

DIFFERENTIATING INSTRUCTION WITH MATH CENTERS: POWERFUL POSSIBILITIES FOR ENGAGED STANDARDS-BASED PRACTICE

Grades K-3

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Math Centers: Powerful Possibilities for Engaged Standards-Based Practice is a workshop filled with ways that the primary teacher can create math centers with differentiated, standards-based, engaging, student-centered activities that foster mathematical thinking in young children. The goal of math centers is to allow students to make sense of math by engaging in sustained practice over time that allows them to understand the concept, practice doing the math and actually solve problems within authentic contexts. Math centers are student-friendly, interesting and scaffolded in such a way that students gain confidence and pride in their work. The more successes they have doing the math, the more motivated they are to stay in the learning zone. As one scholar noted, "Students like to have hard fun"—something that challenges just enough but is fun and engaging.

Nicki Newton has been an educator for the past 16 years, working in inner city schools on both the East and West coasts. Presently working as a math consultant, Nicki provides professional development for teachers, coaches and administrators of grades K-5. She has worked thoroughly with the Everyday Math, Terc, Scott Foresman, and Houghton Mifflin programs. She has created a variety of workshops which include teaching math through picture books, poetry and songs; writing in math class; creating rich mathematical environments; developing a community of mathematical thinkers (routines and rituals that matter); and providing meaningful academic interventions. She has also been very instrumental in setting up study groups and math labsites (where teachers view and discuss lessons) in her schools. She has done extensive work with bridging the home school connection by facilitating Family Math Nights, Family Math Carnivals, Math and Muffin Mornings, The Homework Club for Parents as well as a series of Test Prep Seminars for Parents.

The purpose of this workshop is to:

- Show what engaging, standards-based, child-centered learning centers look like in the K through 3rd grade classroom
- Give teachers and administrators tools and strategies for creating math learning centers
- Illustrate what it means to differentiate math centers so that they meet the needs of a variety of learners.

About the Presenter

NICKI NEWTON