Students’ Role in the Literacy Environment

Students have a critical role in creating, maintaining and utilizing their classroom’s literacy environment.

The more students...
- contribute to its creation and development
- participate in the organization and management of it
- routinely interact in it
- practice, model and role play behaviors related to it
- choose how they learn best in it, and how to read and write in it
- encourage each other when effort and improvement is evident

The better chance they will ...
- feel responsible for its development
- rely on it to support them in their literacy development
- respect it as the foundation for their learning
- grow with it as they develop as readers and writers
- feel proud of their role in its growth
- overcome/solve challenges that occur within it

Directions: Check the behaviors your students demonstrate in the literacy environment. Discuss the items checked and unchecked with a colleague. Consider why students may not be demonstrating certain behaviors (Have you taught them how? Showed them how? Been consistent? Given them specific encouragement and feedback?). Create an action plan for getting your students (all of them!) to demonstrate all of the behaviors below.

Books
- organizing the library corner and keeping it organized
- choosing books that are “just right” for them
- reading their books quietly
- putting books back in the appropriate places in the library
- keeping books in good condition
- taking out and returning books to the home lending library
- keeping books at home in good condition
Students have the time and opportunity to:
______ read books independently (at their independent level), in partners and in small groups
______ read a balance and variety of books according to their interests, levels and other learning topics
______ respond to those books in multiple ways
______ discuss those books with classmates
______ talk about those books with you
______ take books home and discuss them with family members
______ model, practice and role play behaviors related to books

Students utilize (to support them in their independent work):
______ the organization system for books in the library corner
______ anchor charts that support them in making meaning (comprehension), fixing up comprehension and figuring out unknown words
______ procedural anchor charts that outline procedures for interacting with and discussing books
______ books all around the room
______ the home lending library

Print

Students are responsible for:
______ creating alphabet charts, anchor charts and other classroom displays
______ utilizing alphabet charts, anchor charts, the Word Wall and other classroom displays
______ displaying their personal best work
______ utilizing the displayed and shared work of peers to support them

Students have the time and opportunity to:
______ interact with anchor charts connected to current learning
______ interact with the Word Wall
______ interact with student work
______ create authentic print
______ model, practice and role play behaviors related to print
______ give specific encouragement about student work displayed

Students utilize:
______ alphabet charts
______ anchor charts
______ the Word Wall
______ other theme and vocabulary Word Walls/charts
______ other classroom displays
______ student work displayed (on walls or in class/student written books in the library)
**Space**

**Students are responsible for:**

- following previously taught and posted responsibilities for interacting in various classroom spaces: large group space, small group space, library corner, centers/stations
- organizing and cleaning up materials and resources available in classroom spaces
- caring for (keeping in good condition) furniture and materials in classroom spaces
- maintaining the appealing and uncluttered look of the classroom

**Students have the time and opportunity to:**

- choose what classroom spaces are best for them to read and write in
- work with peers in classroom spaces
- handle materials and resources in spaces that support them in literacy learning

**Students utilize:**

- the large group space
- the small group space
- the library corner
- areas to meet individually with you
- literacy center or stations

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**Time**

**Students are responsible for:**

- staying on task during every instructional practice in the literacy block
- following previously taught and posted responsibilities for working independently
- following previously taught and posted responsibilities for working with peers
- minimizing time spent on non-instructional tasks
- handling distractions and interruptions appropriately
- transitioning from one activity to another efficiently
- communicating when time is an issue (not enough time, wasted time, unsure how to use time, etc.)
- giving specific encouragement to their peers when focused and on-task behavior is evident

**Students have the time and opportunity to:**

- learn content area topics during literacy instruction
- understand the purpose behind each instructional practice and content
- engage in guided practice with you
- work with peer to make sense and discuss what is learned in the literacy block
- independently practice what is being taught
Students utilize:
______ the schedule of the literacy block
______ work boards (posted or individual) that direct/sequence their options for independent literacy tasks
______ personal reading and writing goals that direct their focus during independent reading and writing
______ anchor charts from lessons on transitions, maximizing time and minimizing distractions

Language

Students are responsible for:
______ actively listening to you and their peers
______ using positive and empowering language with you and their peers
______ encouraging and giving specific feedback to their peers
______ discussing ideas, thoughts and opinions with their peers
______ redirecting their behavior when your language prompts them to do so
______ responding to verbal and nonverbal communications that direct their learning and behavior
______ using the language of “taking care of yourself, taking care of others and taking care of the classroom.”
______ reflecting on their language

Students have the time and opportunity to:
______ express what interests them, motivates them and keeps them engaged
______ respond to open ended questions
______ verbally respond to books and instruction
______ share their own reading and writing
______ give feedback to their peers about their reading and writing
______ discuss ideas, thoughts and opinions with their peers
______ discuss ideas, thoughts and opinions with you
______ verbally reflect on reading and writing goals and growth with you
______ verbally reflect on reading and writing goals and growth with their peers
______ use specific encouragement with each other
______ reflect on their language through discussions, class meetings and rubrics

Students utilize:
______ anchor charts that have been previously taught and posted about how topics related to language (how to actively listen, how to do accountable talk, how to discuss books, how to turn and talk, how to partner conference)
______ clear and concise statements of what they will be learning and why it is beneficial to them as readers and writers, so they can develop goals and expectations for their learning and independent work
______ the time in their literacy block to discuss books and learning with their peers
______ the positive language from you and their peers to empower and motivate
Procedures

Students are responsible for:

- implementing procedures previously taught, practiced and posted on anchor charts
- transitioning from one activity to the next in the literacy block
- communicating when procedures breakdown
- using strategies previously taught and posted for what to do when procured break down
- reflecting on their class/individual procedures and how they can be improved
- communicating respectfully when a procedure needs more explanation and assumptions have been made

Students have the time and opportunity to:

- learn all aspects of the classroom (MAP: all materials, all areas and all processes)
- brainstorm the procedures they need to be taught in order to be successful
- practice, model, role play and perform procedures that are taught
- participate in the model, practice and role play stage daily (may take weeks) until a procedure becomes a ritual
- create anchor charts on procedures during instruction
- refer to these charts as needed to support work
- discuss when problems occur and collaborate on how to solve these problems
- participate in Class Meetings that focus on the culture of the room

Students utilize:

- anchor charts on classroom procedures
- strategies for when procedures break down
- behaviors and skills learned during role plays
- class meetings that focus on procedures

Responsibility

Students are responsible for:

- taking care of the classroom
- sharing an “our classroom” belief
- accepting and valuing all members of the classroom
- establishing responsibilities for expected behaviors
- communicating the purpose behind the responsibilities
- creating anchor charts for behaviors during instruction
- their learning and behavior inside and outside the classroom
- using strategies for solving conflicts previously taught and posted
- maintaining classroom culture
- reflecting on their responsibility for themselves, their classroom and each other
- communicating when they are having difficulty with class responsibilities
- focusing on effort and improvement (the process) vs. final mastered results (the product)
- viewing mistakes as learning opportunities
Students have the time and opportunity to:

- brainstorm the responsibilities that need to be taught in order to be successful
- practice, model, role play and reinforce the language of “taking care of yourself, taking care of each other, and taking care of the classroom”
- practice, model, role play and perform responsibilities that are taught
- create responsibility charts during instruction
- refer to these charts as needed and appropriate
- participate in Class Meetings that focus on the culture of the room
- brainstorm logical solutions to problems
- practice, model, role play and implement logical solutions as needed
- be self-reflective about their contributions to the culture of the room

Students utilize:

- anchor charts on students responsibilities for themselves, their classroom, and their peers
- behaviors and skills learned during role plays
- logical solutions to overcome challenges
- class meetings that focus on responsibilities and logical solutions
- rubrics where they self reflect on Classroom Culture