

A Literacy Learning Center

According to research, a literacy center is a physical area or station designated for specific learning purposes. It is designed to provide appropriate materials to help students work independently or collaboratively to meet literacy goals. Literacy centers can be portable, temporary or permanent. Having literacy centers in the classroom can help improve a students reading comprehension, language, social, and writing development. Literacy centers help facilitate problem-solving due to the students being able to explore, invent, create, and discover alone or with other students.

Literacy Learning Center Categories

There are six different types of literacy learning centers, and they are independent reading, word work, writing, listening, vocabulary, and technology. These six categories have their own types of activities that are specific to each center.

- Word Work Center-

A word work center is a type of literacy learning center, where students work on phonics and spelling patterns. At the word work center, the students are engaged in activities where they discover words, parts of words, and spelling of words. For example, students can do a word sort of sight words or that week's spelling words, an activity where they have to alphabetize a group of words, an activity where they work on vowel sounds, or an activity where they discover the relationship between onsets and rimes.

- Independent Reading-

In an independent reading literacy center, students can choose books on their own independent reading level. Having students read on their individual reading levels can allow them to complete a form of a reader response. It is a good idea for teachers to have their students keep a reader's response notebook so that students can record their responses. Independent reading centers take place in and around the classroom library. According to research, it is important for teachers to teach mini-lessons on choosing the right books. This will help students choose books that fit their reading level better. Teachers' should also administer running records periodically to learn each student's independent and instructional reading level.

- Listening Center-

A listening center is a type of literacy learning center where students participate in a two part activity. At the listening center, students will first listen to a recording of a book or create a recording of a book. Then, the students will complete some type of comprehension activity based on the book they read. For example, the students can complete a story map, draw their favorite part in the story, or respond to the story in their reader's response journal.

- Vocabulary-

A vocabulary literacy center is a literacy center devoted to learning the words we must know to be able to communicate with others. At the vocabulary literacy center, teachers can have students write a letter, make a recommendation chart, have reading buddies, create a book review, and etc.

- Writing Center-

A writing center is a type of literacy learning center where students participate in activities where they write for a variety of purposes. At the writing center, students write letters, story starters, reader's responses, and for many other purposes. Teachers usually provide students with a

writing journal to bring with them to the writing center, so the students can keep all their writing in one place.

- **Technology-**

There are various ways you can integrate technology into literacy centers. Using a computer can give you a variety of language art related software titles for students to use; also there are numerous electronic games that students can use to work on skills. Some examples are Leap Frog Phonics, Twist and Shout Phonics, and many more.

Literacy Learning Center Management

In order for the literacy learning centers to run without a glitch, it is important that the teacher is well organized, and that the students understand the procedures and what is expected of them at each center. To help insure that center time runs smoothly, the teacher can create a center chart to show the students which center they need to go to, and the teacher can display the rules at each center for the students. Also, there should be a plan for how students should transition from group to group, and a plan for how students should store their center work. For example, each student could have their own binder dedicated only for center work, where they keep all their work from each center.

There are 7 principles for teaching with literacy workstations.

1. Focus on practice and purpose, not the stuff
2. Link to your teaching
3. Slow down to speed up
4. Balance process and product
5. Less is more. Don't put out too much at once
6. Use Novelty
7. Simplify

Resources:

http://www.busyteacherscafe.com/literacy_centers/

http://hil.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/literacy_centers%20Final.htm

<http://www.littlegiraffes.com/literacycentersexamples.html>

<http://www.literacyleader.com/?q=node/220>

<http://www.questar.org/services/rse-tasc-ii/presentations/literacy/Literacy-Work-Stations.pdf>