

ABC AND ME!

Description:

Early literacy students are engaged in a kinesthetic approach to putting things in alphabetical order. This is an introductory strategy that can be explored and expanded to alphabetizing in increasing specificity. Children are motivated by the use of their own names and those of their peers. Students can then use this skill to explore a variety of information skills, i.e. early dictionaries, finding books in the library. Adaptations for inclusion of students with special needs is included with some sign language, singing, and modifications for different literacy levels are also explained.

Instructional Goals:

- To be able to put things in "ABC order" using the initial letter in a word or name
- To recognize when items are organized in "ABC order" (alphabetized)

Learning Objectives:

- Given a letter of the alphabet, students will be able to put it in correct ABC order on the "letterline"
- Given the name of a classmate, students will be able to put it in the correct section on the "letterline"
- Given an early dictionary, student will find a word that starts with the same letter of their first name
- Given a letter, students will be able to find that section of the picture books and find a book whose author or illustrator has that letter as an initial letter in their name
- Given a letter, students will find a picture book by an author whose last name starts with the same letter

Motivational Goals:

- Students will be confident they can find a book in the picture book section by the first letter of their last name
- Students will be confident they can find a section in an early dictionary that matches an alphabet letter
- Student will know that things in our world are organized in "ABC" (alphabetized) order, a lifelong skill that will lead to success

Materials:

- Low mounted clothesline, students must be able to reach it independently. Caution: Mounting it just in front of a windowsill, cabinets or bookshelves will discourage students walking past or into it without seeing it.
- Index cards or cardstock (approximately half the size of standard letter paper) These are folded (hamburger fold) and any writing will be on the "tent" with the fold at the top. All cards listed below will follow this pattern.
- Markers

- Class sets of Name Cards
- Set of Index Cards with capital Alphabet
- Set of lower case alphabet cards

Introduction:

Students will practice a variety of alphabetizing activities over the next several years using a "letterline." At this introduction to the strategy, the concept of ABC or alphabetical order will be introduced using the "ABC Song" and sign language letters while singing. (Signing tends to slow down the L,M, N, O, P section so that we identify the individual letters).

The librarian will put the letters A, Z, and L on the "letterline." Deliberately leaving very little space between the A and L. (The cards are hung like little tents by their fold with the letter side out) The letters are placed on the letterline so it reads from left to right.

Then each child is given a letter of the alphabet, children with special needs are given a letter the teacher has indicated they know. Each child takes turns to put their letter on the letterline.

The first several children who must put a letter between A and L will model for each other how the cards can be slid along the letterline to make room for the correct order. There can be some lowercase letters included to ensure that all children have a card. These should be given to students who recognize them.

While they are learning to letterline procedure, the content must be easy. Using known letters at this point increases motivation and ensures that student can focus on the new strategy of using the letterline and taking turns.

After the whole alphabet has been introduced, each child can have a turn placing their name on the letterline in the correct section (by initial letter). At this point, no attention to second and third letter alphabetizing will be mentioned.

Conclusion:

Students will then be given their name cards and instructed to find the section of picture books that corresponds with their initial letter. They will be asked to find a picture book whose author/illustrator's letter is the same as theirs. (Serendipity might mean a child could stumble across an illustrator with the same initial letter. At this introductory level, this could also constitute success.)

Subsequent practice will ensure that all children will eventually understand that they will search for information by the first letter of the last name, but it is not necessary yet.

Assessment:

Students will be considered successful if they are able to show the matching letter on their name card and the cover of their book.

While students are searching for a book, the children waiting could be exploring beginner dictionaries.

Further assesment could have them show the section of the dictionary corresponding to their initial letter of their first name.