. The Activities are sequenced and identified in the following manner: Narrative Text Structure, Expository Text Structure, Text Analysis, and Monitoring for Understanding (see below). Results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring are factors in determining the order of implementation of these activities in the classroom.

Narrative Text Structure

Students practice identifying story elements (characters, setting, sequence of events, problems, solution, plot, and theme).

Expository Text Structure

Students practice identifying details, main idea, and important information in expository text.

Text Analysis

Students practice identifying and organizing text.

Monitoring for Understanding

Students practice using strategies to comprehend text.

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Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Centers

Frequently Asked Questions Concerning Reading Centers

1. What is differentiated instruction?

The Literacy Dictionary (1995, p. 60) defines differential reading instruction as “the provision of varied learning situations, as whole-class, small-group, or individual instruction, to meet the needs of students at different levels of reading competence.”

Put simply, differentiated instruction involves matching instruction to meet the diverse needs of learners in a classroom. When considering the Florida formula, 5 + 3 + ii + iii = No Child Left Behind, it is important to keep in mind that differentiated instruction is part of initial instruction (ii). After a whole group lesson, reading centers provide time for teachers to effectively differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students. This can be accomplished by the teacher working with an individual or with a small group of students at the Teacher-Led Center while the other students practice, demonstrate, and extend skills independently at the student centers. This is an ideal time to keep students actively, yet academically, engaged and motivated during the 90 minute reading block. Reading Centers can also provide time for teachers to implement immediate intensive intervention (iii) with individual or small groups of students.

2. What is a Reading Center?

A Reading Center is a place where students practice, demonstrate, and extend learning independent of the teacher (Student Center) or with the assistance of the teacher (Teacher-Led Center).

To elaborate, Reading Centers are special places organized in the classroom for students to work in small groups, pairs, or individually. Each Center contains meaningful, purposeful activities that are a reinforcement and/or an extension of what has already been taught explicitly by the teacher in reading groups or during the whole group lesson. Each Center Activity must be pre-taught before it is placed in a center for independent practice since Reading Centers offer students the opportunity to apply previously taught skills.

All Reading Center activities focus on and reflect the content of reading instruction and require careful planning. It is recommended that teachers not bring in material from other content areas (e.g., from science or math) unless the activity specifically focuses on a skill that is being addressed in reading instruction. Usually students work at Centers while the teacher is conducting Teacher-Led small group instruction.

Students practice a variety of skills at Centers. For example, they practice phonics skills at the phonics Center; they explore and apply knowledge of word meanings at the vocabulary Center; they read books, listen to taped books, record the reading of a book, and read in pairs at the fluency Center. Another example is the library/research Center which contains a variety of books clearly marked at various reading levels to meet the needs of all students as well as resource books (e.g., dictionary, encyclopedia, thesaurus). Activities and materials at Centers may consist of building words using magnetic letters, writing and spelling using a whiteboard, and sequencing stories using sentence strips and pocket charts. Some Centers may be permanent; others will change according to the skills, books and activities being currently addressed.

It is important for teachers to provide accountability for students when implementing Reading Centers. Monitoring progress on a daily basis is an important part of instructional time and helps teachers determine student mastery. When an effective classroom management system is in place, feedback can be provided to students in a timely manner to help prevent students from practicing errors.

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Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Centers

3. What are examples of Reading Centers and Activities?

Keep in mind that **Center** refers to a place in the room where students go to work; some teachers prefer to keep the types of Centers consistent and others prefer to vary them. As long as the Centers are managed in an organized fashion with clear expectations, either way may be effective. Center space may include the floor, a table, a counter, a large piece of tagboard, or any other defined work area (including those in Table 1). Centers may be portable due to classroom space limitations.

The **Activity** placed at the center is what the student does and it changes frequently based on student assessment data. The Activity is always explicitly taught by the teacher before it is placed at a Center.

Table 1 – Centers and Activities

Example Center	Example Activity
Phonemic Awareness/Phonics Center	Students sort r-controlled words into corresponding spelling pattern “jars.”
Fluency Center	Students time each other as they do repeated readings and then graph results.
Vocabulary Center	Students identify multiple meanings of words by completing a cloze activity.
Comprehension Center	Students use graphic organizers to identify story elements.
Library/Research Center (leveled books sorted by colored stickers or organized in assorted tubs and resource books such as a dictionary, encyclopedia and thesaurus)	Students “partner read” books at their independent reading level.
Computer Center	Students interact with computerized reading programs targeted at their instructional level.

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Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Centers

4. How are these Reading Centers different from the Centers of the past?

Table 2 – Centers of the Past Versus Today

Reading Centers of the Past	Reading Centers of Today
were used by teachers to keep students busy so they could plan or complete paperwork.	are utilized by teachers to provide systematic, explicit, small group instruction that meets the needs of the students (Teacher-Led Center).
were only for students who finished their assigned work.	are for all students.
incorporated only theme-based activities.	incorporate activities that reflect previously taught reading skills.
engaged all students in the same activities.	engage students in specific activities that are selected to differentiate instruction for each student (or a small group of students).
often included only worksheets.	include hands-on, targeted activities that reinforce and are aligned with previously taught skills.
incorporated a lot of non-academic and trivial projects.	keep students academically engaged in meaningful activities that reinforce and extend learning.

5. Why should Student Center Activities be implemented in second and third grades?

A large number of students in this country are struggling to become proficient readers by fourth grade. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which has been administered to 4th and 8th grade students since 1971, reports that student performance in reading has been extremely stable over almost a 30-year period. On the 2003 assessment, 37% of all fourth graders performed below the basic level, which indicates that they do not have sufficient reading skills to adequately support grade level work that involves reading (Torgesen, 2005).

It is important to facilitate an organized classroom, provide explicit, differentiated reading instruction, and offer engaging opportunities for students to practice reading so that they may become proficient readers. Implementing Student Center Activities is important to accomplish this goal.

A critical factor of implementing Student Center Activities successfully is to focus on the individual needs of students. This is best achieved in small groups where teachers can focus on specific skills and scaffold their instruction on a more individualized basis than can be accomplished in a whole group setting. Small group instruction has been found to benefit student learning, especially those who struggle to learn to read (Foorman & Torgesen, 2001). In order to teach in small groups, the teacher must be able to work uninterrupted and be assured that the students who are not in that small group are spending their time productively.

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Frequently Asked Questions About Reading Centers

Student Center Activities provide a way for those students who are not working with the teacher to be academically engaged in meaningful and independent activities. Second and third grade students have most likely experienced Student Centers in kindergarten and first grade and understand the procedures and responsibilities. Continuing this routine in second and third grades allows the teacher to focus on the needs of small groups of students (at the Teacher-Led Center), allows students to practice skills (at Student Centers), and continues the development of responsible behaviors for the students. When the Student Center Activities and expected behaviors have been explicitly taught and practiced well, all students will be academically engaged whether working at independent Student Centers or with the teacher at the Teacher-Led Center.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom: System One

The next part of our guide pertains to developing and implementing Centers. There are eight elements that can assist in developing and implementing an effective classroom management system. These elements include procedures that help facilitate differentiated Teacher-Led small group instruction and support independent Student Center Activities. The first three elements are considered pre-planning activities for the teacher and are completed before implementing Student Centers in the classroom:

- I. Form Flexible Groups Based on Assessment
- II. Identify Appropriate Center Activities Based on Assessment
- III. Design Center Management System

The next five elements are used to implement and manage independent Student Center Activities with the students. It is important to note that these five elements are not necessarily listed in sequential order, but may be done simultaneously.

- IV. Implement a Behavior Management System
- V. Give Explicit Center Directions
- VI. Organize the Classroom
- VII. Manage Transitions
- VIII. Establish Accountability

This Teacher Resource Guide describes two Systems for forming flexible student groups based on assessment. This section describes System One.

I. Form Flexible Groups Based on Assessment

When forming flexible groups based on assessment, important guidelines to consider are:

- Keep group sizes small (5-7 students as a maximum)
- Reduce the group size to 3-5 for students in need of intensive support
- Base small groups on instructional need with specific instructional strategies in mind
- Consider attitudes, behaviors, and work ethics of each student
- Monitor the progress of high risk students more frequently in order to make instructional changes, small group changes, and to accelerate learning

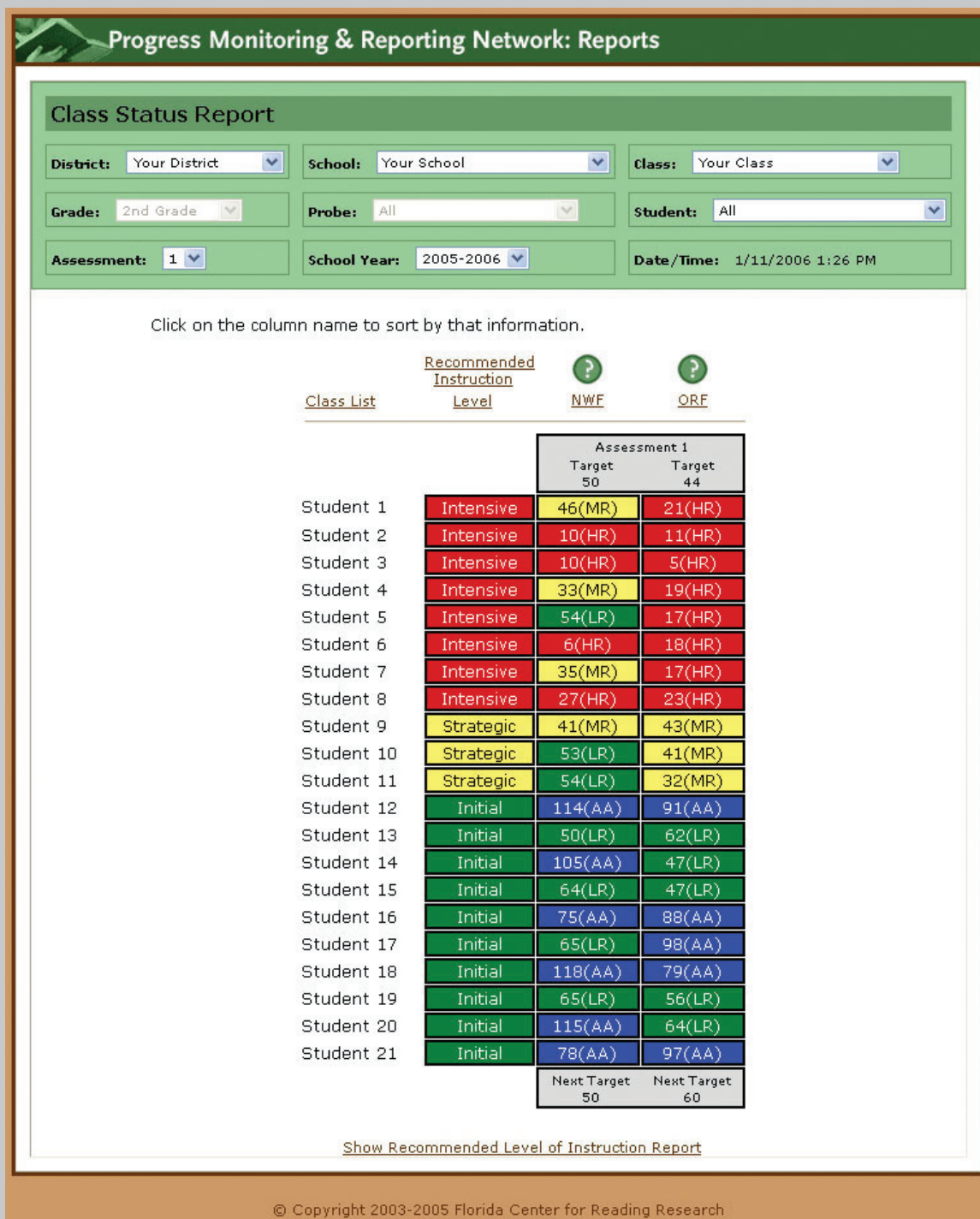
One way to formulate flexible groups is to use a Class Status Report from the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network (PMRN) in conjunction with teacher observation and, when needed, diagnostic assessments.

A Second grade Class Status Report from the 2005-2006 academic year will be used as an example of how to form groups and implement a management system throughout this guide. See Figure 1 for this Second grade Class Status Report from the PMRN.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Figure 1 – Second Grade Class Status Report From the Progress Monitoring and Reporting Network



Please note that all data are real and only names (students, teacher, school, and district) have been changed. Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) assesses phonics and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) assesses reading fluency.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

How to read a PMRN Report

The first column is the class list. Note that on actual class printouts the students are in alphabetical order within each instructional level (red, yellow, green). The second column denotes the Recommended Instructional Level (the general level of intensity of support that the student needs to achieve grade level proficiency).

- Red indicates the student is at High Risk (HR) and in need of immediate intensive intervention to achieve grade level reading by the end of the year.
- Yellow indicates the student is at Moderate Risk (MR) and in need of additional support to meet grade level expectations by the end of the year.
- Green indicates that the student is at Low Risk (LR) and current reading instruction using the core reading program is meeting the needs of the student.
- Some students within the green instructional level will have individual measures at or above (AA) the 60th percentile (this is noted in blue). Although the current reading instruction using the core reading program is meeting the needs of the student, extension and expansion of this curriculum is important.

The next two columns display specific Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS®) measures with each student's raw score recorded in each cell. The measures on this example are Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) which is a measure of phonics and Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) which is a measure of reading fluency. At this assessment period, the target is 50 for NWF (the student should be able to identify 50 letter sounds, either individually or blended, in a minute) and 44 for ORF (the student should be able to read 44 words correctly in a minute). These columns are critical in forming groups and selecting activities to meet students' needs. Although the Recommended Instructional Level column provides important information, the DIBELS® scores on the specific measures are emphasized when forming reading groups. The rationale for this is twofold:

1. The number of high risk students who are in need of intensive support as indicated in the Recommended Instruction column (second column) may exceed the number of students who should be placed in a small group where more intensive instruction is provided by the teacher. For example, this second grade class has eight students in need of intensive instructional support as indicated by the Recommended Instruction column and eight students is more than the appropriate size of an intensive support group.
2. It is important to know which skills to focus on, and this is not indicated in the Recommended Instructional Level column. For example, although eight students are indicated as needing intensive instructional support overall, Student 5 as compared to Student 6 will need a very different type of support from the teacher based on the scores received on the individual NWF DIBELS® measure.

Grouping for the Teacher-Led Center

It is important to remember that there is not ONE right answer as to how small groups should be formed. Groups must remain **flexible** and change according to instructional needs. These groups are skill-based and are formed with the Teacher-Led center in mind. In other words, the groups are formed based on instructional needs (similar skills that need improvement) and these groups will be working at the **Teacher-Led Center** as the teacher implements small group instruction. On the next page, Figure 2 illustrates one way to form flexible groups for this second grade class.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Figure 2 – Forming Teacher-Led Groups

Group A

Students 2, 3, 6, 8

Students 2, 3, 6, 8 were at high risk on both measures (NWF and ORF). Four students (who are all at high risk) in Teacher-Led small group instruction can be effective. Instruction at the Teacher-Led Center for this group would be intensive and the instructional focus would be on phonics (the decoding process) and developing reading fluency.

In addition to whole group and differentiated small group instruction, this group will also need additional instructional support (intervention) beyond the 90 minute reading block.

Group B

Students 1, 4, 5, 7

Students 1, 4, 5, 7 were at high risk on the reading fluency measure (ORF). Students 1, 4, and 7 were also at moderate risk for phonics (NWF). Because these students' phonics skills were at moderate risk, Teacher-Led small group instruction will include some phonics and have a strong emphasis on reading fluency.

In addition to whole group and differentiated small group instruction, this group will also need additional instructional support (intervention) beyond the 90 minute reading block.

Group C

Students 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19

Students in this group were close to the target (either just above or just below) for either phonics (NWF) or reading fluency (ORF). In other words, some were at low risk and some were at moderate risk of not meeting the target for both of these measures by the end of the year, but their raw scores were fairly similar (except for student 9 on the NWF measure). The focus for Teacher-Led small group instruction will be on fluency and comprehension. The NWF measure for Student 9 indicated that he was lower than most of the other students in this group. This student may benefit from Teacher-Led small group instruction in both Groups B and C. The teacher could conduct more frequent progress monitoring and determine which group is appropriate for him/her (this is a good example of flexible grouping).

In addition to whole group and differentiated small group instruction, the students who were at moderate risk for fluency (ORF) may also need additional instruction and practice beyond the 90 minute reading block.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Figure 2 – Forming Teacher-Led Groups

Group D

Students 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21

Each student in this group was at low risk (or doing well with the current instruction) or above average on both measures. The focus for the Teacher-Led Center will be on comprehension and vocabulary development. Activities that extend and expand on the core reading program would be appropriate.

Although the focus of these examples was on the DIBELS® data and the related instructional implications, it is important to remember that all five components of reading development (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension) must be integrated into reading instruction. Again, these groups are skill-based, flexible, and were formed with the Teacher-Led Center in mind.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Grouping for the Student Centers

When grouping for Student Centers teachers may consider one of two Systems:

1. System One – Students are in skill-based groups at the Teacher-Led Center and Student Centers. In other words, students stay in the same group whether they are at the Teacher-Led Center or Independent Student Centers.
2. System Two – Students are in skill-based groups at the Teacher-Led Center and mixed skill groups at the Student Centers. In other words, students go to the Teacher-Led Center in skill-based groups, but attend Student Centers in mixed skill groups. System Two is described in the next section.

There are advantages to using each system.

- System One is easier to implement (because students stay in the same groups for both the Teacher-Led and Student Centers).
- System One may be a good starting place for those teachers who have never implemented centers.
- System One allows students to work together when they need help practicing the same skill.
- System Two allows students with higher skill ability to help those with less skill ability at a Student Center.

Both Systems are used as examples and planned according to student data provided in this Teacher Resource Guide. In addition to the descriptions of both Systems, System One is highlighted on the accompanying DVD.

Table 3 depicts the basic formation described in Figure 2. Both the Teacher-Led and student groups are listed vertically since they stay the same throughout both Teacher-Led and Student Centers.

Table 3 – System One Formation

Teacher-Led Center and Student Group A	Teacher-Led Center and Student Group B	Teacher-Led Center and Student Group C	Teacher-Led Center and Student Group D
2	1	9	12
3	4	10	14
6	5	11	16
8	7	13	17
		15	18
		19	20
			21

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

II. Identify Appropriate Center Activities based on Assessment

Important things to consider when planning Student Center Activities:

- For learning to take place, activities at the Student Centers should be within each student's zone of proximal development (ZPD). Lev Vygotsky (1978) describes the ZPD as "the distance between a child's actual developmental level as determined through independent problem solving and his or her potential development level as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or a collaboration with more capable peers." To put it simply, students must participate in activities they may either do independently or with help from a peer of higher skill ability. Otherwise, Student Centers may not provide opportunity for optimal learning.
- Plan with the learning objective, not the product, in mind. The whole idea of the "reading centers of today" is to advance student reading ability. Though activities should engage students, there need not be a lot of "fluff." As Debbie Diller notes in her book *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work* (2003), "if it takes longer to make something than it does for children to use it instructionally, then don't bother making it" (p. 10).
- Time must also be a consideration. If you have allotted 20 minutes for the Center and the Activity only requires 10 minutes, the students will need something else to do. Suggestions for extensions and adaptations are provided in each of the Activity Plans. Continuous support materials (such as puzzles, letter stamps, magnetic letters and boards, etc.) should be available at each Center for use when students finish a specific Activity.

Choose Activities for Student Centers that target each group's instructional need. In System One, the Activities students complete will be at the same skill level within each group. Within each Student Center, students are all engaged in the same Activity: working individually, in pairs, or as a small group. Table 4 provides examples of what students might be doing at the Teacher-Led Center and at the Independent Student Centers.

Table 4 – System One Example Activities

Student Group	Teacher-Led Center	Student Centers (Activities have been previously taught either whole-group or at the Teacher-Led Center)
A (Students 2, 3, 6, 8)	Counting syllables in words	Syllable Scoops P.029
B (Students 1, 4, 5, 7)	Read appropriate leveled text orally (that has been chunked) while receiving feedback from the teacher to build fluency	Chunk-A-Lot F.017
C (Students 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19)	Timed readings using appropriate leveled connected text	Read and Read Again F.025
D (Students 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21)	Compare common words to advanced words with similar meanings	Meaning Exchange V.033

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

III. Design Center Management System

Center management systems help to establish time efficient routines, protecting valuable instructional time. A center management system helps coordinate the following:

- Group formation
- Activities
- Center locations/areas
- Systematic movement of student groups
- Scheduling of student Center times

Center management boards are graphic organizers and may be displayed in a variety of ways. Center management boards help students know where they should be, when they should be there, and what they should be doing. This allows the teacher to concentrate on teaching at the Teacher-Led center and emphasizes accountability from students. When choosing a management board, it is important to keep in mind the following:

- It should meet the needs of the management system.
- It should be large enough to be seen by all students from different areas of the room.
- Matching words/icons should be on the management board and in the Center areas to help students quickly locate Centers.
- Students should know how to independently use/read the Center management board to help them know where they should be and when.

Teacher Resource Guide

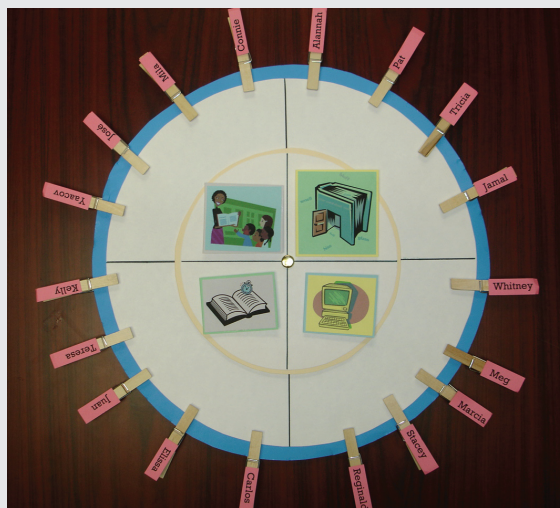
Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

The following examples may be adjusted to meet the needs of a specific class. Rotations may be added or deleted, the number of student or teacher groups may be modified, and icons may be replaced.

