

Introduction

A wide range of texts and literacy materials is found throughout the intermediate reading classroom. Students are joyfully working independently, in small groups, and with the teacher. All students are engaged and on task and seem to know exactly what the routines and procedures are without constant direction. The room and the activities within it appear to run like a well-oiled machine. No space remains unused for learning and inquiry.

This is just a glimpse of an engaging literacy environment. It should be the goal of every teacher of reading to create such a place where learning is deep and meaningful for all students, regardless of age or reading level.

As we conduct workshops for educators, again and again we hear teachers of older students asking for help in creating such a space. They want to provide their students with meaningful literacy tasks so that they can differentiate and teach small groups. But teachers are overwhelmed. And they don't want stations that look "too babyish." When intermediate teachers look at their primary counterparts, they often see twelve to fifteen active centers in the same classroom. They wonder just how they can manage that much while also teaching the content areas and test-taking strategies that so often fill the day.

Intermediate teachers also face the dilemma of higher curriculum expectations in the classroom. This means that they must integrate more and teach with more depth and complexity. For these reasons, we believe the intermediate classroom is more sophisticated. Since the work that is happening with older students is more sophisticated, we decided to use a more sophisticated term for the work that happens during small-group instruction. Rather than "centers," we call them stations. Students like the term and feel it separates them from the primary students in the school.

When we ourselves started using literacy stations with intermediate students, we found that less is sometimes more. It is easy to believe that older children can and should handle MORE activities during their workshop than younger students. More is not always better, however; depth and complexity should be the goals. Completing a few activities over an extended time encourages less unnecessary movement in the classroom and more time to investigate literacy acquisition. More time investigating text creates further opportunities for deep reading and critical thinking.

It comes down to helping students become literacy investigators. They are thinking about text critically, asking questions, and drawing conclusions based on their interactions. If investigation is the core of how we want students working with text, then each and every station must lead to investigation, and literacy activities within each station must be selected and created wisely.

What You Will Find in This Book

This book is divided into two parts. **Part One** provides you with all the basics and classroom-tested tips for establishing and maintaining stations in your classroom.

- **Chapter 1:** Follow the reader’s workshop model to help students move toward independence as they practice and apply literacy skills in six intermediate stations: Comprehension, Fluency, Listening and Speaking, Visual Literacy, Word Work, and Written Response.
- **Chapter 2:** Choose and differentiate activities that encourage the deepest level of investigation from your students.
- **Chapter 3:** Learn how to keep students moving from station to station as they take control of their own learning by using a Literacy Learning Plan that outlines their station rotations.
- **Chapter 4:** Start your stations and manage activities with a station rotation table.
- **Chapter 5:** Use insider tips and tricks for planning lessons, keeping activities fresh and students on track and organized.

Part Two has six chapters, each focusing on a suggested literacy station and offering five activities, complete with material lists, tips for setting up, step-by-step activity instructions, strategies for differentiation, and reproducibles. Full-color reproducibles of the literacy station activity titles, student directions, and other pages are available for download at www.maupinhouse.com/pdf/IntermediateLiteracyStations.zip.

Look for this icon on the pages throughout the book that are available in color.

