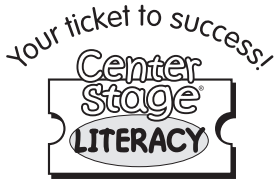


Teacher's Resource Guide explains references and pedagogic methods—giving teachers the big picture and helpful insight.

## Literacy-Focus Centers: Step by Step

Helpful tips for teachers ensure effective results in implementing literacy centers.



Assessment leads to mini-lessons, which, in turn, lead to guided practice through centers. Literacy-focus centers provide scaffolded learning in a controlled environment. Students can more easily work independently, with a partner, or in a small group, and remain engaged because the teacher has used

the Guided or Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, as first described by Gallagher and Pearson (1983) and later by Pearson and Fielding (1991). This is true scaffolding or support, moving the students from much teacher support to independent practice and application, with little to no teacher support. It is important to note that each activity is explained, modeled, demonstrated, and practiced before the student practices it independently, with a partner, or in a small group, at centers.

- First, the activity or skill is explained, modeled, and demonstrated through a mini-lesson during read-aloud, shared, or modeled reading/writing: I DO IT (teacher).
- Next, the activity is practiced through a shared experience. I DO IT (still primarily the teacher with perhaps a student or two).
- Then the teacher and student practice the activity together through guided practice: WE DO IT (teacher and students). The fishbowl technique works well here where 2–4 students move into the center of the circle and model the activity for all of the others who are looking on.
- Finally, students practice the strategy or skill independently, with a partner or small group: YOU DO IT (students at literacy-focus centers).

The goal is for the students eventually to apply the strategy or skill needed as they develop as independent readers and writers.

Literacy-focus center sessions frequently end with a sharing time of approximately 10 minutes. Students share their experiences, what worked and what didn't, and sometimes share a product created at the center. This sharing time may be with the rest of the members at the center, with a larger group, or occasionally with the whole class.

*It is generally more effective for students to share with a partner or a small group than with the whole class, so that more individuals become actively engaged in the sharing itself.*

Guidelines are included for previewing, modeling, and demonstrating center activities.