

What is an Invitational Group?

- A time during Composing when the teacher identifies small groups of children based on a shared need for intensive instruction and discussion.
- A time to read instructional level texts in order to experiment with or reinforce deep and surface structure intentions recently taught.
- A time to write short pieces in which children can experiment with or receive more intensive instruction in deep and surface structure intentions recently taught.
- A time during which a small group of children explores ideas with an eye toward sharing them with others later in Crafting or Reflecting sessions.
- Children have an opportunity to practice, with teacher support, surface and deep structure strategies recently taught in Crafting Sessions.
- Children have an opportunity to observe the teacher model in a more controlled, focused setting than in a large group Crafting session.
- An opportunity for the teacher to model a deep or surface structure strategy again and to observe children closely as they begin to apply it.
- An opportunity to introduce a surface structure strategy that the rest of the class already demonstrates independently.

- A time for students to read and write silently and discuss problems they encounter immediately.

What is characteristic of an Effective Invitational Group?

- Invitational Groups are **short, focused and active**.
- Children are actively and **enthusiastically involved** as they have been effectively prepared - their teacher has capitalized on the Living Language section of the Cornerstone Literacy Framework to create a **learning environment** conducive to enthusiastic student involvement.
- The group has a **spirit of support** for other group members.
- The **teacher is free to focus** exclusively on the Invitational Group, having taught the rest of the class to read and write independently for long periods of time.
- Students and teachers **plan to share** what they've discussed with other children in the Reflection time.

Some Words of Caution About Invitational Groups

- ✧ Invitational Groups are not static - the same group of children may meet one to three times to focus on an area of need, then they disband

- ✧ Invitational Groups are not necessarily homogeneous

- ✧ Invitational Groups are designed to offer instruction in the groups' zone of proximal development - in other words, instruction closely matches a clearly identified need for each child in the group

- ✧ Invitational Groups are not used as an opportunity for the teacher to listen to children read aloud in a round robin style

- ✧ When the teacher is working with an Invitational Group, the other children are reading and writing

- ✧ When the teacher is working with an Invitational Group, he/she does not permit interruptions from other students nor does he/she initiate the interruption to manage other children

- ✧ The teacher creates a sense of anticipation and excitement for those invited to a group -

- ✧ Children who have participated in an Invitational Group are often invited to teach or demonstrate to others what they have learned during a Reflecting session