

Learning Activities for **DIVERSE LEARNERS**

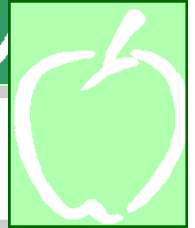
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Educated Solutions



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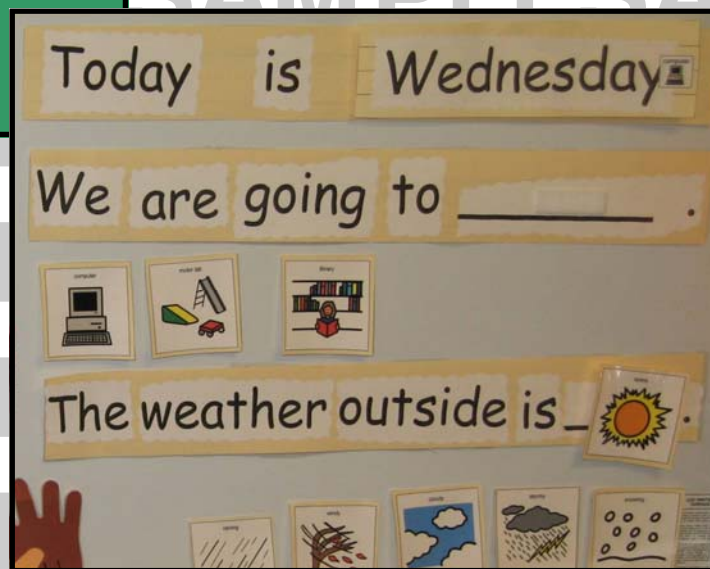
Teacher-Led Instructional Activities

- Introduction
- Calendar Time
- Morning Message
- Daily News
- Read Alouds
- Shared Reading
- Introducing Learning Centers
- Songs and Poems
- Writing Class Books
- Group Problem-Solving



Teacher-Led Instructional Activities

Morning Message



Morning Message

Effective Practices—What’s Good for All Children

The Morning Message is an instructional activity that takes place in a whole-group setting, usually during circle time. Students learn important print concepts as they participate in the reading and rereading of the Morning Message, which is a letter written by the teacher to the class. While many literacy concepts can be taught through the Morning Message, the main goal is to help students learn important concepts of print: that print carries meaning, that spoken words can be written down, and that print can be used for different purposes.

The content of the Morning Message is based on current classroom events and is written in letter form beginning with a greeting (“Dear Class,” or “Dear Kindergarteners,” for example). The message includes the day of the week: “Today is Monday.” Announcements of the day’s special events follow: “Mr. Garza will read to our class today.” Routine events are also included: “Today we will go to Music Class.” The letter ends with the closing, a consistent phrase that is readily recognized by young students: “Love, Ms. Rogan.”

At the beginning of the year, the teacher writes very short and repetitive messages and does most of the reading. As the year progresses, the students’ participation in the Morning Message increases as they begin to recognize familiar words, phrases, and sentences.

Eventually, the students are able to read and reread parts of the message on their own.

The Morning Message format can also be used for different purposes throughout the day, and when appropriate, might be used for an afternoon or closing message.

Diverse Learners Framework—Meeting Individual Needs

Input: *Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the student.* Add more visual and concrete information to the Morning Message. Use a variety of objects, photographs, line drawings, product labels, and/or communication picture symbols.

Participation: *Adapt the extent to which the student is actively involved in the task.* Provide an individualized copy of the Morning Message for students who have difficulty attending to a group activity.

Level of support: *Increase the amount of personal assistance given to the student.* Select a peer to assist the target student during circle time. The peer provides additional support by modeling and demonstrating routine activities, inviting the target student to interact with the materials at hand, and actively engaging him or her in reading the individualized Morning Message.

Morning Message For Diverse Learners

The daily repetition of the same circle time events offers students multiple opportunities to learn the associated concepts and skills.

(Wald, Morris, & Abraham, 1996, p. 29)

1. Write the repetitive phrases of the Morning Message on sentence strips. For example, write "Today is ____." on one sentence strip. Write "We will go to ____." on the next. Provide word cards with picture cues so the students may select and insert the correct day and activity.
2. Prepare a laminated file folder for students who need individualized Morning Messages.
 - Write the Morning Message's repetitive phrases on the left side of the folder, leaving room for the student to complete the sentences.
 - Prepare laminated picture symbols of the days of the week and the daily activities. Use adhesive-backed Velcro to attach the pictures to the folder. Place these on the right side of the folder.
 - Assign a buddy to assist the target student in selecting and placing the picture symbols in the sentences.
3. Sing the sentence to a familiar tune such as "Today is Monday" by Eric Carle or "Are You Sleeping?"
4. When writing text on more than one line, choose one color for the first line and a different color for each subsequent line.
5. Pair objects with each of the routine daily activities in the Morning Message (e. g., use a CD case or an instrument to represent Music Class).
5. Teach sign language for the days of the week. Encourage all students to sign the day of the week at the appropriate time. The use of sign language allows communication for students who are not able to express themselves verbally, as well as enhances the communication skills of all students.
6. Select a sentence, phrase, or word that appears in the Morning Message. Choose a peer to record the selection on a single switch voice output device (such as a Big Mac switch). When it is time to provide an answer, the target student pushes the switch.
7. Read the Morning Message to a small group of students. In this way, the teacher ensures that all students are active participants. A smaller group also provides a better opportunity for the teacher to assess individual students' concepts of print and to try out different ways to adapt instruction for students who need extra help. Students have more frequent turns and less wait time between turns.

