

Six Small Group / Center Organization Models

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1. Traditional Timed Rotations:

- Students are leveled to make small reading groups. Use STAR and/or Literacy First data to group students.
- Identify groups (color names, etc.). Post names in the room so when you call the “Red Group” those students know who they are.
- Allow 60-70 minutes for small group rotation. If you have 4 groups, you can see each group daily for 15 minutes each with transition time in between. Always try to meet with your low students each day!
- Provide activities for students to review practice skills while you are working with a group at the teacher table: Writing, word work, spelling, reading, listening center, computers/ipads, etc. Each student would be at each station every day.

Time Period	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
15 min.	Teacher	Work Station 3	Work Station 2	Work Station 1
15 min.	Work Station 1	Teacher	Work Station 3	Work Station 2
15 min.	Work Station 2	Work Station 1	Teacher	Work Station 3
15 min.	Work Station 3	Work Station 2	Work Station 1	Teacher

More info on Option #1:

- Have a simple rotation plan so students aren’t criss-crossing the class to get to their next station.
- Use a timer. Give students a one-minute warning so they can clean up before moving.
- Practice procedures!!
- Keep centers stable so students know what is expected each day. Have a plan for what students are to do if they finish / don’t finish before time to move to next station.
- Students at centers can rotate with the members of their reading group, OR center groups can be mixed ability, with teacher calling for students she is ready for.
- Pros: Students experience a variety of motivational activities on a daily basis. Provides a structured daily routine.
- Cons: Students and teacher groups must change after 15 minutes. What if students finish early or don’t finish? Students are always rotating with students in their group – could be social conflicts. It is harder to monitor student engagement – more classroom noise and opportunities for misbehavior.

2. Semi-Flexible Schedule:

- Instead of timed rotations, all students start off at their desk/table with 1-2 *short* must do assignments that they can do independently.
- Follow with a reading assignment (Decodable reader, leveled reader, or anchor story). It can be individual, partner reading, or via a listening/ipad station.
- This enables a staggered start to center activities.
- When they have finished the above, they go to a station chosen by the teacher for that day.
- The stations can be assigned by day. Post a chart. Example:

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednes.	Thursday	Friday
Blue	Computer	Word Work	Listening	Spelling	Writing
Red	Word work	Listening	Spelling	Writing	Computer
Green	Listening	Spelling	Writing	Computer	Word Work
Yellow	Spelling	Writing	Computer	Word Work	Listening
Orange	Writing	Computer	Word Work	Listening	Spelling

Or it could look like this each day.

Time period	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
15 min.	teacher	Work station	Read	Must-do
15 min.	Must-do	teacher	Work station	Read
15 min.	Read	Must-do	teacher	Work station
15 min.	Work station	Read	Must-do	teacher

More info on Option #2:

- This plan makes it easier to differentiate instruction at centers. Example: There could be different word work activities for struggling and advanced students. Color code them or assign certain ones to certain students.
- Only 1 group of students is at a work station each 15 minute time period.
- Centers (work station) changed once a week instead of once a day. Activities at centers can be repeated often. (repetition promotes familiarity and confidence, and students often like to repeat activities they enjoy)
- Watch out for students who rush through work to do a center. Idea: Student must show another their work. This student checks for name on papers and all answers complete. If a student has a pattern of rushing through, then they must fix prior work and do not get to visit centers.
- Teacher's small group schedule:
 - Monday and Tuesday: Reading leveled text, strategies, comprehension
 - Wednesday: Word work (making words, word sorting, word hunt in the story)
 - Thursday: Guided writing about the story (1-2 sentences)

3. With another adult for 1 hour (reading specialist, sped teacher, certified tutor)

- If another qualified adult is in the room, they can conduct a group while you conduct a group.
- Teacher works with group A, while group B is as a station. Tutor works with group C, while group D is at a different station. Then after 15 minutes, A switches places with B; and C switches places with D, etc. After 30 minutes - - Teacher works with groups C and D while tutor works with groups A and B.
- Sample schedule:

Time	Teacher	At Center		Tutor	At Center
15 min.	Group A	Group B		Group C	Group D
15 min.	Group B	Group A		Group D	Group C
Teacher and other adult switch their groups					
15 min.	Group C	Group D		Group A	Group B
15 min.	Group D	Group C		Group B	Group A

- With this plan, you need just 2 center activities per day.
- Tutor could work on reinforcing a skill, oral reading, sight words, etc.

