



Differentiation Strategies Explained: Anchoring Activities

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Anchoring Activities Defined:

An Anchoring Activity is a strategy that provides students with choices of ongoing activities to be completed during times when they are not actively engaged in classroom work.



Anchoring Activities are *not* 'busy work':

"Busy Work" used to define these kinds of activities. Be mindful of this as you create meaningful tasks that will add content knowledge, skills and products to enhance whole class lessons.

Remember – quality, not quantity.



Anchoring Activities can be:

- Used in any subject or across subjects
 - Whole class assignments
 - Small group or individual assignments
 - Tiered to meet the needs of different learners
- by readiness, interest or learning style



Anchoring Activities

The purpose of an **anchoring activity** is to:

- Provide meaningful work for students during 'ragged' or transitional times.
- Provide ongoing tasks that relate to a content area and current instruction.
- Give students opportunities to practice self-directed work.
- Give the teacher time to give extra attention to individuals or small groups.



Rules for Anchoring Activities

- 1. Create meaningful tasks.*
- 2. Teach students to work independently*
- 3. Include a variety of tasks.*
- 4. Students should be held accountable for task completion and the quality of their work.*



Rules for Anchoring Activities

1. Create meaningful tasks:

- Plan activities in conjunction with content and concepts currently being taught in the classroom.
- Use what you know about student readiness, interests and learning styles
- Worksheets are used sparingly
- Tasks enhance, extend or add depth to learning.



Rules for Anchoring Activities

Meaningful task structures for anchoring activities:

- Journals
- Centers* or Stations*
- Drop Everything And Read
- Finish up other work
- Portfolio management
- Ongoing research projects
- Computer work
- Tic-Tac-Toe Menus*
- Agendas and Choice Boards*

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Rules for Anchoring Activities

2. *Teach students to work independently.*
- Students can help create rules
 - Independent work rules can mirror class rules.
 - Attention-getting signal.
 - Create rules for non-academics.
 - Easily accessible materials.
 - Keep rules to a minimum
 - Clearly state and post rules in the room.
 - Review rules periodically and revise them as necessary



Anchoring Activities

Sample Student Rules

Suggested rules for independent work:

- Work quietly.
- Stay on task.
- Small groups = small voices.
- Be respectful of others if you leave your seat.



Anchoring Activities

Sample Student Rules

If you need help:

- Ask another student.
- Put your name on the help list.
- Keep working on a part you can do alone.

If you are finished:

- Recheck your work.
- Be willing to help others.
- Do a 'choice' or 'may do' activity



Rules for Anchoring Activities

3. Include a variety of tasks

- Include “must do” as well as “may do” tasks.

Use menu metaphor (Main Course, Side Dish, Dessert) to indicate.

- Create tasks for student interests, learning styles and readiness levels.
- Differentiate by tiering or leveling tasks.
- Use a variety of resources and materials to initiate tasks.



Adding variety to Anchoring Activities

Other ways to add variety to the tasks:

- Use Bloom's Taxonomy Verbs.
- Use Gardener's Multiple Intelligences.
- Use an Interest Analyzer, create tasks that consider these interests.
- Vary group size - alone, pairs or small groups.
- Take student suggestions for tasks.



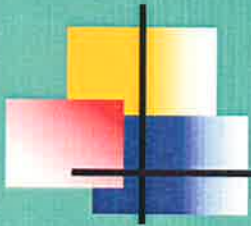
Rules for Anchoring Activities

4. Students should be held accountable for task completion and the quality of their work.

Suggestions for accountability:

- Regular or bonus points
- Checklist of activities to complete
- Percentage of final grade
- Portfolio check
- Teacher/student conference
- Rubric
- Peer review

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Anchoring Activities

See the I-GET-GTED Javits Teacher Module for training on these strategies that can be used as anchoring activities:

- Tic-Tac-Toe Menus
- Centers
- Stations
- Agendas and Choice Boards

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Anchoring Activities Discussion

- What areas in your teaching can benefit from the use of Anchoring Activities?
- How can using Anchoring Activities assist you in reaching the needs of all learners in your classroom?
- Discuss how you might use information about student readiness, interests and learning preferences to create Anchoring Activities.
- Discuss specific ways you might use this strategy in your classroom.

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