

## Guidelines for Using Workstations / Centers

Many teachers in the primary grades choose to use workstations/centers when they are working with small groups of students in small group instruction/guided reading. When workstations/centers are used, they should be independent, meaningful activities. Researchers have learned that collaboration among small groups of students promotes achievement and productivity. In these workstations/centers, students are able to observe, model, support and learn from one another.

Once students have learned to be responsible and independent (See "Scaffolding for Independence"), these workstations/centers provide the opportunity for students to be engaged in purposeful learning activities. No matter what format is chosen for this work, it is important they clearly understand the procedures and expectations for each activity, which is based on previously learned material. Independent activities should be:

- **AUTHENTIC** – represents real world situations (avoid worksheets)
- **INTEGRATED** – involves more than one subject area
- **INTERACTIVE** – creates opportunities for collaboration
- **MULTI-DIMENSIONAL** – allows varying degrees of challenge to permit every student to be successful
- **OPEN-ENDED** – generates additional learning opportunities (You should never hear the words, "I'm finished.")

Adapted: Cambourne