Example – Center Management Boards for System One

1. Rotation Wheel

On a Rotation Wheel student names (hot glued to clothespins) are placed in groups on the larger laminated circle. Student clothespins may be moved as groups change. Using Velcro, Center icons are placed on the smaller laminated circle and may be replaced as Centers change. Turn the wheel to rotate Centers. This example shows four centers (including the Teacher-Led Center) with four rotations.



2. Bulletin Board

On a Bulletin Board, student names are placed in groups using velcro. Icons are placed on the right side denoting each rotation. Both the student names and the icons may be moved when student groups or centers change. Move the red arrow to the right to rotate centers. This example shows four rotations with four centers (including the Teacher-Led Center).



Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

IV. Implement Behavior Management System

It is essential to spend time at the beginning of the school year modeling, practicing, and reviewing appropriate classroom procedures in order to establish time efficient routines and to encourage positive classroom behaviors. Experts suggest that it may take at least six weeks to implement Student Centers before beginning Teacher-Led Centers (especially in the primary grades). During this time, the teacher should be “roaming the room” monitoring students and providing assistance as needed. Many experts also suggest sending students to one rotation daily until they “get the hang of it” before trying two or three rotations daily. This is a productive use of time for two important reasons:

1. Students need to be on-task in order for Centers to support learning.
2. The teacher needs to focus on students at the Teacher-Led center and this is not possible if the other students are off-task.

When teachers implement a behavior management system students should be involved in role modeling positive classroom behaviors. Boundaries and consequences should be fair, consistent, and age-appropriate. Throughout the year, teachers may want to occasionally use the Teacher-Led Center time to circulate during Student Centers to support on-task behavior. If this is the case, all students go to Student Centers while the teacher “roams the room.”

Successful implementation of Student Centers involves helping students know how to problem solve. For example, students need to know:

- What to do when something does not work
- What to do when they do not understand the Activity at a Center
- What to do when they complete an Activity at a Center
- Whom to go to for help (e.g., “Ask 3 before you see me.”)
- How to clean up (where to put their product, where to put materials away, etc.)
- How to decide who goes first when engaged in a pair or group activity

Even in the best managed classrooms, there are many reasons why students may not be academically engaged at Student Centers. Here is a list of questions for teachers to use when behavior problems begin to impede the successful implementation of student activity centers:

- Did I introduce too many new Centers at once?
- Did I do an effective job explicitly teaching the activity?
- Have the students mastered the skill and need to move on?
- Is the activity interesting to the student?
- Do students 3 and 6 work well together or do they create behavior problems?
- Is this Activity too difficult for students to do independently?

Answering these questions may help teachers reorganize Centers to get student behavior back on track. It may also be helpful to have a problem solving discussion with the students about a certain Center or Activity.

Teachers have found that creating a chart or checklist with their students is an effective way to ensure positive classroom behavior. These charts or checklists include the expected student behavior at each Center.

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

The checklist and Center management board provide a management system that supports on-task student behavior. Teachers are responsible for:

- Holding all students accountable
- Making consequences meaningful
- Being consistent when implementing the behavior management system
- Reviewing the rules and consequences
- Practicing classroom procedures

It is important that students practice, practice, and practice classroom routines until the classroom Centers and transitions are running smoothly. Additionally, teachers model/review expected behaviors continuously.

V. Give Explicit Center Directions

The goal of explicit directions is to help students understand what they are expected to accomplish at a specific Center. Clear directions and expectations encourage academic engagement at Centers. It is essential to model each Activity before students are expected to complete it at the Center. Providing directions in manageable steps helps students to understand the sequence of completing an Activity. Model the use of new materials and Activities before placing them in a Center either during the whole group lesson or at the Teacher-Led Center.

Activities to be completed at Centers should be introduced by the teacher in the following format:

1. Teacher Models and Explains the Activity

Some Activities need repeated modeling, while others need to be modeled only one time. For example, a syllable segmenting activity may be modeled once at the Teacher-Led Center and then placed at a Student Center. Teaching students how to identify the meanings of words in context may require many whole group lessons in addition to modeling at the Teacher-Led Center before being placed at a student center.

2. Teacher provides Guided Practice

Students practice what the teacher models and the teacher provides prompts and feedback.

3. Teacher provides Supported Application

Students apply the skill as the teacher scaffolds instruction.

4. Independent Practice

Students apply the skill independently.

This same format should also be used to teach students how to use the manipulatives and/or technology at each Center (e.g., overhead projector, computer, tape recorder, etc.).

VI. Organize the Classroom

The goal of creating an organized classroom is to attain maximum student achievement. Keeping an organized classroom enables students to:

- Easily locate materials
- Focus on academic tasks
- Use Center time productively

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Clearly define, organize, and label reading Centers to facilitate the flow of student movement during Center rotations. Set Center materials in an orderly arrangement, allowing adequate work space for each student. Place skill leveled materials in baskets or tubs and label accordingly. Also, preserve and protect materials by laminating or using another creative method so that they don't have to be remade constantly. Teach students how to keep materials organized, replace materials when needed, and clean up in an orderly and timely manner. When materials are well organized and students cooperate in taking care of Centers, classroom disruptions are limited.

VII. Manage Transitions

The intent of managing transitions is to maximize and protect instructional time. It is important to keep a quick pace when transitioning between centers. Instill set routines and expectations for changing centers, putting materials away, and cleaning up center areas.

It is also important to use this time instructionally. There are a variety of signals that may be used to indicate to students that it is time to change centers. To reinforce skills, make every minute count by singing songs, reciting poems, or playing word games while the students are cleaning up. Be consistent with all techniques.

VIII. Establish Accountability

Student centers are an excellent opportunity for teachers to assess student progress. Accountability should be established for Activities completed at Centers. Accountability is a way to encourage students to stay academically engaged and for teachers to determine whether or not students can apply what they have been taught. Communicate the fact that students are expected to stay on task and complete quality work. Students need to receive feedback in a timely manner. Reviewing center work daily:

- prevents students from practicing the same errors
- provides opportunity for teachers to instill the importance of quality work
- conveys the importance of each academic task

Establishing accountability is intended to help students develop an appreciation for learning and to view Centers as a meaningful and productive time of day. Other key ideas to keep in mind concerning accountability:

- The process of learning to be proficient readers is more important than creating a product at each Center. Students need to be accountable for work completed at Centers, but this does not mean there always needs to be a product. Make it a balance.
- Have “with-it-ness” — even though teachers are involved with other students in an intense small group activity at the Teacher-Led Center, they must be aware of what is going on at the Student Centers. This is a teaching skill that comes with time and practice!

In conclusion, reading Centers should provide opportunities for students to practice, demonstrate, and extend previously taught skills. Using assessment data to form groups, planning appropriate teacher-led and independent student center activities, and consistently monitoring progress will help teachers establish a supportive learning environment.

