

APPLYING THE STATION TEACHING METHOD IN TEACHING HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY FOR 4TH GRADE

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Station teaching is a flexible and interactive teaching method that emphasizes student activeness and cooperation. This article presents the process of applying station teaching in the subjects of History and Geography in the 4th grade, emphasizing this method's principles, implementation conditions, and benefits for students. Experimental results show that this method contributes to improving learning efficiency and promoting student activeness.

Keywords: Primary education; teaching methods; station teaching; active learning.

1. Introduction

Station teaching plays a vital role in promoting innovation in teaching methods, focusing on the capacity and qualities of developing learners following the orientation of the 2018 General Education Program. This method creates opportunities for students to actively participate in the learning process through experiential activities at learning stations, helping to promote positivity, creativity, and teamwork. At the same time, station teaching encourages multi-dimensional interaction between teachers and students, as well as among students, contributing to building a flexible and friendly learning environment. In the context of the 2018 General Education Program focusing on integration and linking knowledge with practice (MOET, 2018), the station teaching method helps ensure diversity and effectiveness in organizing teaching and learning activities, meeting the learning needs of each student.

History and Geography are often considered boring and mechanical, making it challenging for teachers to design lively and engaging lessons, especially for primary school students who have not yet formed the habit of abstract thinking. Therefore, developing and innovating teaching methods that stimulate curiosity and create conditions for students to access knowledge intuitively and vividly is necessary. Station teaching brings many important benefits for teaching History and Geography

in 4th grade, improving learning efficiency and developing students' abilities. This method helps students approach knowledge proactively through practical activities and exploration at each learning station. Students memorize knowledge, understand it deeply, and learn how to apply it in practice, especially in lessons related to historical events, geographical features, and connections to life. For teachers, applying station-based teaching helps diversify the form of classroom organization and easily personalize teaching activities to suit the capacity and needs of each student, thereby improving teaching quality and meeting the comprehensive education goals according to the 2018 General Education Program. This article will propose content, process, and conditions for effectively applying station teaching in History and Geography 4 to promote students' active participation.

2. Research method

A qualitative and quantitative approach was used to ensure comprehensiveness and objectivity. Specifically, we study the application of the document analysis and synthesis method to systematize the theoretical basis from scientific articles, textbooks, and related documents. At the same time, we surveyed teachers teaching History and Geography in 4th grade to collect data on the current situation, difficulties, and effectiveness of this method. In addition, the study also conducts pedagogical experiments by organizing experimental teaching using the station teaching method, observing and evaluating the level of positivity of students in the learning process. The collected data will be processed by statistical methods to analyze and evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of this teaching method. On that basis, we will inherit and develop research to propose content, processes, and methods of applying station teaching in teaching History and Geography 4 to promote student activities and meet the innovation requirements of the 2018 General Education Program.

3. Research results

3.1. Some issues on station teaching

3.1.1. Concept and characteristics of station teaching

Station teaching is a teaching and learning method in which students are divided into small groups and take turns participating in learning activities at “stations” arranged in classroom or outdoor spaces. Each learning station is usually designed with a specific task linked to the lesson objectives and requires students to perform different activities, such as observation, discussion, problem-solving, or skill practice (Phan, 2021; Stolzer & Rigolosi, 2022). This method usually has the following main characteristics:

- *Task division:* Each station will undertake a different knowledge, skill, or activity, contributing to the lesson.

- *Time Rotation:* Groups of students will rotate through stations at set times, ensuring that all students participate in all activities.

- *Promote initiative:* Students are encouraged to manage their own time, coordinate in groups, and solve tasks at each station under the guidance of teachers.

Station-based learning optimizes the organization of learning activities, allowing students to experience multiple approaches to knowledge in a single lesson. At the same time, this method helps teachers control the classroom more effectively, especially when teaching complex or multidimensional content.

3.1.2. Principles of organizing station teaching

Station teaching needs to adhere to the following principles (H. C. Nguyen, 2004; Stolzer & Rigolosi, 2022):

First, the station teaching tasks must serve the achievement of the proposed teaching objectives, ensuring that the content at each station contributes to the overall knowledge and skills of the lesson.

Second, the station's content and learning tasks must be scientifically and logically suitable for students' thinking sequences and abilities.