4. 30 minutes available for whole group and only 30 -40 minutes is available for small group:

Day	Basal Reader – 30 min.	Small Group 15 min.	5 minute transition time	Small Group 15 min.
Monday	Introduce vocabulary, sight words. Read story to students (or project on smartboard). Ask general comprehension questions. Establish author’s purpose and point of view.	Group 1: With teacher Group 2: Must-do desk work Groups 3 & 4: Must-do desk work <u>Option:</u> Group 3: must do Group 4: work station(s)		Group 2: With teacher Group 1: Must-do desk work Groups 3 & 4: Work station when must-do is finished. <u>Option:</u> Group 3: work station; Group 4: must do
Tuesday	Comprehension focus. Dig deeper to find text evidence or examples. Reread parts that support skill. Complete graphic organizer together that goes with comp. skill (sequence, cause effect, main idea/details, problem/solution, character analysis, story elements, etc.)	Group 3: With teacher Group 4: Must-do desk work Groups 1 & 2: Must-do desk work <u>Option:</u> Group 1: must do Group 2: work station(s)		Group 4: With teacher Group 3: Must-do desk work Groups 1 & 2: Work station when must-do is finished. <u>Option:</u> Group 2: must do Group 1: work station(s)
Wednesday	Vocabulary, Sight word, or Word work focus. Reread parts of story that support this skill: “Find the word _____. Read the paragraph to find clues to what it means.” Or “Let’s find these words in our story.” Chose from skill for week (contractions, compound, vowel sounds blends/digraphs, 2 syllables, etc.)	Group 1: With teacher Group 2: Must-do desk work Groups 3 & 4: Must-do desk work (just like Monday)		Group 2: With teacher Group 1: Must-do desk work Groups 3 & 4: Work station when must-do is finished. (just like Monday)
Thursday	Writing focus. Choose a topic related to the story. Do a <i>shared writing</i> on the board or large chart paper. Choices: writing details you learned, opinions, information about a character. Teacher does think-alouds while writing, modeling formation of an idea, spacing, letter formation, spelling words, using the word wall.	Group 3: With teacher Group 4: Must-do desk work Groups 1 & 2: Must-do desk work (just like Tuesday)		Group 4: With teacher Group 3: Must-do desk work Groups 1 & 2: Work station when must-do is finished. (just like Tuesday)
Friday	Finish work from M-Th or assessment time.			

More info about option #4:

- Basal whole group lesson plan can be used with any reading program
- Provide must-do assignment which can be done in 15 minutes.
- During small group time, If using the option: 1 group is with teacher, 2 groups are doing must-do desk assignment, and 1 group is at a work station during each 15 minute time period.
- Small group sessions:
 - Struggling readers: Letter, word work, and easy patterned text.
 - Average and above readers: On-level text (either more practice with basal reader or short leveled text selections).

5. Two Mini-Lessons, 2 Center Periods System: This would take about 80 minutes (10 for each mini-lesson and 60 for 4 groups).

Teacher mini-lesson #1. Then students are given desk job assignment #1.				
15 minute time period	Teacher with group A	Group B	Group C	Group D
		All are working on desk job #1		
15 minute time period	Teacher with group B	Group A	Group C	Group D
		Desk job #1	At work stations when desk job fin.	
Energizer and Teacher mini-lesson #2. Then students are given desk job assignment #2.				
15 minute time period	Teacher with group C	Group D	Group A	Group B
		All are working on desk job #2		
15 minute time period	Teacher with group D	Group C	Group A	Group B
		Desk job #2	At work stations when desk job fin.	

