

*“Creating Contexts for Meaningful Independent  
Reading and Writing”*

National Reading Recovery Conference  
February 2007

Mrs. BethAnn Browning, Literacy Coordinator  
Mrs. Alice Ensley, District Literacy Coordinator  
Mrs. Pam Smith, Classroom Teacher

Dalton Public Schools  
[www.daltonpublicschools.com](http://www.daltonpublicschools.com)

“Creating Contexts for Meaningful Independent  
Reading and Writing”

Presented by  
Mrs. BethAnn Browning  
Mrs. Alice Ensley  
Mrs. Pam Smith

Table of Contents

**Word Work Components .....5-26**

    Word Study: 5-Day Sort .....7

    5-Day Sort Principle Ideas .....8

    Getting Prepared For A 5-Day Sort.....9

    Supplies for 5-Day Sort .....10

    5-Day Sort Example Lesson .....11-17

    Using Children’s Literature to Explore Word Work .....18-20

    Taking Word Work to the ABC Center .....21

    Supplies for ABC Center.....22

    ABC Center Templates.....23-26

**Reading Component .....27-30**

    Why Have A Classroom Library?.....27

    Taking Books to the Classroom Library .....28

    How to Create an Effective Classroom Library .....29

    How to Maintain an Effective Classroom Library .....29

    Making the Classroom Library Meaningful for Students ....30

**Writing Component .....31-32**

    Using Interactive Writing as a Way to Introduce Various  
    Forms of Writing into the Writing Center .....31

    Taking Interactive Writing Samples to Independent Writing  
    Center .....32

**Works Cited .....33**

**Presenter’s Bios.....34**

How to Make Independent Centers  
Meaningful Within the  
Readers' Workshop

We have found that when students are provided with opportunities to practice whole group learning experiences within Readers' Workshop, the learning centers become more meaningful and effective.

**Word sorting will enable students to  
form hypotheses, concepts, and  
generalizations about the properties  
of written words, and it will help  
them to link new words to the  
familiar ones they can already spell.**

**Pinnell, G.S., & Fountas, I.C. (1998). *Word Matters*, pp. 155-156.**

## 5-Day Sort

The 5-Day Sort is a 5 day plan that provides students with opportunities to work with words in a flexible way. This plan for teaching words focuses on one principle of how words work as opposed to learning “rules” for how words work.

**Day One- Meaning Sort (open sort):**

Develops thinking about the meaning of words and using oral language to express personal thinking

**Day Two-Visual Features Sort (Open Sort):**

Develops flexibility in ways to look at words

**Day Three-Spelling Principle (Closed Sort):**

Focuses on ONE common aspect of a group of words

**Day Four-Examine one part of the sort (closed sort) and Construct/Write Principle in Kid Language:**

Teaches that exceptions exist and these should be expected

**Day Five-Explore Principle Further:**

Teaches how to choose “exemplar” words to use as a model for how other words work. It also allows students to find the “principle” in books (finding evidence)

## 5-Day Sort Principle Ideas

- Two consonants go together and make a brand new sound (e.g. **ch**ips, wash**sh**, moth**th**er)
- Two consonants go together and make two sounds (e.g. **cr**y, **li**st, post**er**)
- Two consonants go together and make one old sound (e.g. **li**ttle, **mi**ss)
- A vowel says its name when
  - 1) two are side by side (e.g. str**ee**t)
  - 2) vowel consonant “e” (e.g. face, time, hope)
- Making words plural (e.g. day to days, mouse to mice, watch to watches)

# Getting Prepared for a 5-Day Sort

1. Think of all of the ways a particular principle works in words. Each principle can have more than one 5-Day sort. (Ex. below is 2 separate 5-day sorts)

Ex. A vowel says its name when...

Vowel consonant -e	2 vowels side by side	Other
bike	rain	

2. Select one area of the principle

Ex. Vowel consonant -e

3. Choose a total of 10 words (make sure they can go together by meaning)

6-8 words that follow the principle

Ex. bike joke cake name drive note

2-4 words that are exceptions

Ex. apple table blue sea

4. Check to make sure the words selected are easy for the students to read and to understand. (It's not about new vocabulary!)

5. Make word cards for each group and put in plastic zip bags.

6. Make "larger word cards" for whole group discussion.

7. Divide kids into heterogeneous groups of 3. (will sit in a "u" shape so all of the kids can see the words)

8. Plan out category sorts for first 2 days

Ex. Day One-Meaning Sort

Things that you can do

Things that can be found in a house

Day Two-Visual Sort

Words that have short letters

Words that start with the same letter

## Supplies for 5-Day Sort

- \*Larger word cards for group pocket chart  
(5-day sort words for that week)
  
- \*Smaller word cards (1 set per group of 3 students)
  
- \*Plastic zip bags (to store word cards for each group)
  
- \*Pocket chart (for group discussion of words)
  
- \*Post-it notes (to write words that follow principle)
  
- \*Chart paper and markers (to make principle chart)
  
- \*Children's books to locate words that use principle words (Day 5 finding evidence)

## Five Day Word Sort Plan

### Example Lesson

#### Making words plural with -s and -es

#### Day One-Meaning Sort (open sort)

(In advance, teacher has cut out word cards-1 set per 3 kids in baggie-and has his/her larger set of word cards for the pocket chart)

*Teacher:* "We're going to do some work this week on thinking about the different ways we can think about words. This week, we're going to work with this set"

Teacher puts up cards one at the time and reads each. If any word is unfamiliar, s/he might draw a quick sketch on the word card.

*Teacher:* "I'm going to give each group a set of cards and we're going to see how we might sort them by what they mean."

Distribute cards and have each group of 3 kids sit in a fan shape so no one is looking at the words upside down.

*Teacher:* "Let's start with 'Things Found in the House'. Now all cards will not fit, of course, and we may find some of us include some cards that others leave out. This is fine...as long as you can explain your reason for putting the card in- or for leaving it out."

Teacher walks around as the students form this category-purposefully looking for differences so that s/he can bring this up before the group-teacher may record one group's sort to put up on the pocket chart

*Teacher:* "Let's look at this category that one group formed (put up cards). I notice that this group decided not to put in "roach" while some other groups did put it in. Why did you put it in?"

Kid answers

*Teacher:* "Why did you leave it out?"

Another kid answers

*Teacher:* "So we're seeing that we can think differently about this. I notice the same thing happening with 'dog'."

Teacher gets reason for why it was and was not included in groups.

*Teacher:* "And I noticed all of us put in 'coach'. So, we will have some similarities and some differences when we sort by meaning based on how we're thinking about the category. All of us had some cards left over. As we sort, we'll call the one left over the "other" column because not all cards will fit when we make categories. So, in the sort we just tried, some of you might have a word like "roach" or "dog" in the "other" column and others might have it in the sort. I'll be asking you for your reasoning-and we'll see if it makes sense both ways. Let's try another sort, this time we are going to have two columns and one column will be 'Things that are found on the ground' and 'things that are found above the ground'. If some do not fit, put them in the 'other' column."

Go around and discuss any differences with group. Put categories in pocket chart so whole group can see and discuss.

Put up the words, "tree, peach, apple".

*Teacher:* "It may be tricky to come up with a name for some categories. I can't call this 'things that grow on a tree' because tree is there-so I could put tree in the 'other' category and use the category name 'things that grow on a tree'...or I might be able to change the category name and keep tree in there. What could I call it if I want to keep the word 'tree'?"

See if kids can come up with something.

*Teacher:* "If I use that name, could I add any other words from the "other" column?"

Kids respond

*Teacher:* "So, we're seeing that words can be sorted in different way according to what we call the category names-and that we won't always have exactly the same word cards when we sort them."

Take up cards.

### Day Two: Visual Features Sort (Open Sort)

*Teacher:* Today, we're going to use our same cards but use them in a different way. We're going to sort them by how they look. Let's start with words that begin with one tall letter. Put the leftovers in a column you'll call 'other'. We'll see if there are any differences in what you decided to put in the column."

Go around-some kids may disagree on whether to allow words that begin with two tall letters. If so, bring back to group and discuss. If it doesn't come up, you put up one with 2 tall letters and discuss rationale for both ways...remembering you didn't say ONLY one tall letter.

Maybe now let them have an independent go with other ways to sort by look of the word...or teacher directs another sort. (ex. one tall letter at beginning/end, words with no hang down letters, short words, long words, etc.) \*\*Be sure not to do Phonics/sounds only-that's the main agenda for tomorrow, and we want kids looking at word in a wide variety of ways.

*Teacher:* "So, today we're seeing that we can work with words and think about how they look...as well as what they mean. We're also seeing words end up in different categories based on the way we are thinking about them."

BEFORE DAY THREE, TEACHER HAS EITHER MADE COLUMN HEADING FOR EACH GROUP...OR HAS PUT THE HEADINGS ON A SHEET OF PAPER SO KIDS CAN PUT THEIR CARDS UNDERNEATH.

