

# Anchoring Activities

*Anchoring activities help teachers deal with the differences in the pace of learning within the classroom. They are ongoing relevant learning tasks that students automatically move to when they have completed classroom assignments.*

We all know that students do not work at the same pace. When we plan a whole-class learning activity and estimate it will take the average student 30 minutes to complete it, inevitably some students will finish the assignment in 10 minutes, while others will need 45 minutes or an hour to do the same work. Because students do work and learn at different speeds, teachers need to plan for these differences. When students do not know what to do when they finish their work, they are likely to waste learning time and may become behavior problems. Having anchoring activities for your students to work on alleviates this problem.

An anchoring activity can be as simple as reading a book and doing a short book

review, or as complex as a long-term independent study. The most important thing about an anchoring activity is that it should be a learning activity that can be done independently without teacher assistance.

The key to success in using anchoring activities is planning. In general, teachers know which of their students work at a fast pace. Help those students develop a list of anchoring activities they would like to do, and help them gather the materials they will need in order to do them. Many of the strategies and techniques discussed in this book can be used as anchoring activities. Additional ideas are listed below. What others can you add?

## Ideas for Anchoring Activities

- Tic-Tac-Toe learning choices
- Resident Expert research
- Learning Centers or Stations
- Reading a book
- Logic puzzles
- Word puzzles (See *Think Hard* and *Think Harder* by Pam McAneny, Pieces of Learning, publisher)
- Crossword puzzles
- Geoboard activities
- Writing a short story or play
- Research about a famous person
- Current events
- Writing a poem
- Vocabulary research (etymologies)
- Glyphs (See *Researching Adventures* by Laura Magner, Pieces of Learning, publisher)
- Word play (See *Word Play* by R.E. Myers, Pieces of Learning, publisher)
- Other: