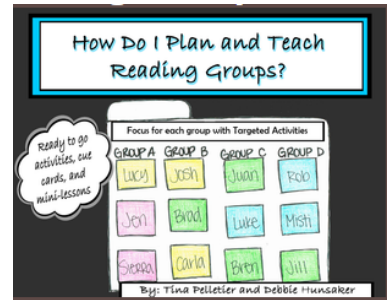


SMALL GROUPS

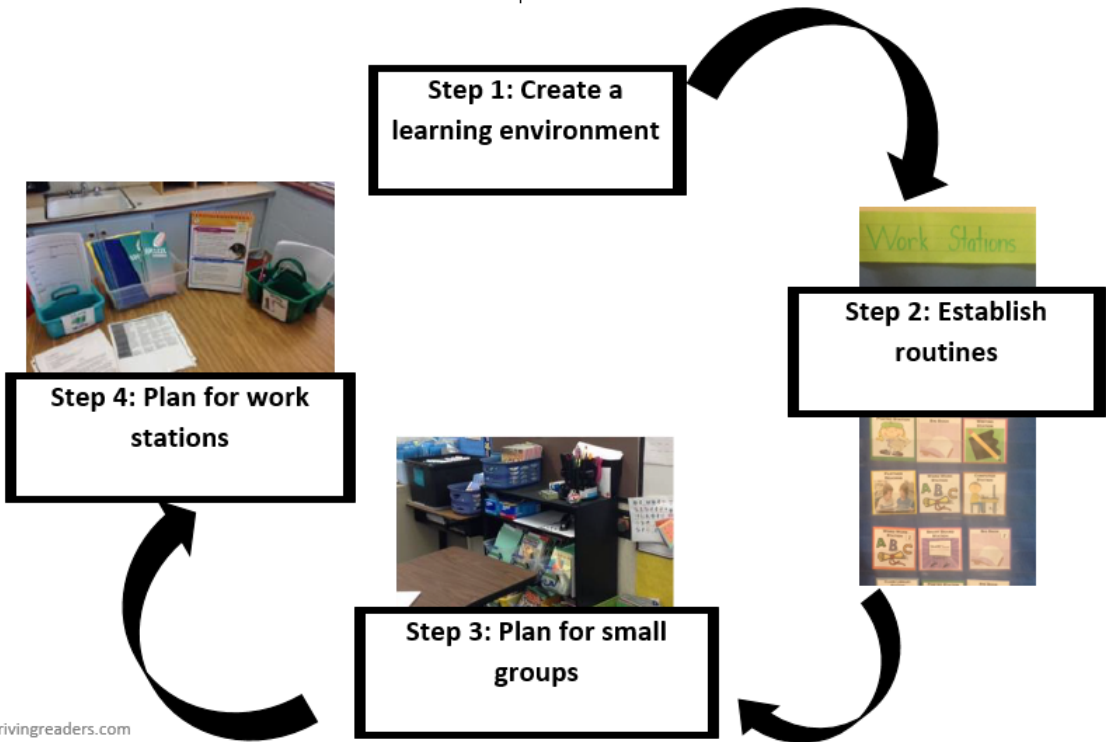
AND WORK

STATIONS



By Debbie Hunsaker

NOTES: _____



Strivingreaders.com
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Step 1: Environment

First: Inventory your space

Why: You and your students will be much more successful during small group instruction if you create an organized environment. A well planned and organized space will help you monitor student behavior, create consistency for students, allow quicker transitions between work stations, and help reduce disruptive behaviors.

How: Use an already developed inventory or create your own.

Example:

Then: Make decisions about small groups

Why: It is important to plan a well-organized and defined space, so students know where they are going and what they need to do when they arrive at the teacher table (e.g., pick up books out of a colored bin and begin reading with a partner until the teacher arrives).

How: Analyze the inventory and think through questions.

Example:

Then: Make decisions about work stations

Why: It is critical to plan well-organized and defined spaces for work stations. Students need to know where they are going, how to transition to where they are going, and what to do when they arrive at each work station, without asking the teacher and disrupting small group lessons at the teacher table.

How: Analyze inventory the and think through questions

Example:

Next: Determine what you have, what you need, and what you wish for later

Why: Once you have inventoried your environment and made decisions about small groups and work stations, you will be able to make decisions about the resources and items you still need that are critical for providing a great learning environment.

