

Literacy & Learning Centers for the Big Kids (4-12)

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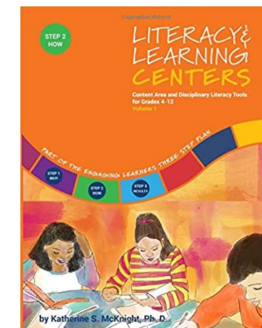
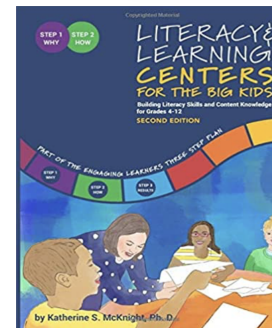
Leading Change,
Teachers' Institute, &
School Counselors' Institute



About the Presenter

Dr. Katherine McKnight is a dynamic presenter, dedicated teacher, and award-winning author. Dr. McKnight began her career in education over 30 years ago as a middle school and high school English and social studies teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. In addition to speaking at professional development conferences, she is a regular consultant in schools and classrooms in the United States and Internationally. Dr. McKnight's 15-year distinguished university career culminated in her assignment to Distinguished Professor of Research at National Louis University. She is the founder of Engaging Learners, an educational company built around her successful Literacy and Learning Center model. Her work in educational leadership, literacy and student skill development has resulted in unprecedented academic achievement in many struggling schools.

Dr. McKnight has received several awards for her publications and teaching at the university level. She has authored 21 books that support educational strategies to engage all learners. Her titles include the best-selling *The Teacher's Big Book of Graphic Organizers*, winner of the 2013 Teachers' Choice Award and *Literacy & Learning Centers for the Big Kids, grades 4-12*. Most recently, she founded Coffee with Katie and Richard webinars (with renowned educator and author, Dr. Richard Cash during the COVID 19 pandemic as a weekly forum to bring together educators to engage in professional learning. To learn more about Dr. McKnight, visit her websites: KatherineMcKnight.com and EngagingLearners.com

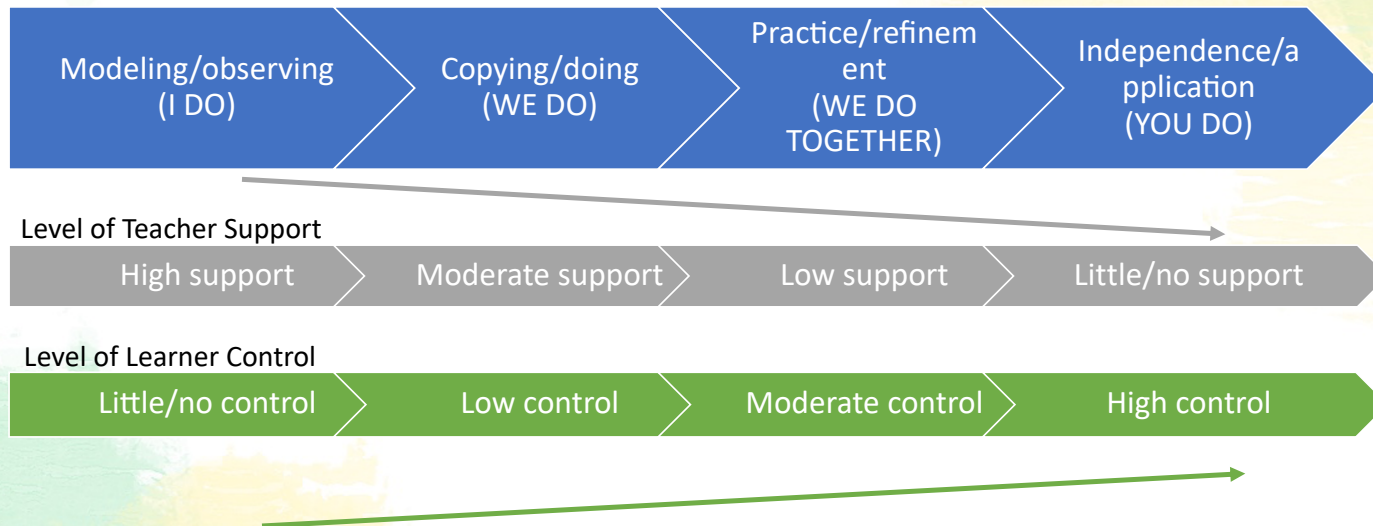


Why should we use centers for older students?

- Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)
- Differentiated Instruction
- Brain Based Learning for Adolescent Students

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Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR)



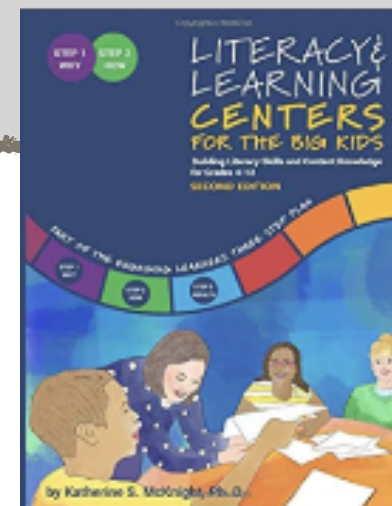
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**Gradual Release
of Responsibility
(GRR)**

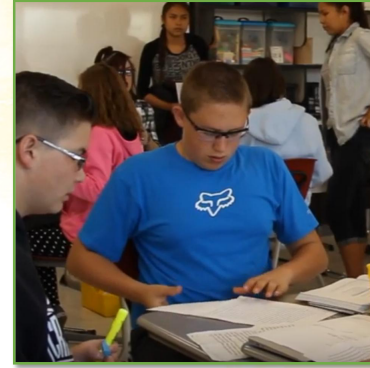
**Literacy & Learning
Centers (LLC)**

I Do It	<p>Teacher-Led Mini-Lesson OR Whole Group Instruction</p> <p>The teacher models a particular skill, usually through a think-aloud or read-aloud.</p>
We Do It	<p>Pair/Small Group</p> <p>In small groups, the students practice the skill that was demonstrated during the Teacher-Led Mini-Lesson/Whole Group Instruction</p>
You Do It	<p>Centers</p> <p>The Literacy & Learning Centers include clearly focused activities that foster skill development and content knowledge.</p>

Direct parallels to Literacy & Learning Centers



Differentiated Instruction



With Literacy & Learning Centers, teachers can create learning activities that involve **student choice, flexible grouping, and modification of skills**, the cornerstones of differentiated instruction.

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Literacy & Learning Center Cycle Structure

Step 1 - Mini Lesson

- Direct instruction
- No longer than 12-14 minutes
- Introduces a skill or content knowledge



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What exactly IS a Mini Lesson?



It's whole-class instruction that is:

- Short
- Focused
- Chunked
- Incorporates Modeling

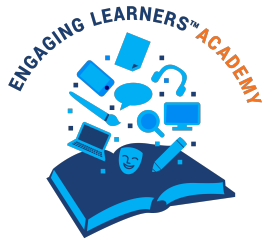
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SAMPLE MINI LESSON

Sample Activity: Read Together Center

Sticky Notes

This exercise helps students become more active readers by encouraging them to record their thoughts, comments, questions, and personal connections on sticky notes and placing them directly on or by the text that inspired the thought.



Mini Lesson

- Explain the purpose of the activity
- Model the activity

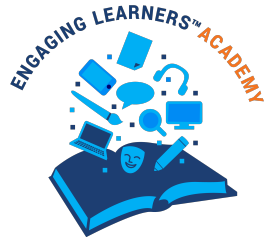
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SAMPLE MINI LESSON

Sticky Notes

Sample Center Instructions

1. Chose an essay from the stack.
2. Read your essay independently.
3. Use sticky notes to record comments, questions, or personal connections.



Note: *Students* decide when to stop and write a sticky note!



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Literacy & Learning Center Cycle Structure

Step 2 - Guided Practice

- Students **practice the skill or engage with the content** knowledge that was introduced in the Mini Lesson

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How does Guided Practice work?



Students work individually or in pairs.

Practice specific skill or review specific content that was introduced in Mini Lesson

Teacher assists as needed

What do students DO in a Center?



Students work in small groups.

Each center has a clearly articulated learning activity.

The learning activity relates to the skill or content that was introduced in the Mini Lesson.

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Literacy & Learning Center Cycle Planning

Topic	Focuses on specific skills or content
Essential Question	BIG questions, not easily answered Require students to explore and reflect
Mini Lesson (Whole Group Instruction)	Introduces or reviews a skill or content Short: no more than 12-14 minutes Teacher models skill for students
Guided Practice (Pairs or small groups)	Students practice skill or engage with content that was introduced or reviewed in the Mini Lesson
Center Activities	Clearly articulated activity in each Center Start with the 4 Foundational Centers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teacher-Led Center• Vocabulary Center• Reading Together Center• Writer's Craft Center Add content-specific centers as required

Literacy & Learning Center Cycle Planning Template

Download it Here:



Topic:
Essential Question:
Teacher-Led Mini-Lesson or Whole Group Instruction:
Paired/Small Group Activity:
Center activities: <i>Teacher-Led Center:</i> <i>Vocabulary Center:</i> <i>Reading Together Center:</i> <i>Writer's Craft Center:</i>

Getting started...

Be sure to establish:

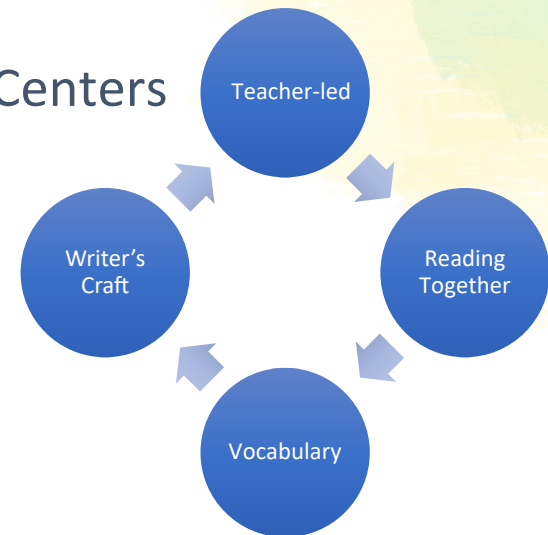
1. Group size
2. Choice
3. Timing
4. Make up center
5. Procedures



