

TABLE 16.3

**Wise & Well-Crafted Responses to Station Teaching Objections**

Objections to station teaching	Wise and well-crafted responses to station teaching objections
<p>“We don’t have enough room for two teachers to conduct stations.”</p>	<p>Many teachers use station teaching inside the classroom but you can also engineer a station teaching model by tapping into alternative instructional spaces. Can one group go outside? To the library? To a nearby classroom?</p> <p>If you cannot leave the classroom, you can still engage in station teaching. Just be sure to teach guidelines about voice volume, transitions and behavior (e.g., stay with your group). Use table spaces, rugs, clusters of desks and so on to create stations. Keep in mind that not all stations need desks or even spaces. If one station requires students to snap photos of geometric shapes, these learners might be turned loose in the hallway (with one supervising teacher, of course) for that purpose.</p>
<p>“I don’t know how to divide the content for stations.”</p>	<p>There are many ways to divide content; teachers should feel free to use the method that best fits the material and the learning needs of students. Some teachers create stations based on the multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983). For instance, they may have a bodily-kinesthetic station, a verbal-linguistic station and a logical-mathematical station; this method ensures that all students (or at least most) get to learn in a way that is most appealing to them. Another method of dividing content is to plan around resources and materials (e.g., teacher-led center, iPad center, microscope exploration center). Still other teachers use station teaching as a way to differentiate the difficulty of content. These educators might feature an enrichment station, a review station and a choice station in their rotations.</p>
<p>“Voices get too loud and the room gets too chaotic when we use stations.”</p>	<p>Chaotic moments can occur during any sort of active learning experience, but this does not mean we need to limit these sorts of lessons. Instead, incorporate some chaos-management techniques into your station teaching model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play soft music and ask students to monitor their voices so that the music can be heard.</li> <li>• Create some silent stations (e.g., watching a video clip with headphones, annotating a document, blogging).</li> <li>• Use a “whisper” signal.</li> <li>• Physically position stations as far enough away from one another as possible.</li> <li>• Ask students for noise-reduction ideas.</li> </ul>
<p>“It is disruptive to move materials and seats. We lose valuable instructional time as students move from station to station.”</p>	<p>This is a reasonable objection, but we feel that the benefits of station teaching outweigh this drawback. To mitigate this challenge, take concrete steps to aid transitions and maximize time-on-task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with students on seamless transitions. Ask them for assistance. Shoot some video of a less-than-successful transition and have students provide feedback on how to make improvements.</li> <li>• Teach students how to transition. Use visuals such as number signs and arrows to indicate how and where they should move.</li> <li>• Present clear directions for each station so students can begin working the minute they arrive at a new work space.</li> </ul>
<p>“It is overwhelming to assess all of the products that students create during a station teaching lesson.”</p>	<p>This is a common concern. Many teachers believe that every station needs to be connected to the development of a product. You can create stations that require the development of or contribution to a product, but no station needs to be tied to an assessable item. Keep in mind that a high-quality station teaching lesson does not require students to keep busy. It does, however, require that they are immersed in meaningful work and learning key concepts. For example, a station teaching lesson that requires students to watch and discuss a Kahn Academy (<a href="http://www.khanacademy.org">www.khanacademy.org</a>) video at one station, engage in a probability dice game at another station and review a lesson on probability with a teacher at a third station is varied and engaging; gives students opportunities to address key skills; and does not necessarily result in the creation of a single product.</p>