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Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

References

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Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom: System Two

The next part of our guide pertains to developing and implementing Centers according to System Two. There are eight elements that can assist in developing and implementing an effective classroom management system. Both System One and System Two incorporate the same eight elements. These elements include procedures that help facilitate differentiated Teacher-Led small group instruction and support independent Student Center Activities. The first three elements are considered pre-planning activities for the teacher and are completed before implementing Student Centers in the classroom:

- I. Form Flexible Groups Based on Assessment
- II. Identify Appropriate Center Activities Based on Assessment
- III. Design Center Management System

The next five elements are used to implement and manage independent Student Center Activities with the students. It is important to note that these five elements are not necessarily listed in sequential order, but may be done simultaneously.

- IV. Implement a Behavior Management System
- V. Give Explicit Center Directions
- VI. Organize the Classroom
- VII. Manage Transitions
- VIII. Establish Accountability

This Teacher Resource Guide describes two Systems for forming flexible student groups based on assessment. This section describes System Two.

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

I. Form Flexible Groups Based on Assessment

How to read a PMRN Report – Please see System One

Grouping for the Teacher-Led Center – Please see System One

Grouping for the Student Centers

Again, when grouping for Student Centers teachers may consider one of two Systems:

1. System One – Students are in skill-based groups at the Teacher-Led Center and Student Centers. In other words, students stay in the same group whether they are at the Teacher-Led Center or Independent Student Centers.
2. System Two – Students are in skill-based groups at the Teacher-Led Center and mixed skill groups at the Student Centers. In other words, students go to the Teacher-Led Center in skill-based groups, but attend Student Centers in mixed skill groups.

The advantages of using each System were noted in the previous section. Again, it is important to keep in mind that these are just two examples of the many ways to implement Centers. Teachers may design modifications and extensions of these Systems to meet the individual needs of students. Both Systems are organized and planned according to the Class Status Report from the PMRN (Figure 1) and are used as examples throughout this guide.

In System Two, students are in skill-based groups at the Teacher-Led Center (the same groups demonstrated in Figure 2) and mixed skill groups at the Student Centers. There are two steps in organizing these groups. Table 5 shows the first step as a vertical listing of Teacher-Led groups.

Using this system the Teacher-Led groups are set (Table 5), but the student groups must be rearranged (Table 6) with the following considerations:

- Student group size is appropriate
- Not more than one or two students are pulled from each student Center when reporting to the Teacher-Led Center
- Skill ability remains balanced within each student group
- Student behaviors complement one another

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Table 5 – System Two Formation, Step One (Teacher-Led Groups)

Teacher-Led Group 1	Teacher-Led Group 2	Teacher-Led Group 3	Teacher-Led Group 4
2	1	9	12
3	4	10	14
6	5	11	16
8	7	13	17
		15	18
		19	20
			21

Table 6 – System Two Formation, Step Two (Student Groups)

	Teacher-Led Group 1	Teacher-Led Group 2	Teacher-Led Group 3	Teacher-Led Group 4
Student Group 1	2	1	9, 15	12
Student Group 2	3	4	10, 19	14, 18
Student Group 3	6	5	11	16, 20
Student Group 4	8	7	13	17, 21

In Step Two (Table 6), student groups are listed at left then viewed horizontally. Students are then moved within the horizontal groups (they must stay the same vertically so that Teacher-Led groups do not change). This formation allows teachers more precision in arranging student groups while keeping the Teacher-Led group skill based. The following changes were made from Table 5 to Table 6:

- Student 15 was moved to Student Group 1 and Student 19 to Student Group 2 so that both student groups had a mix of students from the skill level of Teacher-Led Group 3. A key idea to forming these student Center groups is that there should be a balance within skill level and size of group. For example, Student 15 was moved to Student Group 1 so that when Teacher-Led Group 4 is working with the teacher, Student Group 1 still has at least one low risk student at the Student Center.
- Student 18 was moved to Student Group 2, Student 20 to Student Group 3, and Student 21 to Student Group 4 so that these three groups had more students in general (and more low risk students specifically).
- Since the high risk students were evenly distributed throughout the Student Groups (two per group), none needed to be moved.

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

II. Identify Appropriate Center Activities based on Assessment

Important things to consider when planning Student Center Activities – Please see System One

Planning for System Two

In System Two, student groups are skill-based at the Teacher-Led Center and are meshed, creating mixed skill ability groups, for the Student Centers. There are two approaches for planning appropriate activities at each center for this system:

- **Approach One** - Students work at the same center, but on different activities targeted at each individual's skill level.
- **Approach Two** - Students work on one activity which has been modified to meet varying level of abilities.

Approach One

Depending on grouping, students may work individually or in pairs. In this system, the students are working within their independent-instructional level range but may request the assistance of a peer. This is easily accomplished if the teacher leaves file folders or tubs containing Activities with each skill set for students to choose appropriate activities. File folders or tubs are color coded or labeled so students know which file folder or tub to select.

In System Two Formation, Step Two (Table 6) all students listed vertically go to the Teacher-Led Center together, but attend Student Centers with the students who are noted horizontally. The Teacher-Led Center activities are the same as in the System One Example Activities (Table 4). The activities for the Student Centers are also the same if the teacher uses System One, but the activities are divided and labeled for each student.

Students can all be at the same center location, but completing different activities (Table 7). The other students from the Teacher-Led groups will also do the same activity once they rotate to the Student Center. For example, students 2, 3, 6, and 8 will all pull the orange tub when at this Student Center even though they are now with a different group of students than when they attend the Teacher-Led Center.

Table 7 – System Two, Approach One Example Activities

Student Tub Colors	Students	Example Activity
Orange	2, 3, 6, 8	Syllable Scoops P.029
Purple	1, 4, 5, 7	Chunk-A-Lot F.017
Brown	9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19	Read and Read Again F.025
Blue	12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21	Meaning Exchange V.033

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

Approach Two

Depending on grouping, students may work individually or in pairs. In this system, the students are working within their independent-instructional level range but may request the assistance of a peer. Although students are working on the same activity, it is modified. In order for each student to understand his/her task for the activity, teachers may need to leave file folders or tubs color coded or labeled with specific instructions.

In System Two Formation, Step Two (Table 6) all students see the teacher when pulled in the vertical groups, but attend Student Centers in the horizontal groups. The Teacher-Led Center activities are the same as in the System One Example Activities (Table 4). The activity at each Student Center are the same, but simply modified to meet the needs of each student.

Students can all be at the same center location, but completing different activities (Table 8). The other students from the Teacher-Led groups will also do the same activity once they rotate to the center. For example, students 2, 3, 6, and 8 will all pull the orange tub when at this Center even though they are now in a different group (than they were at the Teacher-Led center).

Table 8 – System Two, Approach Two Example Activities

Student Tub Colors	Students	Example Activity (all derived from Meaning Exchange, V.033)
Orange	2, 3, 6, 8	Matching synonyms
Purple	1, 4, 5, 7	Matching Synonyms
Brown	9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 19	Identifying synonyms by playing a matching game
Blue	12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21	Writing new sentences using synonyms from the matching game

Teacher Resource Guide

Implementing and Managing Student Centers in the Classroom

III. Design Center Management System

Example – Center Management Board for System Two

1. Pocket Chart

On a pocket chart, Teacher-Led groups are placed vertically and Student groups horizontally. Icons are placed to the right denoting Center rotations. The second set of Student Center icons are behind the Student Center icons shown on the pocket chart. They will be placed in front of the current icons when students rotate Centers. Black arrows point student groups to Centers. The red arrow points to students who are pulled to the Teacher-Led Center. In this example, students 2, 9, 15, and 12 go to the fluency center while student 1 is with students 4, 5, and 7 at the Teacher-Led Center. Student 1 will rejoin the student group during the next rotation. This example shows four Student Centers.