### Day Three-Spelling Principle (Closed Sort)

*Teacher:* "Today, we're going to look at the words in the way I give you. All of you will have the same column headings, which I'll give you. Today, we're going to say the word in its plural form and put it under a column based on how the ending would sound. "

Model each one (-s, -es). Teacher puts up (-s or -z) column header.

*Teacher:* "Here is the word card 'dog'. So I say 'one dog-two dogs'. I hear a 'z' sound at the end when I say 'dogs', so it goes under this column.

Leave example. Put up -es column header

*Teacher:* "There is the word 'peach'. So I say 'one peach-two peaches' I hear -es at the end, so 'peach' goes here. Remember, some words may not fit either place, so they'll go under 'other'.

Let each group have a go...or lead them through the whole sort. Lead the group in ending up with same sort-discuss why "mouse" is tricky...because it could/should have worked like "house".

*Teacher:* "So, today we're seeing that sometimes words have a different sound when we make them plural...and some words like 'mouse' even change to a whole new word when they are plural...not all words work the same way.

Leave this sort up in the pocket chart for tomorrow.

**Day Four-Examine One Part of the Sort (Closed Sort) and Construct/Write Principle in Kid Language**

*Teacher:* "Today, we're going to look at just one part of our sort, the part where some words had the -es sound at the end."

Move other columns to the far sides of the pocket chart

*Teacher:* "Get out only your cards that go under the -es ending and talk with each other. Is there anything that's alike about all-or almost all-of these words that might help us know why they have the -es sound at the end when they're plural?"

Go around-or discuss as a group.

*Teacher:* "So, we're seeing that all of these except "house" ended with -ch or -sh. We also noticed that we have to think about how we're using 'fish' to decide if we need that -es or not. That could help us with spelling because

we do add -es to everything except 'house'-and sometimes 'fish'-to make them plural.

Take "house" out of the set.

*Teacher:* "How could we say that what we are noticing about when to add -es?"

Use kids language to construct something like: If you see -ch or -sh at the end of a word and want to make it plural (more than one), you're probably going to add -es. There are a few words that do not work this way.

Teacher Prep-have books and Post-Its ready for the next day-have kids bring pencils to the floor.

#### **Day 5-Explore Principle Further**

*Teacher:* "I want us to check out what we are thinking about our principle to see if it works with any other words we might see. So today, here's your job. I want you to look through these books for a few minutes to see if you can find any other word that ends with -es. If so, I want you to write it on a Post-It and place it on the chart either under our principle or under 'other'. If you don't see one, you may be able to think of one you want to put up there. It is fine if some of you put up the same word-it will just show us that some words seem to come up a lot as we read-or that some of us were thinking about the same word. I'll look over what's posted and we'll talk about our results later in the day."

\*If somebody puts up something like "foxes", that's also good. It gives you the opportunity to say-humm here's one where the base word ended in the letter "x". I wonder if other words would work that same way. If so, we may need to add a little more to our principle.

Lesson created by D. Johnson, District Literacy Coordinator with Dalton Public Schools, 2006

## Words for Model Lesson:

Principle: Making words plural...adding -s or -es

<b>mouse</b>	<b>roach</b>	<b>dog</b>	<b>peach</b>	<b>house</b>
<b>glass</b>	<b>fish</b>	<b>fox</b>	<b>apple</b>	<b>bus</b>

## Category Cards

-s or -z	-es	other

## Using Children's Literature to Explore Word Work

### Rhyming books:

- \*Language is enjoyable to hear and say
- \*Sounds can be repeated over and over in songs and rhymes

Fountas, G.S., & Pinnell, I.C. (1998), *Word Matters*, p. 68.

### Alphabet books:

- \*The letters of the alphabet follow a certain order
- \*Guides the reader to relate the intended word to each letter of the alphabet

### Alliteration

- \*Provides repetition of a single beginning sound within meaningful texts
- \*Enhance awareness of letter sounds

### Language Play

- \*Words can sound the same, but have different meanings
- \*Context plays a role in how words are read and interpreted

## Bibliography for Word Study Connections

### Rhyme

Alacor, Karen (1997). *Louella Mae, She's Run Away*. New York: Henry Holt.

Martin, Bill Jr. (1971). *"Fire! Fire!" Said Mrs. McGuire*. Illustrated by Richard Egielski. New York, NY: Voyager Books/Harcourt Brace and Company.

Sendak, Maurice (1962) *Chicken Soup With Rice*. New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc

### Alphabet

Allsburg, Chris Van (1987). *The Z Was Zapped*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Macdonald, Suse (1992). *Alphabatics*. New York, NY: Aladdin.

Shannon, George (1996). *Tomorrow's Alphabet*. Illustrated by Donald Crews. New York, NY: Mulberry Books/ Greenwillow.

### Alliteration

Bayer, Jane (1994). *A My Name Is Alice*. Illustrated by Steven Kellogg. New York, NY: Penguin Putnam.

Edwards, Pamela (1997). *Four Famished Foxes and Fosdyke*. Illustrated by Cynthia Jabar. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Fleming, Denise (1993) *In The Small, Small Pond*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.

### Language Play

Dallas-Conte, Juliet. (2002). *Cock A Moo Moo*. Illustrated by Allison Bartlett. New York, NY: Little Brown and Co.

Gwynne, Fred. (1970). *The King Who Rained*. Aladdin. Schwartz, Alvin. (1982). *Busy Buzzing Bumblebees And Other Tongue Twisters*. Harper Trophy.

Heller, Ruth. (1987). *A Cache of Jewels*. New York, NY: Grosset  
Dunlap/Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers.

Kuskin, Karla. (1990). *Roar and More*. New York, NY: Harper Trophy.

Schwartz, Alvin. (1982). *Busy Buzzing Bumblebees And Other Tongue  
Twisters*. Harper Trophy.

Truss, Lynne. (2006). *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: Why Commas Really Do Make  
A Difference*. Putnam.

## **Taking Word Work to the ABC Center**

- Use a pocket chart and sort 5-day sort words (on the index cards) in new ways.
- Use a template and “write around the room” looking for words that fit the designated category/principle.
- Look through classroom library books to find words that fit the designated category/principle.
- Use magnetic letters to spell the words used and other words that work the same way.
- Use the magnetic letters to make and break the words to enhance the understanding of how the words are formed.
- Use dry erase boards and markers to write the words and other words that work the same way.
- Spell the words using letter stamps.
- Write the words with markers or color pencils (e.g. identifying the principle using a second color, vowels in one color and consonants in a second color, etc.).
- Use a highlighter and highlight the words and other words that work the same way in an interactive writing or shared writing passage.

## **Supplies for ABC Center**

### Needed supplies:

- Pocket chart
- Index cards (word cards)
- Magnetic letters
- Magnetic trays
- Clip boards
- Templates

### Additional meaningful supplies:

- Dry erase boards and markers
- Letter stamps with ink pads
- Highlighters
- Color pencils
- Markers

### My Words Work Just Like Other Words

<b>My Word</b>	<b>Works Like This Word</b>	<b>Because</b>
<b>chocolate</b>	<b>shop</b>	<b>They start with two consonants that make a brand new sound.</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### My Words Work Just Like Other Words

<b>My Word</b>	<b>Works Like This Word</b>	<b>Because</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Words With**

<b>ch</b>	<b>sh</b>	<b>th</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Words With**

## **Why Have a Classroom Library?**

“A strong collection of books is the foundation for the effective instruction that helps student become competent readers.”

Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2006). *Leveled books K-8*, p. 194.

“A richly varied classroom collection will enable your students not only to expand their reading abilities but also to expand their world.”

Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). *Guiding readers and writers*, p. 89

## **Taking Books to the Class Library**

**Providing a variety of books to the students is essential for them to become effective readers. Debbie Diller wrote that teachers should, “Take a lesson from the bookstore of the world...we need to be selling books to kids!”**  
*Literacy Work Stations (2003), p. 29.*

**A bookstore designs its displays in several ways, so should our class libraries:**

- \*Interests** (sports, painting, friendship)
- \*Topic of Study** (what is being studied in Science and Social Studies)
- \*Authors** (Jan Brett, David Shannon, Eve Bunting)
- \*Genres** (memoirs, biographies)
- \*Real World** (snakes, plants, Caldecott winners)
- \*Level Books**

## **How to Create an Effective Classroom Library**

- Baskets/tubs of books on shelves in designated area
- Books facing the front within each basket/tub
- Clear, easy to read labels
- Multi-level books within each basket/tub
- Books arranged using a variety of categories (genre, author, topic, illustrating style, etc)

## **How to Maintain an Effective Classroom Library**

- **Add** a new basket/tub
- **Exchange** a basket/tub for a new one
  - Change as a new topic, genre, or author is being studied
- **Combine** baskets/tubs
  - As categories overlap the baskets/tubs can be condensed creating a new category (e.g. books from an author study might also be categorized by topic).
- **Collapse** a basket/tub
  - As students loose interest in a particular basket/tub, it can be removed completely from the classroom library.
- Keep it current, clean, and organized.

## **Making the Classroom Library Meaningful for Students**

**Book choices:** It's not sufficient for students to just choose a book just to look at it, but students need to be taught and have opportunities to pick books that are "just right" reading wise and interest wise.

**Book Talks:** Students need to have opportunities to have both guided and unguided talks about books they are reading in the classroom library. These talks should mirror the type of talk that occurs in interactive read aloud.

*Unguided talks:* Students can recommend for other students to read or not to read a certain book. Share information in a book or on a page.

*Guided talks:* Create a "talk about it" tub in the library. Students can talk about a specific aspect of a book such as: a scene in a story, a conflict in a story, focus on a character, author's style, persuade a student to give the book a try, or compare books to each other. These talking "ideas" are selected by the teacher.

**Buddy Reading:** This section in the class library needs to have colored (unmarked) tubs that are leveled. Each color tub represents leveled books. (Ex. red tub: lower level books.) Groups of students are assigned to a tub/basket of books has been predetermined based on individual guided reading levels. Each child (regardless of level) pulls a book from their respective tub and read to one another. There is no need for "set buddies".

Uses of Interactive Writing for Independent Writing Station Exploration:  
Creating Writing Genre Exemplars and/or Demonstrating the Use of New  
Writing Materials

To select the genre for Interactive Writing the teacher must think about what a writer needs in order to be an effective written communicator.

Things to think about:

- Purpose (reasons for why a writer might select a specific genre)
- To think about the audience
- Decide on a message (what to say and how to say it)
- Reflect and evaluate

McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G.S., & Fountas, I. *Interactive Writing*.

We have divided genres of interactive writing into three categories:

<b>School Writing</b>	<b>Real Life Writing</b>	<b>Shared Experience</b>
Rules	Calendar	Fieldtrip
Tardy slip	List	Party
Stories	Message	Assembly
Diagrams	Reminder	Science experiments
	Journals	
	Card	
	Email	
	Directions	

## Going from Classroom Library to Interactive Writing to the Writing Center

Example: Learning to write an invitation

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Introduce "invitation" and place tub/basket into classroom library, labeled "invitations", for kids to explore aspects of this genre			Interactive writing of an invitation to "Family Night"	
Invitation templates are place in writing center for kids to practice writing an invitation to someone inviting them to "Family Night"				

Works Cited

- Diller, D. (2003). *Literacy Work Stations: Making centers work*. Portland, MA: Stenhouse.
- Dorn, L.J., & Soffos, C. (2001). *Scaffolding Young Writers: A writers' workshop approach*. Portland, MA: Stenhouse.
- Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2001). *Writing Workshop: The essential guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (1996). *Guided Reading: Good first teaching for all children*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2001). *Guiding Readers and Writers: Teaching comprehension, genre, and content literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (2006) *Leveled books K-8*. Portsmouth, NY: Heinemann.
- Fountas, I.C., & Pinnell, G.S. (1998). *Word Matters: Teaching phonics and spelling in the reading/writing classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Johnson, D., (personal communication, 2006).
- McCarrier, A., Pinnell, G.S., & Fountas, I.C. (2000). *Interactive Writing: How language and literacy come together, K-2*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

## Presenter Biographies

**BethAnn Browning** is in her sixth year of teaching at the elementary level. She is currently a Literacy Coordinator at Blue Ridge School in Dalton, Georgia. BethAnn has received her graduate degrees from Mercer University, Piedmont College, and Georgia State University. She has presented her work entitled, *“Catch a Fire! The Foxfire Approach to Teaching and Learning”* at the Georgia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. In addition, BethAnn has been invited to be a lead presenter at the Oxford Roundtable at Oxford University in March in Oxford, England. BethAnn can be contacted at: [bethann.browning@dalton.k12.ga.us](mailto:bethann.browning@dalton.k12.ga.us).

**Alice Ensley** has 18 years of teaching experience. She is currently the District Literacy Coordinator for Dalton Public Schools in Dalton, Georgia. She has presented a paper entitled, *“Developmental Spelling Errors of Spanish Speaking First Graders”* as part of her graduate students at the State University of West Georgia. Alice can be contacted at: [alice.ensley@dalton.k12.ga.us](mailto:alice.ensley@dalton.k12.ga.us).

**Pam Smith** has four years of teaching experience in first grade. She has taught two years using the Literacy Collaborative framework and served as a host teacher for the Dalton Public School District during this time. Pam is currently enrolled in the graduate program at Lesley University furthering her education in the area of reading. Pam can be contacted at: [pam.smith@dalton.k12.ga.us](mailto:pam.smith@dalton.k12.ga.us).