More info about Option #5:













- This requires 2 desk job assignments and 2 work stations per day.
- Only 2 groups are at works stations at a time.
- Desk job must be completed to go to work station.
- Tasks at stations can be differentiated to match needs of the group.

6. Multiple activities task board system: Teacher conducts small groups while students engage in tasks.

- A bulletin board is prepared as a task board with space for 15-20 tasks. This is changed out monthly and can be themed to match the month or holiday.
- Each task is numbered. This number corresponds to an activity/worksheet labeled with the same number. The corresponding activities are in specific locations in the classroom where students have access to them. Example: If my February board shows hearts, then each activity has a heart attached to it with the matching number.
- The tasks can be related to phonics, reading, spelling, grammar, handwriting, writing, math, art, social studies, and/or science.
- Students have 1-3 must do tasks to finish **daily**. These are shown first. This staggers students to other activities while the teacher works with small groups of students.
- After these are done, the student can choose from other tasks posted on the task board in order (or any order). Students have a pocket folder to keep a task chart and mark off (or date) tasks as they are completed. Any which require a paper are stored in the folder and turned in daily or weekly. If all tasks are completed before the end of the month, students can repeat a task.
- For tasks that require a worksheet or specific paper, these can be organized in a stacked drawer system (ie Sterlite stacking drawers).
- Most tasks are done independently or with a partner.
- Choices are numerous. See attached sample.
- Pros: Students get to practice a wide variety of strategies and have constant review. Students are working independently or with a partner, which usually eliminates behavior problems. Teacher changes activities monthly instead of daily or weekly. Students get to practice making choices and show responsibility.
- Cons: Students must keep track of activities done (via task chart). To keep them honest with completion of activity, I recommend the student must ask another student to check their work and verify it was completed. You can even add a “checked by _____” to the task sheet. Or make them self-checking.
- For a task that changes each day (such as #1, 2, and 3 above), staple a quart-sized baggy under the task heading. Place index cards in the baggy that describe the task for that day. (See picture.) Then change out the index card each day.

February example – Task Bulletin Board

- Cut outs with numbers are changed each month to reflect monthly or holiday theme (apples for August, Leaves for September, Pumpkins for October, etc.)
- Corresponding activities are labeled with matching themed cut-out which is taped to the tub, box, drawer, or basket which contains the activity.
- Blue illustrates baggie with changeable index card inside). Cards #1-3 changed daily because they are must-do tasks. Others with index cards changed out weekly or monthly.
- Each student has a pocket folder which contains the task chart & list (see page 8), and the papers generated by some of the tasks

 <p>1 Spelling</p> <p>ABC order</p>	 <p>2 Handwriting</p> <p>Copy Val. poem</p>	 <p>3 Math facts</p> <p>8 facts: __ + __ = 8</p>	 <p>4 Brain Quest Cards</p>
 <p>5 Vowel Match</p>	 <p>6 Sight words</p> <p>Path game board</p>	 <p>7 Telling time match</p>	 <p>8 Science observing</p> <p>Draw & label butterfly</p>
 <p>9 Subitizing cards</p> <p>Dice dots</p>	 <p>10 Valentine Stories</p>	 <p>11 iPad</p> <p>_____ app</p>	 <p>12 Fold-it</p> <p>Draw & label 4 Winter pics</p>
 <p>13 Sentence mix up</p>	 <p>14 Build-a-shape</p> <p>Tangrams</p>	 <p>15 Writing</p> <p>Write a Val. card</p>	 <p>16 Art</p> <p>Heart art creation</p>

Possible Daily Must-do tasks:

1. Spelling -- ABC order, sorting, illustrate, sentences, build the word
2. Handwriting -- letter practice, name practice, copy sentences, copy short poem
3. Math facts -- worksheet, write 8 facts that = 10, skip count by 2's to 20, Draw an AB pattern
4. Fold-it – This is a blank paper folded into 4 or 8 equal sections. Task is to write or draw in each section according to your directions: Write and illustrate 4 compound words, show 4 things you would wear in the winter, write 8 words that start with fl, etc.

