



What are the Other Students Doing While I Conduct Guided Reading?

(originally posted October 16, 2009)

Prior to beginning your guided reading instruction, you will want to establish classroom activities that allow your students to engage in exploring language and literacy concepts independently; thus enabling you to work with a small group of readers in an uninterrupted way. There are a variety of options that you may want to consider as you set up purposeful literacy activities.

In the first option, all students complete the same activity—independent reading. If you are teaching Grade 3, this might be the most useful activity for your students. Providing students with 20 minutes of sustained reading time is extremely valuable. For further information on how to set up an independent reading program in your classroom, check the *Reading Guide* at your grade level.

Another option includes one group of students who complete a guided reading follow-up, while the remaining students work at independent reading. Students might complete follow-up activities such as:

- research on a topic they have been reading about
- recording questions on sticky notes
- writing a retell of the text, a letter to a character/author, a journal entry, a list of interesting facts

Text-specific follow-up activities can be found in the guided reading plans. Remember it is not imperative for students to complete a follow-up activity for every text read so you may want to use this option less frequently in your classroom.

A final option involves students working at a variety of literacy centres, an appropriate choice for Grade 1 and 2 classrooms. In Kindergarten classrooms students usually engage in learning centres—a combination of both literacy centres and developmental play centres. The number and type of centres you establish will depend on your students' needs. Literacy centres should include activities that stimulate students and continue to meet their changing skill development. In *LPEY* the centres are grouped into four basic areas: reading (exploring print), rereading, responding, and working with words. Great suggestions for meaningful activities at these centres can be found in the Reading, Writing, and Working with Words Guides.

Tips for Making Literacy Centres Successful

- Start small and build slowly, introducing one centre at a time so that students have a chance to practise the necessary rules and routines, as well as the activities.
- Start with just a few rules, and promote students' independence by establishing routines that solve problems as they arise.
- Introduce each new centre only after the last one is running smoothly. This may mean that the initial setting-up process takes two to three weeks.
- Prepare written instructions for specific activities on cards or chart paper to post at a centre for student reference.
- For accountability purposes, build in a 5 to 10 minute sharing time at the conclusion of each centre time and select students on a random basis to explain a task or share a response.
- After each centre has been in use for a while, stop and reassess its value and learning potential. Make appropriate changes and additions to your literacy centres as the year progresses, to maintain students' interest and promote continued learning. Replace any activity and/or close down any centre that is not working.

If you have a question you would like answered, please email your request to: workshops@scholastic.ca.