IV. Implement Behavior Management System

Please see System One

V. Give Explicit Center Directions

Please see System One

VI. Organize the Classroom

Please see System One

VII. Manage Transitions

Please see System One

VIII. Establish Accountability

Please see System One

Teacher Resource Guide

Interpretation of Activity Plans

Interpretation of Activity Plans

This section of the Teacher Resource Guide will help you understand how to interpret the Activity Plans. The student center activities are designed to support sound classroom reading instruction. They are written to provide students with the opportunity to practice, demonstrate, and extend their knowledge of previously taught reading skills.

Activity Plans are compiled in two separate notebooks. Book one contains a collection of Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Activities. Book two contains a collection of Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension Activities. Each Activity Plan includes an explanation of the activity with an objective, materials, purpose of the activity, steps to complete the activity, and ways to extend or adapt the activity.

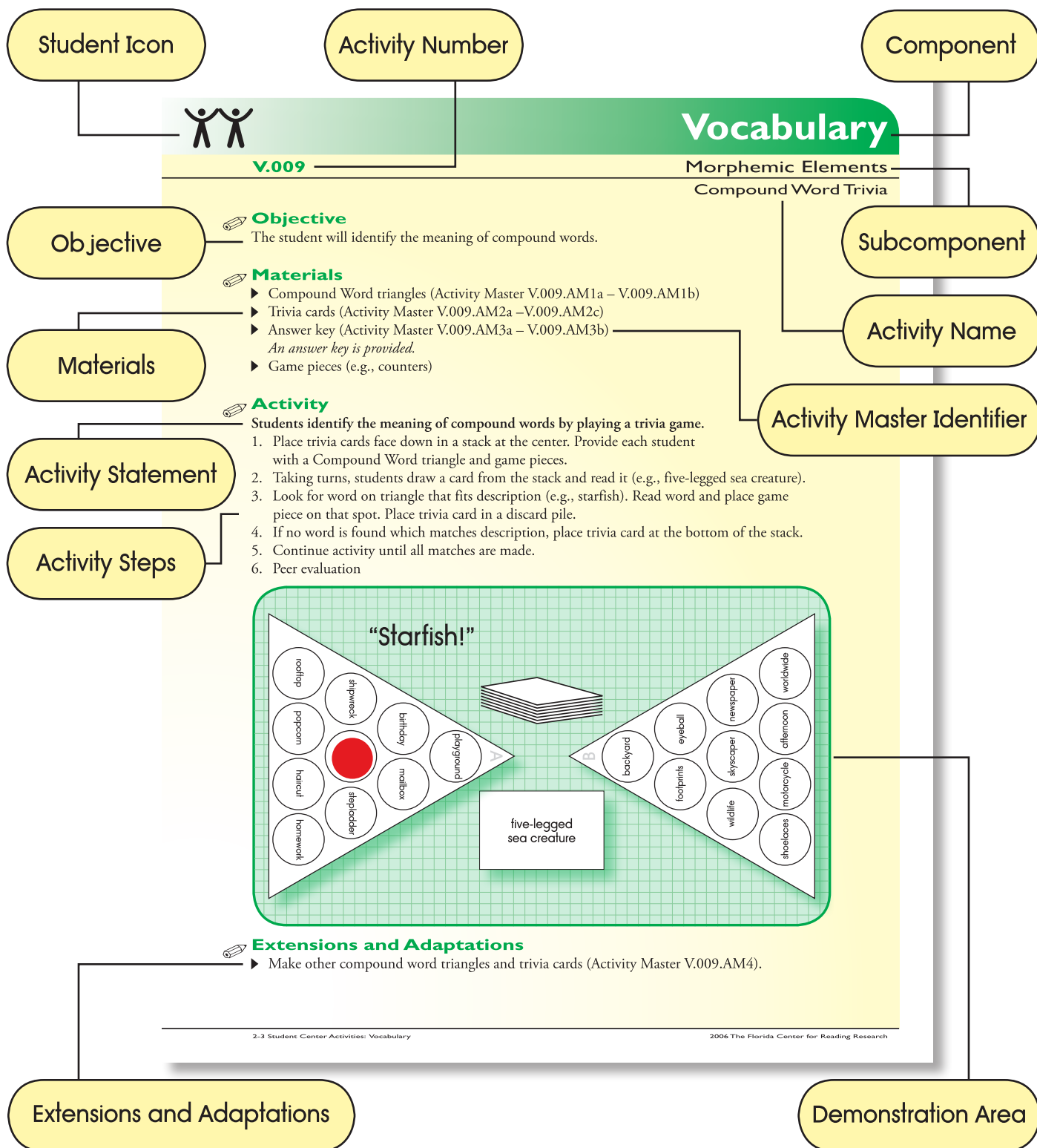
It is important to note that these activities are designed for teachers to use as a resource, guide, and example when implementing student centers. They are not intended to be a curriculum and although they are organized sequentially, assessment results should guide the teacher's decision as to the choice of the activity and the time line for implementation. Each of the activities was designed to enhance skill development in the five components of reading. The activities are intended to be explicitly taught to the whole class or in small group Teacher-Led Centers before they are placed at an Independent Student Center.

Teacher Resource Guide

Interpretation of Activity Plans

Overview

Compound Word Trivia is a sample Activity Plan that will be used as a reference throughout this section.

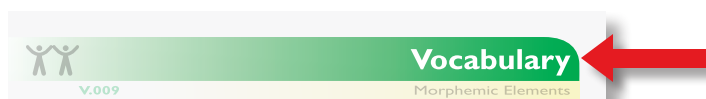


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Interpretation of Activity Plans

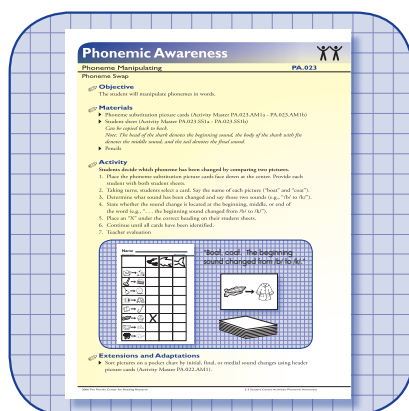
Reading Component

The reading component is placed at the top of the Activity Plan to denote: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, or Comprehension.

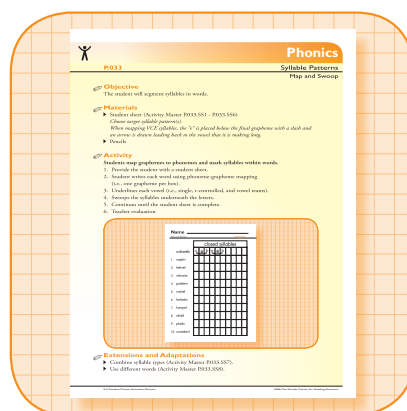


Each reading component is color coded. The Phonemic Awareness activities are highlighted in purple, Phonics in orange, Fluency in red, Vocabulary in green, and Comprehension in blue (see example activities below).

