


FRAMEWORK SPECIALISTS

Resources *for* CPS Teachers *by* CPS Teachers

OVERVIEW: Using Centers in the Library		
Domain Component (s): <i>Element(s):</i>		
Levels of Performance from the CPS Framework:	Proficient:	Distinguished:
Grade:	K-2	
Subject:	Library	
Objective:	This resource will help you establish routines and procedures in the library. It is also a vehicle to teach library skills within a centers framework that many students already use in the classroom. It is loosely based on Literacy Centers in the classroom.	
Connections Across the Framework:		
Learn It!, Try It!, Print It!:		

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This is how I structure centers in my library.

Background to Library Centers

Look around your library. Think about logistics.

5 Reasons to Use Centers:

- Building better classroom management and routines - overly active PreK – 8th graders who are enthusiastic but had very short attention spans
- Limited resources: My centers started because I had 10 computers, 7 of which worked on a good day
- Our classroom teachers were implementing [The Daily 5 Café](#) program, which encourages small group work, individual work, and using data to make small group and individual work more meaningful and focused on skills that each student need, rather than the blanket whole group approach.
- Almost all students had little to no library or technology knowledge
- Building student autonomy

After reflection and some trial and error, this turned into my 3 basic centers – Checkout, Computers, and Reading Area.

Other centers appear and change throughout the school year, and eventually become a choice for the students, but to start and get the students into the routine, I start with these 3.

The Centers Themselves

I have centers that I use in Kindergarten – 5th grade.

There are 3 basic centers:

Checkout/Tablework:
Students checkout and then work on writing or drawing activities at their tables.

- When they are not checking out - they are working with me (learning how to find a book, discussing a book together, etc.)
- They are working with something on the SMART board.
- I also want them to be introduced to a variety of literature, and to save my voice, I use Tumblebooks (and sometimes Youtube or Discovery streaming) for read alouds.
- This also frees me up to facilitate and guide students in the other centers when needed.

Computers:
Teach the students how to go to a website (For example: abcya.com using the address bar and keyboard.).

- Have slips that have a number and the website, the number is the computer number, the website is typed in the address bar and off they go.
- Show this on the SMARTboard/projector, practice it together, have students come up one by one and show you how to do it...etc.
- Once they learn (abcya.com), you can gradually build to other websites and other games or activities.
- I can have the students go to my school website easily because they have the ground work as to how to use a computer and go to a website.

Reading Area:
Students look at books, look for letters they know or sight words, and read what they can, make up/tell a partner the story.

- Either read to self or read to a buddy.
- Also, look at call numbers and decide which section they are (E = Easy fiction, Numbers = Nonfiction, F = Fiction, etc).

Practice going to each center the first week, show what it looks like, and use a timer to help with a signal.

Then rotate centers in 8 - 10 minute increments. It's a lot of work to implement to start, but I think the kids benefit from having a variety of learning experiences, plus they learn to be a little more independent.

Plan to start the period with 5 - 10 minutes to remind students the centers. Go to the centers for most of the time, but leave about 5 - 7 minutes to clean up each center (assign students to help so they feel like their part of the classroom) and line up so they are ready for their teacher.

Try it out with just 2 centers. Practice, practice, practice! When you think the students understand, add the 3rd center. Reteach as needed. Add new centers!

After the centers are implemented, you will need some ground rules. I use 3 simple rules:

1. Walk.
2. Whisper.
3. Ask 3 before me.

Consequences – 3 strikes and you're out! If I see you not following the rules, I will give you a strike (verbal). If you get 3 strikes, you lose the center. You may try again for the next center (because I do not want them to sit out for the entire time, I want them to learn the other skills and to get a second chance).

To differentiate for older grades:

For 3rd – 5th:

I would add the following centers as needed:

- An encyclopedia center, to either explore the encyclopedia or to find specific information.
- A book center (30 – 40 books on one topic) to find specific information
- A computer center to use databases rather than practice typing and mouse skills
- A bibliography center, using an [Encyclopedia PowerPoint](#) that students could watch and practice to learn how to write a bibliography for an encyclopedia article, and another [PowerPoint](#) to practice any citation. I would have them write a “reading log” in citation form to practice bibliographies.
- Anything you see the students struggling with, break it down into smaller steps and practice in a center!

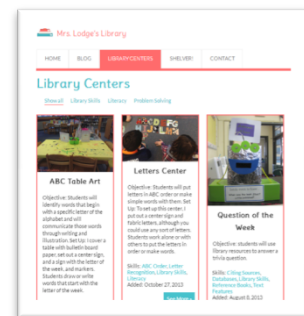
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