

Facilitating Centers in the Classroom

Introduction

The use of centers in the classroom can help teachers actualize the best practice of meeting students' individual learning needs by allowing diverse groups of learners to gain an understanding of a standard. Penda can help teachers meet this best practice by serving as a technology-based reading and writing center for students. Studies have shown that "...teachers that organized their classrooms into activity centers showed significantly greater achievement gains..." (Hilberg et al., 2003). Penda can therefore aid educators as a center for reaching one of the key learning modalities (visual, auditory, reading/writing, and kinesthetic) of students - reading and writing.

Classroom/Instructional Practice

The use of Penda as a reading/writing center for each standard allows for a consistent learning environment where students know the expectations for at least one center. This allows for teachers to minimize their time creating effective centers for every standard, as Penda has activities and assessments for all standards in each grade level. Once expectations are consistently set and implemented for a Penda center, teachers will also minimize the time spent on classroom management during center rotations as students become accustomed to center expectations and routines. A Penda reading/writing center can be used either as an independent center where students do an activity or assessment or as a collaborative center where students read aloud to each other and work on questions together (see steps below for suggestions on implementation).

Impact on Student Learning

Students of all learning modalities can use centers to increase their comprehension. By being exposed to the same standard through each mode of learning, every student has the opportunity to master content through the means that best serves them as an individual. Furthermore, "activity center tasks encourage active participation, collaboration, and opportunities for extended reading, writing and speaking to promote the development of everyday and academic language," therefore helping students to realize greater achievement gains (Hilberg et al., 2003). Using centers with a different learning modality allows students to collaborate with their peers who may learn differently than themselves, further increasing their comprehension.

Give It A Try - Here's How:

1. Create one student center for each learning modality - visual, auditory, reading/writing, kinesthetic (VARK) ([see teacher resource](#)).
2. Set expectations for students working collaboratively and for each center (see teacher resource from step 1).
3. At the Penda center, either have each student independently complete an assigned Penda activity or have students work in pairs by having students alternate who reads out loud and the other student summarizing what they have read (either verbally or written) and answering questions collaboratively.

Artifact/Example:

