

SMOOTH, EFFICIENT ROUTINES SUPPORTING SMALL-GROUP INSTRUCTION

GOAL: HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP “PRINCIPLED HABITS” SO THEY CAN SUCCESSFULLY AND INDEPENDENTLY ENGAGE IN LEARNING IN A DIFFERENTIATED CLASSROOM.

October’s Dazzling Ideas

Dazzling Idea #1: Effective teachers of differentiated instruction establish smooth, efficient classroom routines, and they teach and re-teach these routines throughout the school year. (Cotton, 1995)

Dazzling Idea #2: “Trusting children is the underpinning of what makes...any structure for teaching children to manage themselves independently work.” (Boushey & Mosher, 2006) Children need to develop “principled habits” to be successful within a small group structure.

In October, let’s focus on helping our students manage their independent behavior more successfully in the classroom so we as teachers can focus on small group instruction. In most elementary classrooms, it will be helpful to establish expectations for:

- **Transitions (into a small group, back to the whole group, etc.)**
- **Behavior in Certain Settings**
 - **Working Independently (Silent Reading, Writing, etc.)**
 - **Partner Reading**
 - **Working at a Center or Station**
- **What to do if a student has a problem, and you’re working with a small group.**

Remember...

- **Trusting your students to be able to manage their own behavior is key to establishing a small-group structure, but students need guidance over time to learn how.**
- **“Best practices” for teaching children to manage their independent behavior include:**
 - **Developing I-Charts (a.k.a. “Independence Charts, “Anchor Charts”)**
 - **Role-Playing (appropriate and inappropriate behaviors)**
 - **Modeling (student and/or teacher)**
 - **Developing Behavioral Rubrics.**

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Instead of:	Try this:
<p>BEHAVIOR IN CERTAIN SETTINGS (INDEPENDENT WORK, STATION/CENTER WORK, PAIR WORK)...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just lecturing the students on the behavioral expectations for each type of routine... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a rubric with your students for each routine/setting. (See attached for sample.) Post the rubric. Have students rate their behavior. • Develop an “I Chart” (Independence Chart) with your students for each routine/setting. (See attached for sample.) Post it. • Model the expected behaviors for each routine/setting for your students, or have a student model the behaviors. Have your class critique the behaviors after the modeling is done. Then repeat by modeling <u>inappropriate</u> behaviors. Critique. • Have your students role-play a scenario in which they must perform the expected behaviors. Have your class critique the behaviors after the “performance”. Then have the students role-play using <u>inappropriate</u> behaviors. Critique. • Practice the routine behaviors, gradually increasing your students’ stamina by expecting longer and longer periods of appropriate behavior. Actually time the students in how long they can sustain appropriate behaviors in a particular setting. (Most researchers say this type of practice should occur over 1-2 months.)
<p>TRANSITIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to give (yell?) movement directions over the din of the classroom... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a bell, timer, or other signal, and train students to move when they hear the sound. • Post a rotation chart in the classroom so students know where they go and when.
<p>IF A STUDENT YOU’RE <u>NOT</u> WORKING WITH IN A SMALL GROUP HAS A PROBLEM...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopping small group instruction to take care of the problem... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train students not to interrupt you during small group time, except in case of emergency. • Have a “parking lot” space on the markerboard for the student with a problem to write his/her name. When small group time is over, meet with the students whose names are in the “parking lot” to take care of the problems.

RUBRIC

Working at a Literacy Center





(while the teacher is working with a small group)

<p>4 </p>	<p>3 </p>
<p>2 </p>	<p>1 </p>

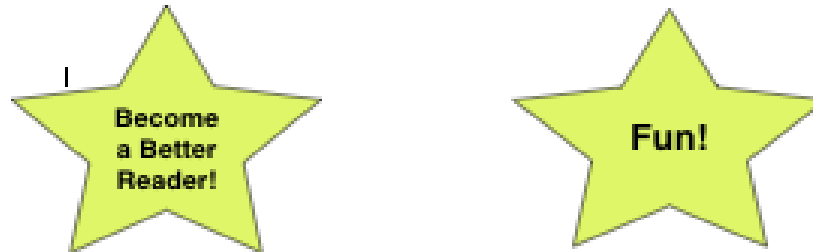
RUBRIC (Sample)

Working at a Literacy Center

(while the teacher is working with a small group)

<p>4 </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Always talking quietly and appropriately with my group• Staying with my group at the center• Reading directions carefully• Completing all the tasks at the center• Cleaning up the center for the next group	<p>3 </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually talking quietly and appropriately with my group• Staying with my group at the center• Reading most directions carefully• Completing most of the tasks at the center• Cleaning up the center for the next group
<p>2 </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sometimes talking quietly and appropriately with my group• Wandering away from the group once in a while• Reading only some of the directions• Completing only 1 task at the center• Leaving a little mess at the center	<p>1 </p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rarely talking quietly or appropriately with my group• Leaving the group many times• Not reading the directions• Not completing any tasks at the center• Leaving a big mess at the center for someone else to clean up

I Chart (Anchor Chart) Example:



Read to Self

Independence

Students	Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get started right away• Bubble space• Read alone the whole time• Stay in one spot the whole time• Quiet, only the sound of turning pages• Build stamina	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with groups of students• Work with individual students• Help students become better readers

I-Charts (or “Independence Charts” or “Anchor Charts”) should be titled by the activity being described, and should list the jobs of both the students and the teacher during that time. In the chart above, the teacher is working with a small group (or an individual) while the other students read silently. I-Charts should be posted in the room on large paper so they are easy to read from across the room.

Students should be involved in the development of the I Chart, and should be allowed to suggest the behaviors that go into the chart. They will have more ownership in the chart if they can help with it.