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Introduction

Learning centres are a wonderful way to encourage independent learning, add creative reinforcement to more structured lessons, and allow students to work at a comfortable pace. Learning centres may be an integral part of a unit of study or a reward for having completed the day's assignments. Learning centres make it possible for teachers to be in more than one place at a time. Teachers are able to work with groups of students while sending individual students or pairs to learning centres. This book will supplement your good ideas with a potpourri of additional ideas which can be placed in the various learning centres.

What Is a Learning Centre?

A learning centre is an area in a classroom where one or more children can participate in activities designed for enrichment and review of current learning and for reinforcement of the skills being taught. A learning centre coordinated with the curriculum enhances skills and learning.

A centre can consist of games, activities, manipulatives, or reading materials. A listening centre with special equipment such as a tape recorder with headphones, a computer, calculator, or typewriter may constitute a centre. As new topics are introduced or areas of special interest develop, new centres may be created. Rather than serve as primary instruction, a learning centre supports what is taught in the classroom. A centre provides an alternative to the traditional concept of seatwork. It allows the student an opportunity to independently practise skills and assume responsibility for learning, while freeing the teacher to work with small groups or individual students.

Why Should I Use a Learning Centre?

Children learn best when they are actively involved in learning. Manipulating maths materials, writing and publishing their own stories, creating plays, exploring the world through maps and globes, or reviewing new vocabulary words are just a few of the learning centre activities that provide students with hands-on involvement. Centres accommodate different learning styles which, in turn, give students an opportunity to become more creatively involved in their own education.

Learning centres also help students learn how to work independently. As students want to find the answers for themselves, they become more responsible for completing tasks, checking them, and cleaning up. As patterns for using the centres are established, organisational skills develop.

The nature of the learning centre gives students freedom to learn on their own. They begin to think more critically and solve problems. Specific activities may require higher levels of thinking, as well as providing an environment that is conducive to this kind of learning.

Learning Centres for Intermediate Classrooms provides a sampling of a variety of learning centre activities that are ready to use with little or no preparation. The activities will supplement classroom studies in the areas of English, Maths, Science, Study of Society and Environment, Technology, and for a fun way to reinforce all subjects, Games and Puzzles.

Introduction *(cont.)*

How Do I Set Up a Learning Centre?

The organisation and setup of learning centres are keys to developing a successful program in your classroom. Where and how you place your centres is important, remembering that they must be useable within your classroom. They may be set up on walls, in corners, behind partitions, on tables, on desks, or even in storage bins. Some centres may require an arrangement of equipment and materials where there is a water source, electrical outlet, or a special light. Wall space around a room is often a good place to set up learning centres. With such an arrangement, students are spread out around a room, so crowding doesn't take place. Flexibility is your most important asset in setting up centres.

How Do I Use a Learning Centre?

Your first job is to introduce the learning centre to your students. Let them know what the centres are for and how to use and take care of them, including cleaning up. This should be repeated every time new centres are introduced. Plan to spend some time at the beginning of each month explaining the proper procedures to follow at the centres. It may be helpful to post procedures and rules near each centre. Some general rules include the following:

1. Use only one centre at a time.
2. Put finished activities away before leaving.
3. Keep voices at an appropriate level.
4. Be careful with materials and equipment.
5. When finished, quietly return to your seat.



Famous Names

How many of the names in the box below do you recognise? Do you know what each one is noted for? Use resource books to help you find out. Then write the proper name beside each phrase.

1. _____ world's first female physician
2. _____ invented the bra
3. _____ developed nuclear physics
4. _____ invented the mechanical reaper
5. _____ invented the phonograph
6. _____ invented air-conditioning
7. _____ developed penicillin
8. _____ named the proton and the neutron
9. _____ invented the telephone
10. _____ invented the world wide web
11. _____ inventor of the elevator
12. _____ pioneered the assembly line
13. _____ developed the first plastic
14. _____ invented the telegraph
15. _____ revolutionised fiction writing

Cyrus McCormick

Alexander Graham Bell

Mary Phelps Jacobs

Willis Carrier

Henry Ford

Howard Florey

Tim Berners-Lee

Ernest Rutherford

Marcel Proust

Thomas Edison

Alexander Parkes

E. G. Otis

Samuel Morse

Ernest Lawrence

Elizabeth Blackwell

This Map Is Making Me Hungry!

Many foods are named for the place where they were first made. Other foods share their names with places in the world. Read the following clues to help find the location of these yummy place names.

1. It is a kind of mustard and a city of Europe.
Where do you go to find Dijon? _____
2. It is a kind of sandwich and a city of Europe.
Where do you go to find Hamburg? _____
3. It is a pepper sauce and a region in Mexico.
Where do you go to find Tabasco? _____
4. It is a red wine and a city in Western Europe.
Where do you go to find Bordeaux? _____
5. It is a type of sausage and a city in Europe.
Where do you go to find Bologna? _____
6. They are two kinds of cheese and two cities in Europe.
Where do you go to find Gouda and Edam? _____
7. It is a kind of orange, and cities in Europe and the U.S.A. are named for it.
Where do you go to find Valencia? _____
8. An Australian might call it a hot dog, and it is a city in Europe.
Where do you go to find Frankfurt? _____
9. It is a brand of chocolate and a city in the U.S.A.
Where do you go to find Hershey? _____
10. It is a cheese and a village in Europe.
Where do you go to find Cheddar? _____
11. It is a hot vegetable or spice and a country.
Where do you go to find Chile? _____
12. It is two slices of bread with ham, cheese, etc., in the middle and a borough in Europe.
Where do you go to find Sandwich? _____
13. It is a citrus fruit and a city in Western Europe.
Where do you go to find Orange? _____
14. It is a type of bird and also a country.
Where do you go to find Turkey? _____
15. It is a kind of steak and a plain in Europe.
Where do you go to find Salisbury? _____

Patchwork Quilts Kit

The process of quilting (two layers of fabric with wool or loft between and stitched together) has been known since 3000 B.C., and possibly even earlier. Quilted clothing and household goods have been discovered in ancient Egypt, Mongolia, and the Middle East. Knights in the Middle Ages wore quilted clothing under their armour, and a bed quilt, used in the 1300s was found in Sicily. It can be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. When people came to settle the Western and Southern Hemispheres, they brought the art of quilting with them, and soon quilt-making became a very popular activity. Quilts were used for warmth on beds, of course, but they were also used for door, window, and floor covers; they were even sometimes used like money to pay bills. Often, quilts are made up of a hodge-podge of scraps of fabric from old, worn clothes; but as the art has evolved, more and more often quilts have been made to be a work of art as well as a family history.

The most basic quilts are made from pieced together geometric shapes in repeating patterns and colours. In your Patchwork Quilts Kit, you will find patterns for many of the shapes commonly used. Trace around these shapes on coloured construction paper and cut the shapes you wish to use for your paper patchwork quilt square. You may wish to get ideas by looking at these designs first, and then making some sketches. Try the shapes in various positions to see if the colours and shapes please you. When you have a pattern you like, glue it into place and write your name on the back.