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The Foundational Centers

- Teacher-led Center
- Reading Together
- Vocabulary
- Writer's Craft

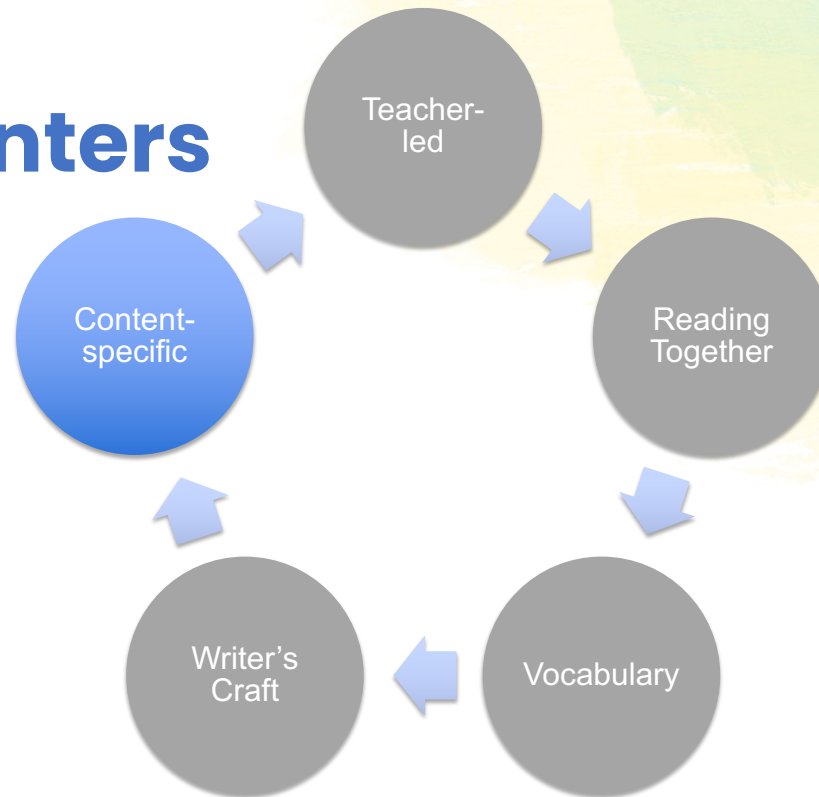


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Beyond the Foundational Centers

Some additional centers work in multiple content areas

- Read Alone
- Speaking & Listening
- Visualization
- Practice Center



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Guidelines for Content-Specific Centers

There is not **ONE** way to create center activities!

- Provide opportunity to practice skills/engage with new content
- Chunk content
- Time (student attention span = age x 1)
- Be sure teams can do the activity independently
- Don't reinvent the wheel!
(Can you adapt your materials?)

Sample Reading List built around an Essential Question **GRADE 5**

Topic: Ecosystems (Non-Fiction)

Essential question: How are ecosystems affected by the actions of human beings?

TEXT COMPLEXITY	BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR
5 th -9 th grade	<i>World Without Fish</i>	Mark Kurlansky
5 th -7 th grade	<i>Life and Non-Life in an Ecosystem</i>	William B. Rice
4 th -8 th grade	<i>Climate Change: Discover How It Impacts Spaceship Earth</i>	Joshua Sneideman
4 th -8 th grade	<i>Inside Ecosystems and Biomes: Life Science</i>	Debra J. Housel
4 th -7 th grade	<i>Extreme Animals: The Toughest Creatures on Earth</i>	Nicola Davies
3 rd -5 th grade	<i>Exploring Ecosystems with Max Axiom, Super Scientist</i>	Agnieszka Biskup
3 rd -5 th grade	<i>Endangered Oceans: Investigating Oceans in Crisis</i>	Jody S. Rake
2 nd -5 th grade	<i>What If There Were No Lemmings?</i>	Suzanne Slade
1 st -5 th grade	<i>The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest</i>	Lynne Cherry

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Sample Reading List built around an Essential Question **GRADE 7**

Topic: Personal Courage (Fiction)

Essential question: How do people find courage to stand up for their rights?

TEXT COMPLEXITY	BOOK TITLE	AUTHOR
7 th -12 th grade	<i>A Raisin In the Sun</i>	Lorraine Hansberry
6 th -9 th grade	<i>A Wrinkle In Time</i>	MadeleineL.'Engle
5 th -8 th grade	<i>Control Under Fire</i>	M. Zachary Sherman
5 th -8 th grade	<i>Counting by 7s</i>	Holly Goldberg Sloan
4 th -7 th grade	<i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>	Kate DiCamillo
3 rd -7 th grade	<i>Loser</i>	Jerry Spinelli
3 rd -7 th grade	<i>Love That Dog</i>	Sharon Crech

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