How: Identify what you have, what you need now, and what you wish for later.

Example:

Finally: Draft your plan

Why: To ensure you have a space that is well organized, flows well for you as a teacher, and makes transitions quick and seamless for students.

How: Use your inventory and notes to draw your classroom environment, or take digital pictures and create a visual of your classroom environment.

Example:

	Environment Checklist
<input type="checkbox"/>	Space inventoried
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decisions made about small groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decisions made about work stations
<input type="checkbox"/>	Determined what I have, what I need, and what I wish for later
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan drafted

Step 2: Routines

First: Determine the length of time

Why: The more time students spend on a task, the more content they learn (Brophy & Good, 1986; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1984), so try to allocate enough time to meet the needs of all students.

How: Often reading block times are determined by administration, so check district and school expectations. If there is no expectation, a typical reading block runs between 90 and 120 minutes, with small group instruction running 30 to 60 minutes. The more students you have reading below grade level, the more time you will need for both whole group and small group.

Then: Draft and post your schedule

Why: It is important for both you and your students to know the expected schedule and adhere to it as much as possible. It is more comforting to students when they know the daily routine and you have identified clear expectations. Being consistent with expectations helps decrease disruptive behaviors.

How: Draft a schedule that can be placed with your lesson planning materials.

Example:

Then: Identify behaviors you expect of students during small groups and work stations

Why: In addition to teaching students what activities they will complete in small group, you must also teach students how you expect them to interact with the content and other students (and you, the teacher) during small groups and work stations. There is a difference between setting expectations and establishing routines. Expectations are more about telling and routines are more about teaching, including modeling and practicing with students before they can apply the routine.

How: Identify each of your expectations and decide how you will convey those expectations to students. These should include how to work with a partner, when and how to interact with you, the teacher, how to maintain materials, where to put finished work, and what to do when finished with the expected activities. Then determine if a routine is needed to make sure students can meet those expectations. Routines need to be explicitly taught and consistently reinforced. Think through questions.

Example:

Then: Identify behaviors you expect of yourself and other teacher helpers during small groups and work stations

Why: Identifying teacher expectations will ensure better supports for students including improved classroom management and regular feedback for improved learning. If you have teacher helpers, it is important to take the time to teach them how you expect them to interact with your classroom environment and the students during small groups and work stations.

How: Identify each expectation for you and teacher helpers, and the “why and how” for each one. Take enough time to meet with teacher helpers to ensure they know the “why and how” of what they will be doing. Some effective instructional techniques (Carnine et al. 2006) include corrective feedback, monitoring, pacing, and signaling. Think through questions.

Example:

Next: Plan for disruptive behavior

Why: Teacher time with students must be protected so that constant disruptions don’t take away from teaching and learning.

How: Establishing expectations and explicitly teaching routines will preempt many disruptive behaviors. Having a clear plan for how you will consistently implement and reinforce expectations and routines will ensure improved teaching and learning. Think through questions. Working through the questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Next: Determine how you will manage student work

Why: It is important to develop a system for managing student work that first and foremost allows you to provide feedback as soon as possible so students can correct mistakes or misconceptions. It is also important for students so they don't lose their work and understand why work needs to be completed and turned in. Plus, ongoing monitoring of student work creates the ongoing expectation of work completion and builds student stamina.

How: Plan specific times during teacher-lead small group instruction when you can circulate among workstations and check on work completion. Not every work product needs to be turned in. Also, plan for how and where students will turn in their work and how often you will review and correct it.

Example:

Finally: Monitor and assess

Why: It is important to constantly analyze the effectiveness of your routines and determine what changes need to be made to ensure students are getting the most learning out of small groups and work stations and not being off task or disruptive.

How: It is all about the DATA: student work, your management system, and feedback from students and administration. Take time as often as possible to analyze your data and determine whether or not your routines are meeting the needs of your teaching and student learning. An easy way to analyze the data is to divide your students into three groups: high, middle, and low. This is just for you and of course should not be used with students or parents. Even though students will not always be together during work stations, it makes analyzing the data easier. Think through questions. Not all questions will apply to all routines. Working through the questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Routines Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Length of time determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schedule drafted and posted
<input type="checkbox"/>	Student behaviors determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult behaviors determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Plan for Disruptive behavior planned for
<input type="checkbox"/>	Managing student work planned
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring and assessing routines

Notes:

Step 3: Plan for small groups

First: Determine how many groups

Why: Once you know how much time you will have for small groups, it is important to determine how many flexible groups you will need to form, how often those groups will meet, and whether or not you will have any additional teacher support including para-professionals, aides, or even well trained and committed volunteers.