2-3 Student Center Activities – Book One

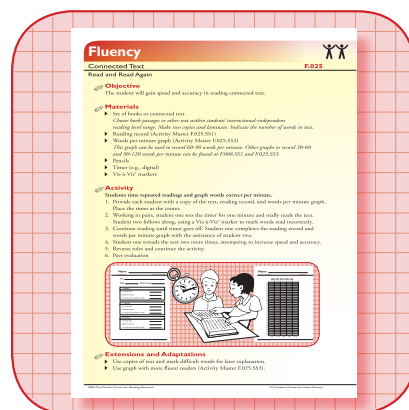


Phonemic Awareness

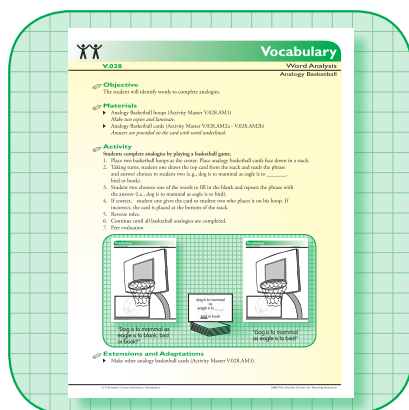


Phonics

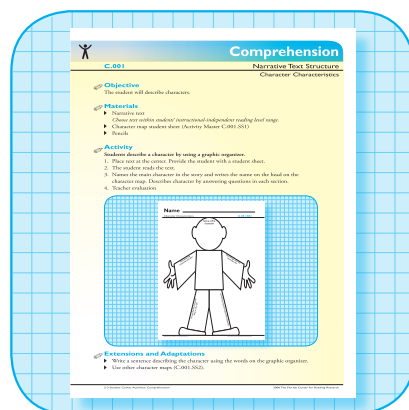
2-3 Student Center Activities – Book Two



Fluency



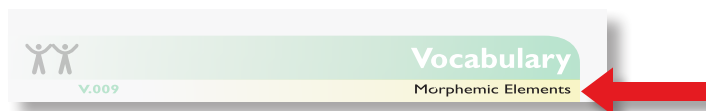
Vocabulary



Comprehension

Subcomponent

The subcomponent is listed under the component. For added convenience each activity book comes with a set of tabs to be inserted in front of the corresponding sections.

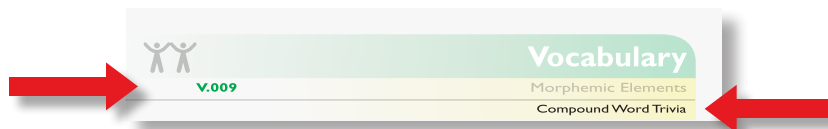


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Interpretation of Activity Plans

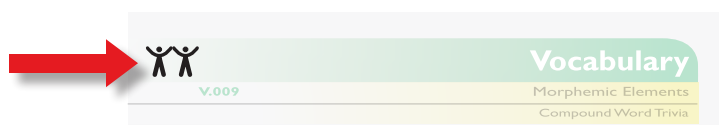
Activity Name and Activity Number

The name of the activity (e.g., Compound Word Trivia) appears under the subcomponent. Across from the activity name is the activity number (e.g., V.009). The letter(s) on the activity number correspond with the component: PA - Phonemic Awareness, P - Phonics, F - Fluency, V - Vocabulary, and C - Comprehension. Within each component, the numbers are listed in ascending order. The Activity Plans are sequenced in a logical order based on subcomponent and difficulty.



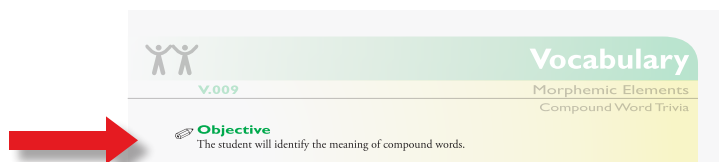
Student Icon

The student icon at the top of the page denotes the number of students suggested to participate in the activity. One icon indicates that students may complete the activity independently, but may also work collaboratively with group members if desired. Two icons indicate that the activity requires students to work in pairs. Two icons with a plus sign indicate that the activity requires two or more students.



Objective

The objective states the goal of the activity. The objectives are correlated with the subcomponents and are aligned with specific skills.



Materials and Activity Masters

There is a list of all materials needed for each Activity Plan. At the end of the Implementation of Activity Plans section of this guide, there is a comprehensive list of materials.

Any Activity Masters or Student Sheets used in the activity are numbered to correlate to the Activity Plan. These Activity Masters and Student Sheets follow the Activity Plan. Both are in blackline master form. The Activity Masters are nonconsumable and should be prepared to be used repeatedly as groups move through the Center (e.g., word cards that can be laminated).

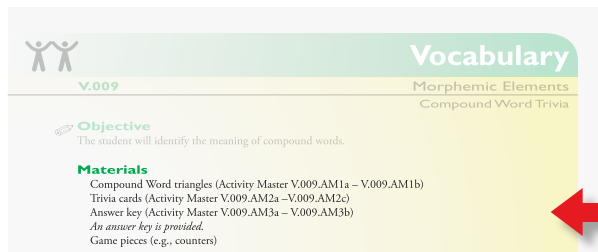
The Student Sheets are consumable and should be duplicated for EACH student. If an Activity Master is used for more than one activity, it is cross-referenced to the original Activity Master and noted on the Activity Plan.

Activity Masters may be adapted or substituted by materials from the core reading program, supplemental curriculum, or teachers' own resources. For example, instead of using the provided high frequency word cards, the teacher may choose to use word cards from the core reading program.

Teacher Resource Guide

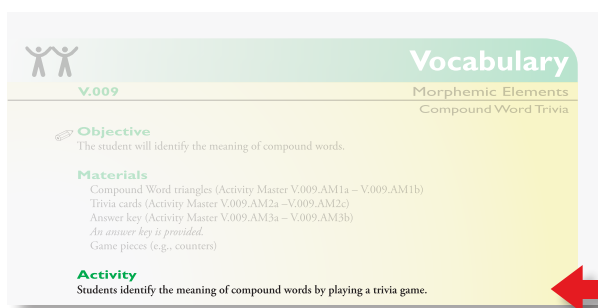
Interpretation of Activity Plans

Target skills in this section refer to concepts/skills that have been previously taught. Center activities, adaptations, and extensions provide practice for skill reinforcement of concepts that have been taught in whole group or small group settings.



Activity Statement

Directly under the activity heading is the activity statement, (e.g. Students identify the meaning of compound words by playing a trivia game). The statement offers a one sentence explanation of the purpose of the activity and what the students will do to complete the activity.



Activity Steps

The first step refers to the center set-up which may be completed by the teacher or a capable student. The second step starts the series of steps which the students go through to complete the activity. Additionally, step two begins with one of the following: The student, Students, Working in pairs, or Taking turns depending on the number of students needed to complete the activity. The remaining steps are written from the student perspective. The last step pertains to accountability and lists one of three evaluation methods: Self-check, Peer evaluation, or Teacher evaluation.

