

Color Their World

“Boys and girls, please write your name at the top of this paper. We are going to practice our addition facts on this worksheet”. I can hear the groans from the students now. Perhaps you are taking a trip down memory lane with visions of handwriting worksheets, timed tests, and fill-in-the-blank vocabulary papers. When we think back to our elementary school years, these types of activities were not engaging, innovative, or fun.

I am a kindergarten teacher who uses flexible seating in the classroom. This means that my students are not confined to tables or desks during their learning. Instead, students choose a spot that works best for their learning. I use flexible seating, in part, because of my hands-on approach to student centered learning.

Each year I survey my students, asking a variety of questions in order to gauge how they learn best. Year after year, the results come back with kinesthetic learning at the top of the list. This means that my students enjoy tactile learning as opposed to lectures or worksheets. Is it any surprise that a room full of 5 and 6 year olds like to move around? "Children enter kindergarten as kinesthetic and tactual learners, moving and touching everything as they learn."(Dunn & Dunn, 1993). Sounds about right! It would be easy to have students sit, listen to directions, and complete a cut-and-paste worksheet. This would also mean I would be doing them a disservice because I would not be fluid in my strategies to enable students to succeed in an ever changing world.

Every day my students have independent learning time. During this time, students use hands on learning centers to practice and demonstrate their learning. The students have a range of activities that they are able to do on any particular day. Many students enjoy picking from our “tubs”. Each group has 10 tubs (or learning centers) to choose from. There are 4 groups which means that there are 40 centers in the tubs at one point in time. I switch our tubs out every month meaning each school year there are approximately 360 centers throughout the year which average to 15 pages each. An example of a center that students complete during math center time is “Dunkin’ Cookies”. Students order numbers 0-20 printed on cardstock glasses of milk. They pair the milk with cardstock cookies with the same number in the form of tally marks,

ten frames, and chocolate chips. This center has students using their kinesthetic skills as well as demonstrating multiple math standards.

All of the centers I use are printed with color ink because images in color enhance a person's ability to retain information. Color helps increase levels of attention. When our attention is heightened, more information is stored in our permanent memory (Dzul kifli & Mustafar, 2013). When I create centers, I want students to be engaged tacitly as well as mentally.

Our school is fortunate enough to allow teachers copy as many pages as necessary for our students. However, this printing is in black and white. To print in color, I rely on asking co-workers, friends, and family members to print a few sheets in color from their homes. I would like to use the HP Officejet 4650 Inkjet Multifunction Color Desktop Printer to print centers in color when needed without the embarrassment of asking someone to print for my class each week. After I print centers on cardstock, I laminate them for durability so I can save money and use them for a number of years. I am asking for this particular printer because it qualifies for HP's Instant Ink Program where I can pay a monthly fee that allows me to make 50-300 color copies per month.

If I had an HP Officejet 4650 Inkjet Multifunction Color Desktop Printer from FriendsOffice, I could freely create hands-on, colored centers and research projects for my kindergarten students to use during independent and collaborative literacy and math learning centers. This printer will help my students to be more engaged in their learning and help them to retain the foundational skills learned in kindergarten all while having fun.

Thank you to FriendsOffice and the WRITE Program for giving students the opportunity to enjoy their learning. Without the assistance of programs such as this, teachers would not be able to use innovating techniques and methods to help students to achieve and succeed.

