Workshop, Grades 2-3

Classroom Management

The success of Workshop depends primarily on the ability of the teacher and the students to efficiently manage their time and materials. It takes time and continual reinforcement to reach this level of organization. Mrs. Day has followed the suggestions presented in **Open Court Reading**, also found in **SRA Imagine It!**, for setting up and conducting Workshop. In addition, she has used her own experience and knowledge of her students' limitations and abilities to make Workshop engaging and valuable.

General guidelines

1. Establish and discuss rules for Workshop with your students. Write the finalized rules on the board or on a poster. Suggested rules include:

    o   Be polite.

    o   Share.

    o   Whisper when you need to say something.

    o   Take only the materials you need. When you are finished, put them back in the proper place.

    o   Don't interrupt the teacher. Note Mrs. Day's method of keeping interruptions to a minimum. She has created a star with each student's name on it. If students have questions or problems, they put their stars on the table, and Mrs. Day will assist them when she is free.

2. Introduce and demonstrate every activity and game before you give it to the students to do on their own. Provide complete instructions for each activity before the students begin working.

3. Make sure that every student knows exactly what to do during Workshop, including what to do when they have finished an activity. This is essential if you are to be free to work with small groups.

4. Show students where necessary materials can be found.

5. If the class should become too noisy or distracted, end Workshop and explain to students why.

Adhere to the Workshop guidelines. By the time the students have completed the first 10 lessons, they will feel confident during Workshop. Early Workshops may run no more than 10 or 15 minutes. The time can gradually increase to 30 minutes as the students gain independence.

Mrs. Day spends a considerable amount of time discussing her Workshop rules with the students (see **Teaching Example 1**). She makes absolutely sure that the students know the rules, understand the rules, and understand that they must abide by the rules. She also explains her reasons for each rule. This is important in helping the students act responsibly during Workshop. They are less likely to ignore rules if they understand the reasons for them.

Managing space

Carefully setting up your classroom to accommodate different Workshop activities will help Workshop time progress smoothly and effectively. During Workshop, the students will be doing independent and collaborative reading and writing, as well as individual and small-group projects. While setting up your classroom, keep the primary Workshop activities in mind.

Note how Mrs. Day has arranged her classroom:

*   She has the materials readily available to the students. They are in containers organized by activity and clearly marked.

*   Desks are arranged so that there is an open space in the front of the room where students can work in small groups.

- She has a table in the back of the room where she meets with individuals and small groups. This allows her to separate these small groups as well as watch the other students as they participate in their Workshop activities.

- She has a computer station set up where small groups of students can work together.

For users of *SRA Imagine It!*, the **Workshop Kits** provide a variety of manipulatives and games for differentiating instruction. The focus of the activities has a wide range and the kit should be positioned in a location that gives students easy access to help them practice phonics, grammar, usage, spelling, and other skills.

Organize your class to best fit the needs of you and your children. You may choose to spread Workshop areas, such as the writing, speaking and listening, reading, and computer areas, around the room. Or you may choose to put all the various Workshop areas in a certain location of the room, such as in a bookcase or in a number of bins, tubs, or boxes.

Additional Workshop tips

- Encourage responsibility and independence by reminding the students to follow the rules and be productive.

- Establish areas and times for the students to display and present their work to you and to their peers.

- Color code materials so pieces don't get lost. For example, code the decks of the *Individual Sound/Spelling Cards* so if a card happens to fall to the floor, you and the children know with which deck it goes.

- Encourage students to tell each other what they like about their work and to offer help and suggestions.

- Look for talents and abilities in each student; provide opportunities for your students to show off their talents.

- Encourage students to challenge themselves during Workshop by encouraging them to solve their own problems.