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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.



Solve These If You Can!

Can you find the answers to these word problems? When you are finished, use the blank form on page 13 to write some of your own word problems.

1. Paul went horseback riding. He paid 2 five-dollar notes and 3 one-dollar coins. He received one fifty-cent coin and one twenty-cent coin in change. How much did it cost Paul to go riding?

2. Amy paid for her lunch with 3 one-dollar coins, a fifty-cent coin, 2 twenty-cent coins, and 3 five-cent coins. The cashier told her she still owes ten cents. How much was Amy's lunch?

3. When Lan went bowling, he paid with 2 one-dollar coins, a fifty-cent coin and a twenty-cent coin. He received 2 five-cent coins in change. How much did it cost Lan to bowl?

4. Kimi wanted to buy a cake mix. She looked in her wallet and counted 2 one-dollar coins and 3 ten-cent coins. She would need fifty cents more. How much was the cake mix?

5. Alvaro bought a ticket to a concert. He paid with a ten-dollar note and a five-dollar note. He received 2 one-dollar coins in change. How much was the concert ticket?

6. Sheila wanted to buy a new swimsuit. She had 2 ten-dollar notes, but would need a five-dollar note and 2 one-dollar coins. How much would the new swimsuit cost?

Measurement Challenge

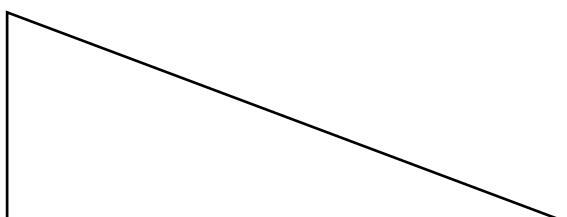
How quickly can you find the measurements below? Work alone, and time yourself for each page using a stopwatch or watch. Write your time at the bottom of each page. Or, if your teacher gives you the okay, race a partner. You may also work with a partner to come up with the answers, if you prefer.

Task Cards



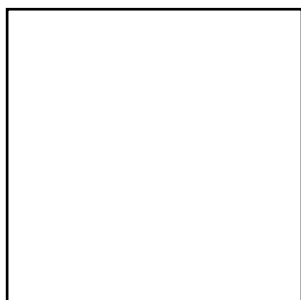
1. Rectangle

- Length = 13 metres
- Perimeter = 42 metres
- Width = _____ metres



2. Triangle

- Side 1 = 29 centimetres
- Side 2 = 23 centimetres
- Perimeter = 86 centimetres
- Side 3 = _____ centimetres



3. Square

- Length of each side = 31 centimetres
- Area = _____ square centimetres



4. Rectangle

- Length = 18 metres
- Area = 162 metres squared
- Width = _____ metres