**Creating New Elements with CCSS: Word Walls to Language Walls and Language and Literacy Centers**

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**Highlights:**

**Language Walls to Word Walls:**

* Make the transition from word walls to language walls.
* You are not giving up word walls but expanding it to include ideas, phrases, pictures, etc…
* Language walls are different form word walls in that they put the vocabulary into a meaningful context, promote higher level thinking, increase word concepts, and aids in reading comprehension and writing style.
* Language walls lend themselves to different learning styles (visual, tactile, oral, etc…)
* Language walls put vocabulary into a meaningful context for students, especially struggling readers and ELL students.
* It promotes students’ independence when reading and writing.
* It can help improve student awareness of spelling patterns.
* The more students see and use the language wall, the more likely they are to retain the information and vocabulary on it. You lose 50% of what you learn within 48 hours if you don’t use it or see it again.
* Language walls can be used in every subject area (reading, writing, spelling, vocabulary, social studies, science, math, PE, library, computer lab, art, music, etc…)
* For example, in art, the teacher can use visual imagery and art vocabulary words and post them as they are taught. The teacher would then refer to these words in subsequent lessons during the school year. In PE, the teacher can post words from activities and games that students play as well as the names of activities so students can make connections and remember the games and activities connected with those words.
* In classrooms, word walls should be integrated, NOT isolated by subject. You may want to color code for subjects and categorize them but try to connect the words in some way.
* Have students create pictures, icons, give connections tied to the words to help them remember the context of which the words were used**.**

**Language and Literacy Centers and CCSS Project Work:**

* Centers or Work Stations should be designed to:
* Solve problems
* Partner Work/Partner Reading
* Raise/Discuss Issues
* Write Something
* Centers or Stations should:
* Provide Choices between a few activities
* Make learning relevant and meaningful
* Be engaging either emotionally (ex. response to book that emits an emotional response), physically ( different location and not just sit in chair at their desk), or energetically (able to act something out or discuss)
* Just a change is location is one of the easiest ways to get the brain’s attention.
* Chart comparing a Literacy Center to a Traditional Center

Literacy Center vs. Traditional Center

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| \*Set up all year  \*Material is differentiated  \*Close reading – may use same book but reading for a different purpose or use different book but for same purpose  \* Material is taught first |  | \*Changes Weekly  \*All students do same thing  \*All students do the same thing  \*New material is added without instruction or added too fast | |
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Here are some obstacles we all face as teachers with literacy centers or work stations:

* Organizing materials and having time to do it (our classrooms just don’t magically get organized. Teachers spend lots of time and money into a well-thought out classroom and many administrators don’t realize this if they haven’t taught elementary students.
* Getting room arranged in a way that is conducive to instruction, movement, etc…
* Keeping up with procedures and routines; keeping material current and up to date.

It is worth the extra time and effort as you give up being the center stage and allow your students to become the director of their own activities which is what centers or work stations are designed to do…help your students become independent learners.

**Keep these things in mind when creating centers or work stations:**

* **Hands-On Activities** – make sure students have an opportunity to TOUCH materials
* **Make Something** – have activities where the students create or make something (such as: a book, picture, wanted posters, build something, etc…)
* **Create or Play a Game** – take concepts you are working on and have kids play games related to it. Have the kids create the games and then teach their games to other kids in the class when they come to that station.
* **Give jobs to kids to do at a center or station –** designate students to be a facilitator at the stations each day or each week

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