

Ohio Literacy Conference for K-3rd Grade Teachers

December 8, 2011 - December 9, 2011

C-4 Writing Centers: Open for Business! (Gr. K-3)

Dr. Connie Hebert

All resource materials not specifically identified as being reprinted from another source is copyright © 2011 by Dr. Connie Hebert. You may not distribute, copy, or otherwise reproduce any of this material for sale or for commercial use without written permission from the author.



Bring SDE presenters to your school!

SDE can bring customized training directly to your school.
For more information call SDE's Professional Development Specialists at
1-877-388-2054 or visit www.SDE.com/onsitetraining

Maintaining a Motivating Writer Center

If a classroom writing centers were set up like kitchen are, kids would cook up some delicious stories!

I firmly believe that every elementary classroom in every elementary school should have a well-stocked and carefully organized writing center in it! All it takes is a little time and effort to set up an inviting center where students will want to visit often. When classroom writing center is unavailable, many students write only when assigned to do so. This leaves little, if any, opportunity for adequate development of written expression. It also limits students to very few choices. Remember that writing is just thinking brought down to the pen. If we want to get the pen moving in a variety of creative ways, we must get the ‘thinking’ flowing in new and exciting ways.

Below is a suggested list of items you will want to consider when setting up writing center in your classroom:

- A variety of pens, pencils, and fine-line markers.
- Different kinds of dictionaries.
- An accordion file full of pictures from magazines, calendars, catalogs, etc., filed by subject category, for easy access.
- A basket filled with wordless books.
- A basket filled with sight word phrases.
- Laminated strips with suggested titles written on them.
- Laminated strips with open-ended sentences written on them.
- White correction tape.
- Bins or folders for unfinished and finished work.
- A variety of stickers for use when students prefer not to draw.
- A selection of different types of assembled blank books (i.e. paper plate books, lunch bag books, construction paper booklets, composition books, teeny-size books, etc.)
- A thesaurus.
- Alphabet charts (Pre-K – Grade 2).
- Paper: different sizes and different types.
- Rulers and scotch tape dispensers.
- A variety of magazines.

After setting up your center, you will want to give your students a ‘tour’ and encourage them to brainstorm all different ways of using these materials for written communication. Here are some activities you might want to add to the class list:

- ❖ Choose 5 sight word phrases and use them in 5 written sentences.
- ❖ Write a story to go with a wordless book.
- ❖ Choose a title strip and write a poem to go with it.
- ❖ Select 3 pictures out of the picture file and use each of them in a story.
- ❖ Choose an open-ended strip and finish it (i.e. If I were invisible I would...)
- ❖ Find 5 words in the dictionary that you never knew. Write each word and its definition in a paper plate book.
- ❖ Use stickers to create a lunch bag story. Be sure to write a story to go with the stickers you choose.
- ❖ Choose a wordless book and write a ‘backwards’ story. Start with the last page of the book and word towards the front! Then read your story to someone while they look at the pictures from back to front.
- ❖ Look through some magazines and find 5 pictures that tell a story. Tape them into a blank book and write the story to go with them.
- ❖ Interview a friend in your class. Find out at least 8 things about them. Be sure to write your questions down and their answers, too.
- ❖ Write a letter to your favorite author. Tell them why they are your favorite and ask them 3 questions.
- ❖ Write down 5 words. Look them up in the thesaurus and write down the words that mean the same thing. Draw a picture to go with each set of words.
- ❖ Practice writing all the letters of the alphabet with a fine-line marker. See if you can write them without pressing down too hard and without ‘hearing’ the marker as you write. Press lightly and form your letters quickly.

The list is endless, but you get the point here. Build them a place to write and they will come and write! After they write, they can publish their special books. Check it out, teachers: <http://www.tikatok.com/login>

C. Hebert. Catch a Falling Writer. (2010). Corwin Press.

www.conniehebert.com



SAMPLE CENTER CONTRACT c. Hebert©2011

(Note: Contract is stapled inside a pocket folder for each student. When completed, center work is stapled to the contract, graded, and sent home.)

Contract begins: _____ **Contract ends:** _____

Make good choices, budget your time, and have fun!!

Reading Center

- ___ Read around the room
- ___ Book tubs
- ___ Magazines/comic books
- ___ Pocket Chart Word Problems
- ___ Sight Word Phrases

Writing Center

- ___ Mystery box
- ___ Picture file
- ___ Story Starters (2)
- ___ Class Newspaper
- ___ Dictionary/Thesaurus

Listening Center

- ___ Two books and tapes
- ___ Two response sheets

Construction Center

- ___ Legos
- ___ Playdough
- ___ Puzzles

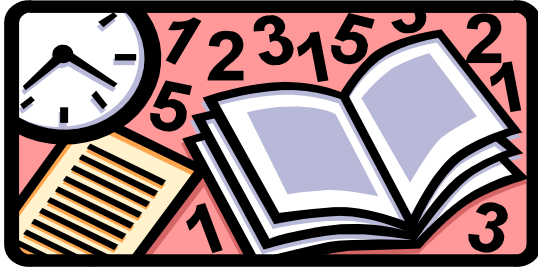
Research Center

- ___ Encyclopedia Search
- ___ Create a Web
- ___ Phone Book Fun

Spelling/ABC Center

- ___ Alphabet Book
- ___ Magnetic letter words
- ___ Letter sort (hula hoops)
- ___ Searching for Chunks
- ___ Word wall search

Recommended Literacy Activities/Materials for Centers (Hebert ©2011)



- *Audio books/tapes with response sheets*
- *Big books*
- *Book-Boxes*
- *Book-making & Puppet-making*
- *Buddy Reading*
- *Flannel Boards*
- *Interactive pocket charts*
- *Magnetic letters and word tiles*
- *Mystery Box*
- *Never-Ending books (narrative & expository)*
- *Overhead projector activities*
- *Picture files, different writing tools, dictionaries, phone books, catalogs, menus, thesauruses*
- *Poetry notebook with overhead transparencies and magnetic letters*
- *Post office*
- *Puzzles, Legos, Q-tips, Lincoln logs, play-dough*
- *Read around the room*
- *Sight words, sight word phrases, white boards*
- *Spelling notebooks (cover cut in thirds)*
- *Write around the room*



Reflections . . .