How: Use data from the previous year to determine where to begin forming groups. Hopefully this will be given to you, so you don't have to wait too long to assess and place students in groups. Begin by analyzing the data and group students into four groups. Those who demonstrate above-grade-level skills, at grade-level skills, below-grade-level skills, and way-below-grade-level skills. You may need to break one or more of the groups into two groups if they are too large. Typically teachers have 4 to 5 groups with 4 to 6 students in each group.

Example:**Then: Study the curriculum and resources**

Why: It is critical you study and learn the curriculum you are expected to teach and the resources you have for teaching it. In order to have well planned and purposeful lessons that meet the needs of all students, you have to put in the study and preparation time.

How: Verify with your administration the expectations of the curriculum and the expected resources to be used. Hopefully, you will receive professional development and support in learning and implementing a research-based core reading program that is aligned with your curriculum. Some districts also have curriculum maps or pacing guides they expect you to follow that include using a teachers' edition from a core reading program, and they also expect you to use additional resources.

Example:

Then: Analyze small group lessons AND student needs

Why: The small group lessons in a core reading program usually include lessons for students above grade level, at grade level, approaching grade level, below grade level, and English language support. The lessons are a great starting point for differentiating instruction for the varying needs in your classroom. If you are a new teacher or the program is new to you, use the lessons in their entirety until lesson preparation and teaching becomes quicker and easier for you. Then, look at student data to determine additional needs of students.

How: Begin by analyzing the needs of each group. Refer to student data, including independent assessments (i.e., isip and Dibels), program assessments (i.e, Wonders, Journeys, ReadyGEN), and formative assessments (i.e., checklists, monitoring, and feedback).

Example:

Then: Determine additional resources you need

Why: A core reading program is a comprehensive resource for teaching and learning. Sometimes you still need to add resources including manipulatives for active engagement and additional activities for **small group instruction** and **work stations** to meet student needs. If you are a new teacher or the program is new to you or the school, you use the program in its entirety and with fidelity until you have enough experience and EVIDENCE (data) that identify additional resources need to be added.

How: There are two levels to purposeful lesson planning: planning the content and planning how to actively engage students with the content. Begin by reading through and planning the content for the small group lesson. Then, review the content and identify how you can engage students with the content. Refer to the active engagement cards when planning. Finally, refer to data (program, independent, and formative) to identify purposeful resources that meet students' needs.

Example:

Next: Draft lesson plans

Why: It is important to have well planned and drafted lesson plans to ensure you know what you are teaching, how you are delivering the instruction, and what the goals and outcomes are for each group.

How: There are many examples and resources for drafting lesson plans. You can even just make notes on stickies and place them in your teacher’s edition. Administration often has expectations for lesson plans, so make sure you know what those are before deciding which format to use.

Example:

Finally: Monitor and assess

Why: It is important that you are constantly analyzing the effectiveness of your small groups and determining what changes need to be made to ensure you are teaching students the most important literacy skills and meeting their individual needs.

How: It is all about the DATA: program data, independent data, and formative data. Take time as often as possible to analyze your data and determine whether or not your small groups are meeting the needs of all of your students. An easy way to analyze the data, is to group your students into three groups: high, middle, and low. Even though they won’t always be together during work stations, it makes analyzing the data easier. Another way to dig deeper with your data is to analyze the effectiveness of each small group, especially if you are using the PDSA cycles. Think through questions. Working through questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Plan Instruction Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of groups determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Curriculum and resources studied...and continuing to study
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small group lessons AND student needs analyzed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional resources determined
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lesson plans drafted
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring and assessing small groups

Begin with the end in mind. What do you want everyone to be able to do? What does it look like when it is successful for teachers and students? Then, either work backward or start at the beginning and work towards the end. **Finally, identify critical turning points in the plan.**