Other task ideas:

1. Box games which focus on a particular reading or math skill. You can choose more than 1 that focus on the same skill, but give each a separate task number.
2. Matching activities: for vowels, blends, digraphs, nouns, verbs, adjectives, vocabulary/definition, synonyms, antonyms, prefixes, suffixes
3. Question / Answer cards to review skills
4. File folder games
5. Pocket chart – Use it for students to arrange words in ABC order, put story sequence strips in order, match vocabulary with definitions, arrange lines of poetry in order (from a poem the class has learned)
6. Puzzles: math matching puzzles, reading matching puzzles
7. Fluency station: Books which are labeled with the #of words, stopwatch, recording sheet
8. Listening station
9. Ipad station and/or computer station: assign the app the student should do. This may need to NOT be part of the task board system if you need students to regularly visit it.
10. Writing: Writing prompt, write a letter to someone, write a postcard, address an envelope, picture prompt
11. Rhyme time: write words that rhyme with given word, locate rhymes from poetry books
12. Poems for 2 voices: With a partner, read simple poems in which each person reads a line, pair of lines, or stanza at a time
13. Joke books: Read joke and riddle books
14. Write a riddle: Choose a picture card and give clues to write a riddle (This animal is little, it has a long tail, it is sometimes gray, cats like to chase them. What is it?)
15. Addition flash cards
16. Subtraction flash cards
17. Concentration game (to practice any skill)
18. Math game with playing cards: Play addition war, subtraction war, fish for 10, pyramid
19. Math game with dice: Roll and cover, path game, graphing
20. Build it: build with different manipulatives (cubes, tangrams, pattern blocks)
21. Patterns: Make specific patterns with manipulatives (AAB with tiles, AB with bears)
22. Science exploration: Provide objects to observe or explore (bug, nests, snake skin, class pet, fish tank). Do mini experiments: How many drops of water will fit on top of a penny using an eye dropper?
23. Book tub: Provide a specific tub of books to focus on such as fiction / non-fiction books about a holiday, social studies, or science topics (planets, dinosaurs, plants, animals, Dr. M.L. King)
24. Versa-tiles
25. Base Ten manipulatives: Provide given amounts to make (ex: 42, 67, 125). Can you show 2 ways to make this number? (35 can be 3 tens, 5 ones or 2 tens, 15 ones).

26. ABC order: Each period have a different set of word cards to put in ABC order. These can be written on a recording form if needed.
27. Review worksheet
28. Word find puzzle
29. 100 chart mystery picture: Using a 100 chart, numbers are colored according to directions to reveal a picture (lots of these available for free on TPT)
30. Art activity
31. Subitizing cards: Practice a different type each month: ten frames, dice, dominos, tally marks, beads on a Rekenrek, random dots
32. Sentence mix up: Write out several sentences on sentence strips. Cut the words or phrases apart for students to put back in order. Put each sentence in a different baggie. Use a different color for each strip so pieces won't get mixed up. Sentences can come from poems, stories you have read, song lyrics
33. Strategy game: Connect 4, checkers, chess, magic number puzzle, etc.

Student recording form: # of tasks matches # of boxes. There is room in each box to add the date the task was completed and/or students' initials who checked it. The names of the tasks are listed below.

Name:		Month: February	
1: Daily	2: Daily	3: Daily	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spelling 2. Handwriting 3. Math facts 4. Brain Quest 5. Vowel Match 6. Sight words 7. Telling time 8. Science | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Subitizing cards 10. Valentine Stories 11. iPad 12. Fold-it 13. Sentence Mix Up 14. Build-a-Shape 15. Writing 16. Heart Art |
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