Adapted from Wald, P., Morris, L., & Abraham, M. (Winter, 1996). Three keys for successful circle time: Responding to children with diverse abilities. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 24(1), 26-29.

Student-Led Instructional Activities

- Introduction
- Classroom Library
- Writing Center
- Author's Chair
- Listening Center
- Story Retell Center
- ABC and Word Study Center



Student-Led Instructional Activities

Listening Center



Listening Center

Effective Practices—What’s Good for All Children

The Listening Center provides the opportunity for students to listen to and read along with books on tapes. In addition to at least one cassette tape player, a well-stocked Listening Center contains several sets of headphones and a variety of books at different levels, each accompanied by a tape. For students to be successful in the Listening Center, they need explicit instruction, modeling, and guided practice on how to use the materials. They also need written directions with rebus pictures to refer to when they work independently.

The tapes in the Listening Center do not need to be commercially produced. In fact, it may be more engaging for students to listen to the voice of someone they know such as the principal, the gym teacher, a parent of one of the students, or a community leader. These “local celebrities” contribute to the motivation of the reader by adding excitement and prestige to the act of reading.

The Listening Center is organized so that students can quickly find a book and tape on their own. They read along with the book as they listen to the tape. Through this process of repeated reading, students build the foundation for later reading fluency.

Diverse Learners Framework—Meeting Individual Needs

Level of support: *Increase the amount of personal assistance given to the student.* For students who are not physically able to turn a tape player on and off, designate a peer to be the target student’s buddy. Assign the role of buddy as one of the daily classroom jobs. The buddy’s task is to ensure that the target student is able to access the materials in the classroom, providing social and emotional support in the process.

Input: *Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the student.*

- Connect a single switch to the cassette player so students with limited physical abilities can turn it on and off.
- Add “page fluffers” to the book pages to make page turning easier.
- Scan the pages of the book to make a computer slide show and connect a switch to the computer so that students with physical limitations are able to advance the pages.
- Elicit family support for contributions to the Listening Center. Ask family members to record their child’s favorite story on tape and send it to school. After playing it for the class, place the tape in the Listening Center for repeated readings.

Adapted from Region 4 Education Service Center. (2004c). *Small group instruction tools for first- and second-grade teachers*. Houston, TX: Author.

Listening Center

For Diverse Learners

1. Teach students how to use the equipment in the Listening Center.
 - Provide guided practice during small-group instruction so that each student demonstrates that he or she can select a book and tape, insert the tape into the tape player, put on headphones, turn on the tape player, and begin reading the book, following along with the tape. When the tape ends, the student should be able to remove it from the tape player, place it in the storage bag with the book, and put the bag and the headphones back where they belong.
 - Create a “how-to” chart to help students remember the expectations for the Listening Center. The directions should include photographs or rebus pictures as well as print so that all students can understand and follow the directions.
 - (1) Select a book and tape.
 - (2) Put the tape in the tape player.
 - (3) Put the headphones on.
 - (4) Push “play.”
 - (5) Listen to the book on tape. Turn the pages when you hear the chime.
 - (6) When finished, remove the tape, place it and the book in the storage bag, and put the bag and the headphones away.
2. Record nursery rhymes, leaving off the last word in each line. Write the words to the nursery rhyme and leave a blank space for each omitted word. Provide manipulatives (objects and/or pictures) for students to use to complete the rhyme. To ensure student success, place matching colored stick-on dots on the object and in the blank space.

Jack and Jill went up the _____. (fill a balloon with sand and tie it tightly)

To fetch a pail of _____. (fill a small plastic bottle with water)

Jack fell down and broke his _____, (make a crown out of a plastic headband)

and Jill came tumbling after.
3. When possible, record the big book used during shared reading and provide small versions of the book so students can read along with the tape. Make pointers for students to track the print as they read along (glue a pompom onto the end of a craft stick to make a pointer).
4. Make many different kinds of tapes for students to listen to in the Listening Center. Record daily classroom events such as:
 - songs sung in circle time
 - family members reading stories
 - books read during read alouds
 - students retelling stories
 - show and tell
 - News of the Day