Implementation Plan for Planning and Teaching Reading Groups <i>Based on the book, "How do I plan and teach reading groups?" Howdoiplanandteachreadinggroups.com</i>			
A. Teachers learn about an exciting new resource that will help both students and teachers	B. Teachers receive PD on how implementing reading groups will help students and teachers	C. Teachers have identified how teaching reading groups will help their students and their teaching	D. Teachers receive PD on creating a focus folder
E. Teachers have created a focus folder	F. Teachers receive PD on grouping students	G. Teachers group students	H. Teachers have students grouped and placed on the focus folder
I. Teachers receive PD on targeted activities	J. Teacher plans to use a few targeted activities with reading groups	K. Teacher is beginning to use a few targeted activities with at least one reading group	L. Teacher is beginning to use multiple targeted activities with all reading groups
M. Teachers are discussing the use of targeted activities during collaborative teams	N. Teachers receive PD on using ready to go mini-lessons	O. Teacher plans mini-lessons with targeted activities to use with reading groups	P. Teacher is beginning to use mini-lessons with at least one reading group
Q. Teacher is using ready to go mini-lessons with all reading groups	R. Teachers are discussing mini-lessons and progress of students during collaborative teams	S. Teachers receive PD on creating their own mini-lessons using PDSA cycles	T. Teacher creates lesson plans using PDSA cycles
U. Teacher is beginning to use PDSA cycles with at least one reading group	V. Teacher is using PDSA cycles with all reading groups	W. Teachers are discussing PDSA cycles and progress of students during collaborative teams	X. Teacher is regrouping students using data from PDSA cycles

Step 4: Plan for work stations

It is highly recommended that if you are a new teacher or the curriculum and resource are new to you, begin with a few work stations and even use worksheets in a “must do, may do” structure, until small groups are running smoothly and students know the routines and follow them consistently.

First: Analyze whole group and small group lessons

Why: The goal of work stations is to ensure students have purposeful practice to solidify literacy skills. Students need multiple repetitions to truly master and apply literacy skills. Of course, some students need fewer repetitions and some need more. Work stations need to provide that extra practice in the skills students have been taught in whole group and small group instruction.

How: Begin by reviewing the skills taught in both whole group and small group. Identify the critical skills and prioritize which ones make the most sense to put into a work station. Keep work stations as simple as possible including the directions, materials, and familiar routines from week to week. This will make planning and monitoring much easier for you and also develop patterns and routines for students so they can get right to the work and not waste time trying to figure out a new work station. The text and content can change but the work station pattern can remain the same. An example of this is the work station, “Text Detective.” Text Detective is very simple to plan. The directions stay the same. It is just the text that changes. Also, review the section, *Make decisions about work stations*, under *Step 1: Environment*. You will need to determine what makes sense for your environment and the needs of your students. Sometimes what you want to happen with your environment changes based on student needs. Think through questions. Working through questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Then: Create progressions that lead to connected text and writing

Why: It is important to create a progression of skills (and not just tasks) that leads to students practicing with connected text and writing. Students need to understand the connection between the skills they are practicing and application of those skills in their reading and writing. Work stations are most effective if they go beyond a “to do” task list to application in reading and writing.

How: Begin with the most critical skills, which are usually the tested or assessed skills at the end of the week and/or the end of the unit. Then, develop a list of progressions that results in students reading connected text and/or applying skills to writing. Think through questions. Working through questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Next: Create work stations

Why: Once you have created your progressions, it is important to determine which materials you can gather and which materials you will need to create. Also, determine how to teach the work stations and how the work stations can be differentiated to meet the needs of all of your students.

How: If you are a beginning teacher or the curriculum and resource is new to you, begin with one or two work stations and have all students complete those two. Use work sheets as needed until small groups and work stations are running smoothly. Then, add in additional work stations and ways to differentiate. Think through questions. Working through questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Finally: Monitor and assess

Why: It is important that you are constantly analyzing the effectiveness of your work stations and determining what changes need to be made to ensure students are practicing and mastering the most important literacy skills.

How: It is all about the DATA: program data, independent data, and formative data. Take time as often as possible to analyze your data and determine whether or not your work stations are meeting the needs of all of your students. An easy way to analyze the data is to group your students into three groups: high, middle, and low. Even though they won't always be together during work stations, it makes analyzing the data easier. Think through questions. Working through questions with a partner or teacher team is very helpful.

Example:

Work Stations Checklist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Whole group and small group lessons analyzed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Progressions that lead to connected text and writing created
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work stations created
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitoring and assessing work stations