

Anchor Activities

What are anchor activities?

Anchor activities refer to some continuous activities designed for students in accordance with their different learning pace in classroom. These activities allow students who have finished the core learning tasks in advance to review and extend their learning through engaging in some meaningful learning tasks or an ongoing assignment related to the curriculum individually or in small groups.

Why use anchor activities for gifted learners?

- Keep fast/ advanced learners fully engaged in working in greater depth with a concept, or enriching their skills development.
- Provide students with enrichment and/ or acceleration opportunities in which a specific set of knowledge, skills and values are developed.
- Make the classroom more student-centered.

Examples of anchor activities

- ✧ Establish resource corner with relevant, challenging and interesting learning materials
- ✧ Ask challenging questions: e.g. Math “Problem of the Week”
- ✧ Provide various language learning options: vocabulary, syntax or paragraph writing, creative writing, drama production
- ✧ Use ICT: multi-media production, on-line knowledge building
- ✧ Provide hands-on experience: e.g. model making
- ✧ Keep journal entries: learn to record and reflect
- ✧ Set learning centre: specific learning tasks
- ✧ Portfolio management: self-manage own learning process
- ✧ Synthesise notes / materials for teaching other students

Reminder

Each anchor activity may last for 5-10 minutes to a whole lesson or even longer.

Duration of an activity depends on content of the course.

Case 1: In an elementary classroom, after the small group of students has finished the use of action verbs in sentence construction, the gifted students are asked to create a short story by using the 7 actions words given. They are then asked to present their stories after the whole class completed the mainstream work.

Case 2: While the class is acquiring knowledge of “light” in Grade 3, a gifted student conducts an independent study on light spectrum. (He has showed the relevant concepts of light that the mainstream class is acquiring.)

Anchor activities can be posted within the classroom in a variety of ways. Liaison with resource teacher, library teacher and even parent volunteer can help. The easiest entry point is the setting up of an in-class library and regular change of the books in alignment with the topic inquired.

Reference

Tomlinson, C. (2004). *How to differentiate instruction in mixed ability classrooms* (2nd ed). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Example 1:

Dimension (Equalizer): Simple → Complex
Anchor Activity Design of P. 4 Mathematics

Topic: Area (Rectangle)

Mainstream students: Calculate the area of a rectangle

Gifted students: Engage in *anchor activities*

- 1) Use a 16m rope to form a rectangle that is biggest in area
 - 2) Use 40 16cm^2 squares to create a shape that is largest in area and perimeter.
-

Example 2:

Dimension (Equalizer): Structured → Open
Anchor Activity Design of P.5 English

Topic: Travel

Mainstream students: textbook / reference passage, tense, vocabulary, adverb

Gifted students: Engage in *anchor activities*

Group task: Design a 4-day tour

- Choose a particular city, identify the tourist attractions, climate and local culture.
- Design a 4-day itinerary with activities, expected expense and matters to be noted.

Presentation format: pamphlet, leaflet, poster, wiki, interactive media (e.g. glogster, slideshare, animation) or any kind

Remarks: The final product will be peer-assessed and sent to a travel agent for further comment or even use.