



The TEACHER CENTER of Broome County
Teacher Study Group Grant Award
Summer 2009-2010
FINAL REPORT
DOCUMENT PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

STUDY GROUP TOPIC: Designing Classrooms

List of group members: Shelly Richards, Sue Stearns, Pam Engler, Helen Alikakos-Steed

The final report must be word-processed and submitted both in print and through e-mail using this form. Contact kharasta@btbooces.org for the electronic version of this form. Include information under each of the following headings.

Describe the initial objectives of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

Our objectives that we plan to meet as a result of this study group are: increased student and teacher learning, improved instruction, more efficient centers and rotations, shortened clean-up and set-up time, smoother transition between activities, more time on task, more effective classroom management. These will be met with our implementation of our new classroom designs, routines and procedures that we have planned for throughout the study. These objectives will lead to better meeting of the NYS Learning Standards.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We developed our expertise by reading Designing Classrooms for Spaces and Places by Debbie Diller and Classroom Spaces that Work. We followed up with discussions and planning to create more meaningful environments. We also referred to other Debbie Diller books such as Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work and Making the Most of Small Groups, as well, to add to our discussions. We discussed and planned for each of the

following areas:

1. Classroom arrangement
 - student areas
 - teacher areas
2. Center set-up and management
3. Classroom routines
4. Kid friendly bulletin boards and spaces
 - teacher boards and spaces
 - student boards and spaces

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We read Designing Classrooms for Spaces and Places by Debbie Diller and Classroom Spaces that Work. We had discussions on the following:

- Classroom arrangement for teacher/student areas to maximize learning, efficiency, and meeting NYS Standards
- Centers – set-up and management to maximize learning opportunities
- Classroom routines – reviewed and modified to eliminate “off-task” times and maximize teaching time
- Bulletin boards – reviewed height and content of bulletin boards.

We have completely and reorganized based on our readings and discussions.

Evaluate the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

How has this study group changed you as a teacher? Do you anticipate that any of your teaching practices will have changed?

1. Helen - I feel more organized, especially in small-group areas. I will be increasing my number of learning centers. I am becoming more flexible in arranging my classroom. That

- included getting rid of superfluous furniture.
2. Sue - I feel like I am thinking more logically about organization of the classroom materials for the children and myself. My classroom layout provides places for both stationary and portable learning centers.
 3. Pam - I feel ready to increase my number of literacy centers. Returning to a classroom last year, after being a reading coach, this study has helped my transition back to an efficient self-contained classroom.
 4. Shelly - I feel like my classroom traffic flow will be more efficient. I have learned that the classroom bulletin boards can remain empty and waiting for student work. The classroom doesn't need to be finished when the students walk in the room in September.
 5. Group - All of us will be different teachers when we return to school in September. This study has brought back a level of enthusiasm to all of us.

What evidence do you expect to see of student achievement improving as a result of your participating in this study group?

As a result of this study group, we expect a reduction in behavior issues because of the reorganization. There will be more time on-task which will lead to more learning opportunities and fewer interruptions. Materials will be at the students' fingertips. Less chaos in the classroom should lead to higher reading and math scores. Streamlined routines and schedules will also impact the learning of the students.

What evidence is there that the objectives of the study group has/has not been met?

The evidence that we have met our objectives will be obvious when walking into our classrooms. The rooms have been redesigned completely. The teaching areas are restructured for

maximum efficiency. Student learning areas are clearly indicated and the boundaries are clearly designated. Materials are logically placed to be at the teachers' and the students' fingertips. Center schedules and classroom routines have been reworked. The new students that are arriving in September will feel ownership and a sense of pride. They will be participating in creating the classroom rules, keeping the classroom clean and organized, and will have ownership in classroom display areas throughout the year.

Comment on the value of the study group process? Did it work for you?

This process absolutely worked for our group. Four heads are much better than one. Working together generates multiples of ideas. It forced us to look at each other's perspectives and broaden our minds to possibilities that were beyond the scope of any one of us. We are all enthusiastically putting finishing touches on our classrooms. During the process, we were all very respectful to and honest with each other, and in the end, very satisfied.

How will the study group information be shared?

We will share this information by posting some of our before and after pictures on Sue's school website. We will also propose a workshop to our director of curriculum for our Superintendent's Conference Day in the Spring of 2010. In addition, we will propose a workshop for the Broome County Teacher Center. Also, we are hoping that just view from our doorways will encourage other teachers and staff in our building to stop in and see the evidence of our study.

A final report is due one week after the last meeting or by August 13, 2009, whichever date is first. The report must be typed and double-spaced using the provided form. One copy must be submitted in print and the file must be submitted through e-mail to kharasta@btbooces.org. Return to **THE TEACHER CENTER of Broome County @ WSKG, BOCES #22**