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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.



# You Must be Joe King!

Below are three common types of jokes. Follow the directions in each section.

## Puns

A *pun* is something that is funny because of a play on words, often because one or more of the words have more than one meaning or sound similar to other words. Read the following puns and circle the words that make each a pun.

1. *Mona*: I can't marry you, Jib; you're penniless.  
*Jib*: That's nothing—the Czar of Russia was Nicholas!
2. Cantaloupe today, lettuce tomorrow.
3. *Diner*: This coffee tastes like mud!  
*Waiter*: That's funny—it was just ground this morning!
4. It's raining cats and dogs! I just stepped in a poodle.
5. Did you hear about the guy who ate 90 pancakes? How waffle!

## Tom Swifties

A *Tom Swifty* is a joke that quotes a person saying something, and the verb or adverb describes how the quotation was said. Read the examples below and then write five Tom Swifties of your own on the back of this paper.

1. "I don't have a fever," he said *coolly*.
2. "I'll pay you one thousand dollars," said the rich woman *grandly*.
3. "I love hot dogs," admitted the girl *frankly*.
4. "I've decided to change your test grade," the teacher *remarked*.
5. "Please pass the sugar," said Jeff *sweetly*.

## Daffynitions

*Daffynitions* are silly definitions for words, based on how they sound literally. Read the following examples and then write the real definitions for the words. Then use five words of your own (or select from the choices below) to write your own daffynitions on the back of this paper.

- boycott: *a bed for a small male child*
- cartoon: *a song sung in an automobile*
- eye dropper: *someone who is very, very careless*
- sweater \_\_\_\_\_
- paradox \_\_\_\_\_
- paramedics \_\_\_\_\_
- grammar \_\_\_\_\_
- missing \_\_\_\_\_
- lawsuit \_\_\_\_\_
- divine \_\_\_\_\_
- Denise \_\_\_\_\_
- kidnap \_\_\_\_\_

# Morse Code

Here is what Morse code looks like. It sounds like this: dot = quick sound or tap, dash = longer sound). Using Morse code, write a note to a friend using only the dots and dashes of the code. Be sure to allow enough space between each letter so that the letters don't run into each other.

## Morse Code

A ● -	B - ● ● ●	C - ● - ●	D - ● ●	E ●	F ● ● - ●
G - - ●	H ● ● ● ●	I ● ●	J ● - - -	K - ● -	L ● - ● ●
M - -	N - ●	O - - -	P ● - - ●	Q - - ● -	R ● - ●
S ● ● ●	T -	U ● ● -	V ● ● ● -	W ● - -	X - ● ● -
Y - ● - -	Z - - ● ●	1 ● - - - -	2 ● ● - - -	3 ● ● ● - -	4 ● ● ● ● -
5 ● ● ● ● ●	6 - ● ● ● ●	7 - - ● ● ●	8 - - - ● ●	9 - - - - ●	0 - - - - -
full stop ● - ● - ● -	comma - - ● ● ● - ●	? ● ● - - ● ●	SOS ● ● ● - - - ● ● ●		Start - ● -
End of Message ● - ● - ●	Understand ● - ●		Error ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		

# What Does This Mean?

Choose three of the words below. Take three sheets of paper and write one of the words at the bottom of each page. Draw an illustration or diagram to indicate what you think the wacky word might mean. Then, look up the wacky word. Once you understand the meaning, write, in your own words, a definition for the word on the back of your drawing. Post your Wacky Words art in the learning centre or on a bulletin board chosen by your teacher for a Wacky Words Art Show. Leave the bottoms of your pages free so that your classmates can lift the pages and see what the words really mean.

<b>abecedarian</b>	<b>mellifluous</b>
<b>agglomerate</b>	<b>obstreperous</b>
<b>agoraphobia</b>	<b>piliferous</b>
<b>alopecia</b>	<b>isthmus</b>
<b>aperture</b>	<b>sigillography</b>
<b>conundrum</b>	<b>tessellate</b>
<b>expurgate</b>	<b>ululate</b>
<b>hirsute</b>	<b>ungulate</b>
<b>lacuna</b>	<b>verboten</b>