

## Workshop/Intervention, Grades 4-6

### Introduction

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This course demonstrates the use and organization of Workshop and especially the use of Workshop time to deliver individual and small-group interventions.

Workshop is the period set aside for students to work collaboratively or independently, practicing and reviewing material taught in their lessons or completing their own projects. As students gradually take on more responsibility during Workshop, they learn to set learning goals, make decisions about the use of time and materials, and collaborate with their peers. During Workshop, you can work with individuals and groups of students to reinforce learning, provide extra help for those having difficulty, conference with students on their writing, or assess the progress of your class and individual students.

Students need structure, repetition, and routine in order to feel comfortable and confident. Within a sound structure, your students will feel secure and confident enough to gain independence, yet have opportunities for flexibility and individual choices that allow them to develop their strengths, abilities, and talents to the fullest.

Throughout this course, you will see not only how Workshop can be conducted to support the varying needs of students in a classroom, but also how intervention sessions focus on the fundamentals of basic reading instruction. Stephanie Strelcheck is able to work with each group of students at appropriate levels and according to individual needs. In this way, those students who are not as strong in one area can receive the help they need on a daily basis and participate in the regular reading class as well.

#### Teaching Example 1

In this teaching example, Ms. Strelcheck starts by reviewing Workshop rules and procedures with her students. She makes sure that they know what is expected of them and that they will be working on productive activities while she works with various small groups.

Since there will be many activities going on at the same time during Workshop, it is essential to establish rules of behavior. If there were constant confusion and discussion about how to proceed with Workshop, neither students nor teacher would be able to accomplish their goals.

#### Independent and Small-Group Work

Workshop is an extremely valuable time during every class day. Using well-defined rules and procedures, the teacher is able to:

- Help students learn to work independently.
- Provide the time necessary for students to engage in collaborative activities, such as project work or group writing assignments.
- Address the individual needs of his or her students while the majority of the class is engaged in independent and group activities.

Once she has completed the review of procedures, Ms. Strelcheck meets with a small group in need of reinforcement in decoding. Using the sound-by-sound blending technique, she works with them on strengthening this strategy for blending unfamiliar words. As the group session moves forward, she has them try whole-word blending. She gives them all the support they need in order to be successful. Success is critical for these students because they have been unsuccessful in the past and are in danger of becoming discouraged. The blending strategies they are learning in the small intervention group will help them become successful, confident readers.

## Teaching Example 2

One of the greatest benefits of Workshop time is the freedom it allows you to address the needs of all your students. In this teaching example, Ms. Strelcheck demonstrates the relative ease with which she is able to work with a small group on vocabulary. While these students are working with their teacher, other students are working on assignments—must do's—and work of their own choosing—may do's. As is evident in the video, Ms. Strelcheck and her small group have no difficulty working on reading multisyllabic words as her other students pursue different activities.

Following her work with the small groups, Ms. Strelcheck takes a few minutes to observe her students working independently and with partners. This combination of working with small groups and observing and conferencing with individuals makes it possible for her to know at all times how each of her students is progressing and what each may need extra help with.

### Word Knowledge

Increasing a student's vocabulary is one of the most effective ways to increase reading ability. In this teaching example, Ms. Strelcheck and a small group of her students work specifically on vocabulary development by looking carefully at prefixes, suffixes, and roots, and talking about how these structural elements change a word's meaning.

Since this particular group of students is still having some difficulty decoding, they are working both on decoding multisyllabic words and words with roots and suffixes. This extra work on word structure and meaning will help give them the confidence they need in their reading.

## Teaching Example 3

Again Ms. Strelcheck takes advantage of Workshop time to work with a small group of students who need extra help. Because of the size of the group, she is able to tell how each student is doing as they progress through the activity.

### Dictation

Blending activities teach students strategies they can use while reading unfamiliar words. Dictation is the reciprocal activity. It helps the students by giving them strategies to use when writing words. In blending, students translate written words into spoken words; in dictation, students translate spoken words into written words. Translating the spoken into the written can be challenging for students. When reading, for example, the spelling *n* is a reliable representation of the phoneme /n/. The reverse is not true: /n/ can be spelled *n*, or possibly *kn*\_, or *grw* when a word begins with /n/.

Ms. Strelcheck gives these students maximum support by starting with sounds-in-sequence dictation before moving on to the more challenging whole-word dictation.

## Teaching Example 4

Once again, Ms. Strelcheck uses Workshop time to lend extra support to those students whom she feels will need it. In this case, though, the lesson is not based on a previous lesson in which the students demonstrated a need. This small-group lesson is based on an upcoming selection that the whole class will be reading. Ms. Strelcheck uses Workshop time to preteach a particularly challenging set of vocabulary words. Since these words will appear in the selection, she wants to give this group as much help as possible.

### Preteaching Vocabulary

Although much reteaching support is provided during Workshop, *Open Court Reading* and *SRA Imagine It!* also recommend the strategy of preteaching vocabulary and concepts to students who would benefit from this help. Preteaching difficult vocabulary allows the students to concentrate their attention on the meaning of the larger piece as they read it rather than missing the meaning of the piece because of its vocabulary. This is a strategy that works especially well with second-language learners.

## Teaching Example 5

In another small-group Workshop session, Ms. Strelcheck instructs her students about how to achieve fluency in their reading.

## **Building Fluency**

Fluency is critical to comprehension. Unless a reader can decode individual words and read them with a measure of speed and accuracy, and read with correct intonation, comprehension is severely compromised. Once students understand and can use decoding strategies, they need to concentrate on building fluency in their reading. The ability to read fluently with purpose and understanding is achieved primarily through much practice. The more your students read, the more fluent they will become. That is why repeated reading activities are so valuable.

Workshop allows the time for Ms. Strelcheck to work with a small group to build fluency and allows her students to work with partners for the same reason. Either way, her students are reading aloud and actively working on building speed and accuracy.

Workshop also affords Ms. Strelcheck the time to individually assess her students' growth in fluency. By conducting simple, one-minute, timed fluency assessments, Ms. Strelcheck is always aware of her students' progress in this area.

**Please note:** Ms. Strelcheck is a fourth grade teacher and, therefore, is using Level 4 of *Open Court Reading*. Although the content is different, the instructional methods learned in this course can be easily applied to lessons in Levels 5-6.

Users of *SRA Imagine It!* can find additional Workshop activities in the grade-level-specific *Workshop Kits*, which include a variety of manipulative and games for differentiating instructions.