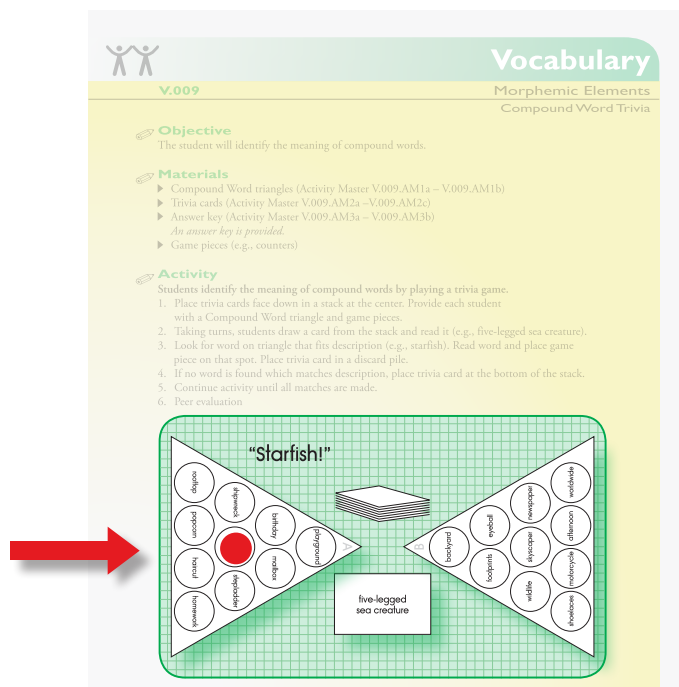


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Interpretation of Activity Plans

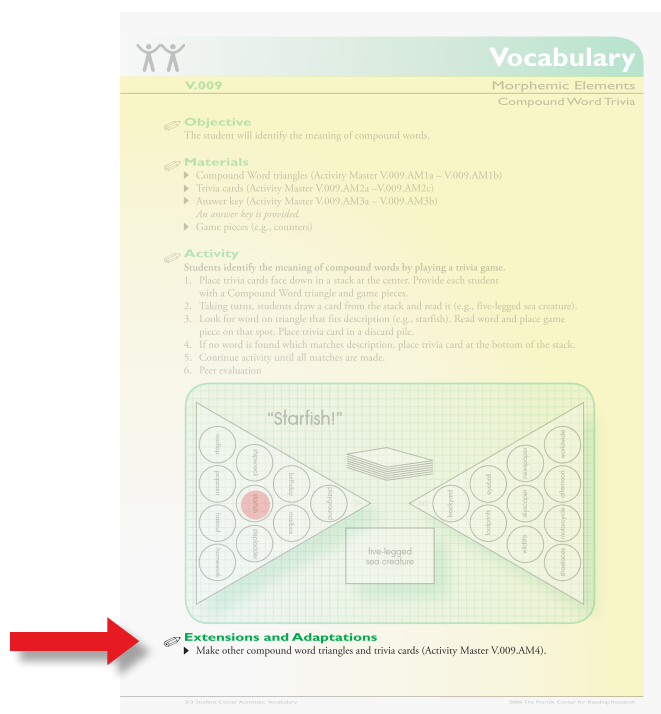
Demonstration Area

Under the activity steps is a display box containing graphics that depict the activity and key materials.



Extension and Adaptations

Extensions and Adaptations are suggested activities that will extend or provide an adaptation to further develop the target skill. These are written from the student point of view unless otherwise noted. Some require an Activity Master, which is referenced. In this example, a triangle game board is provided for teachers to write other target compound words to supplement the triangles game board already provided.



Teacher Resource Guide

Implementation of Activity Plans

Implementation of Activity Plans

This section provides suggestions for preparing activities, organizing materials, and setting up centers. In addition, there is information regarding computer-based centers, the selection of computer software and technology-based curricula, and materials.

Preparing and Organizing Materials

For initial preparation of the activities, it is recommended that Activity Masters be copied on card stock or laminated. This way materials will be durable and ready for long term use. Materials such as picture cards or word cards can also be colored or mounted on construction paper to provide more visual interest. In addition, materials should be organized so that all materials needed to implement the Activity Plan are stored together and easy to locate. For example, game boards can be mounted and laminated on file folders and word cards placed in envelopes or plastic baggies.

Products created while teaching a skill from an Activity Plan can be used at the student centers. For example, story sequence events elicited from the students may be written on sentence strips. These sentences strips may then be mixed up and placed in the center for students to sequence independently (i.e., Activity Plan C.003, Story Line-Up).

If appropriate for the level of students, Demonstration Areas or Activity Steps can be copied, laminated, and placed at centers to remind students how to complete the activity. This should be done only after the activity has been introduced and explicitly taught by the teacher.

Setting Up Centers

Activities should be introduced and made available depending on the instructional needs of the students and assessment information. Prior to making the activity available at a student center, the skill relevant to the activity and the activity itself should be pre-taught in whole or small group. The materials needed to complete the activity should then be placed at the center and set up according to the directions in the Activity Plan.

In addition to the activities provided, centers can also contain consistent materials that have been previously introduced to the students. These materials remain available to students throughout the year, even as other center activities are rotated. Consistent materials are aligned with students' instructional needs allowing students and teachers uninterrupted productivity throughout center time.

These consistent materials will enable students to stay academically engaged until it is time to move to the next center. Examples of materials that may remain consistent at a center are: magnetic letters, alphabet tiles, alphabet puzzles, rubber stamp letters, dry-erase marker boards, blank mini-books, word games, word sorts, flannel boards, puppets for retelling, CDs and tapes for listening centers.

These consistent materials need to be well organized and easily accessible to students. They may be stored in containers. It is important to label or color-code the containers according to instructional needs of students. The intent is to have appropriate materials available for each student to practice and reinforce skills at his/her instructional level.

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Computer-based Centers

Computer-based activities are beneficial to differentiating student instruction and adapt well to reading centers. Like other activities, it is important to note that the results from ongoing assessments and teacher monitoring should be factors in determining the specific software used and the skills that are targeted.

To effectively utilize computer-based centers consider the guidelines listed below:

- Include computer-based activities along with other student centers.
- Assure that students are familiar with all needed computer functions in order to use the selected program effectively.
- Provide computer-based activities specific to those skills that have been pre-taught and that need additional practice or reinforcement.
- Assign each student or group of students a specified component of the software program that addresses the specific skill that needs practice. This helps to reduce non-academic engagement time.
- Select software that is within students' instructional-independent reading level range.
- Monitor student use of computer-based activities. Many programs have built-in progress monitoring and generate reports. These progress monitoring reports can be helpful when planning small group teacher-led instruction.
- Choose software and online programs which are based on the five components, support the latest scientific reading research, and are aligned with *Reading First*.

Selecting Quality Computer Software and Technology-based Curricula Materials

The Florida Center for Reading Research (FCRR) has established a review process for analyzing print and technology-based reading curricula and materials available for use in Florida. Brief FCRR Reports based on the findings from the reviews are posted at the FCRR website (www.fcrr.org) for use by teachers, administrators, and district level personnel.

The sole purpose of FCRR Reports is to serve as a reliable resource for teachers and administrators as they evaluate the alignment of instructional materials to *Reading First* guidelines and determine the degree to which programs are consistent with current research in reading. It is important for school district personnel and teachers to read the reports thoroughly and make whatever additional judgments may be appropriate regarding the suitability of the program for their students.

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Materials Needed for 2-3 Student Center Activities

In addition to the Activity Masters and Student Sheets provided with each Activity Plan, the materials listed below are also needed.

Materials

Basket
Binder Rings
Books (Narrative and Expository)
Cassette Tapes
Chart Paper
Computer Software (Reading Related)
Construction Paper
Cookie Sheet
Counters
Dictionary
Encyclopedia
Envelopes
Game Pieces
Glue
Headphones
Highlighters
Hole Punch
Index Cards
Labels
Magnetic Board
Magnetic Letters
Markers
Paper
Paper Bag
Pencils
Pocket Chart
Reader Theater Scripts
Science or Social Studies Textbooks
Scissors
Stapler
Staples
Sticky Notes (Post-It® or similar)
Tape Player
Timer
Vis-à-Vis® Markers
Whiteboards

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