Third, students must be encouraged to actively participate in activities at each station, manage their tasks and time, and cooperate with group members.

Fourth, the tasks at each station should be different so that students experience a variety of learning styles, from theory and practice to discussion and problem-solving.

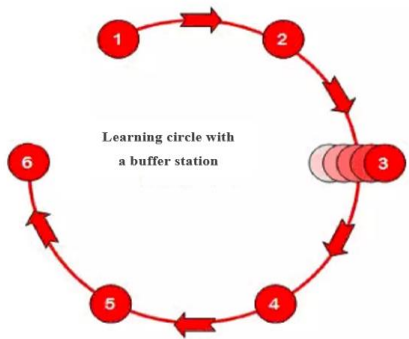
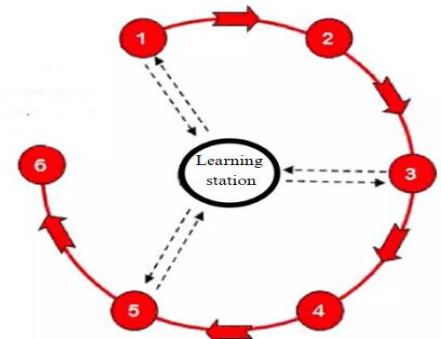
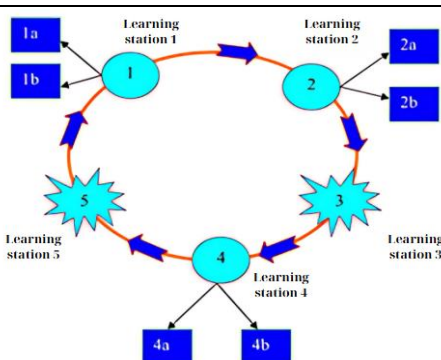
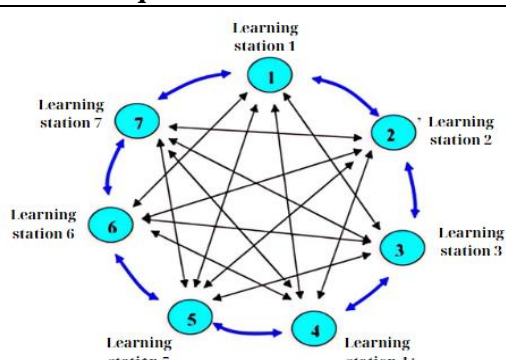
Fifth, all students must be able to participate in all activities at learning stations, with access to duplicate content and methods to ensure equity in learning.

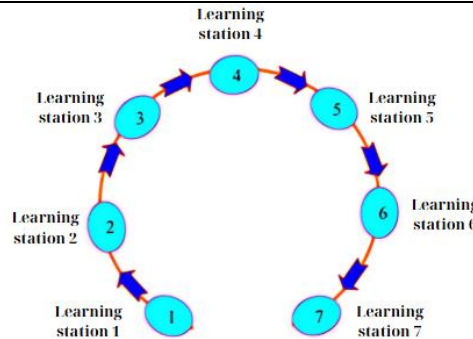
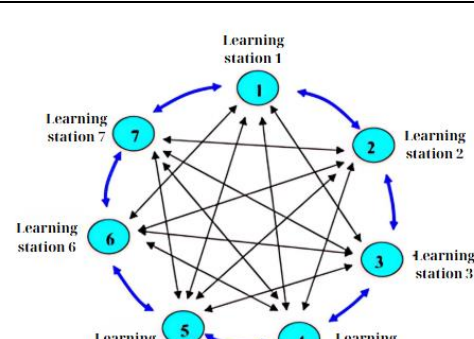
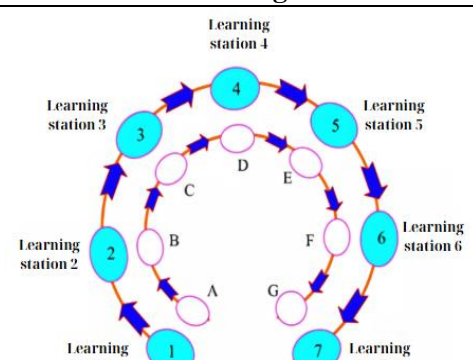
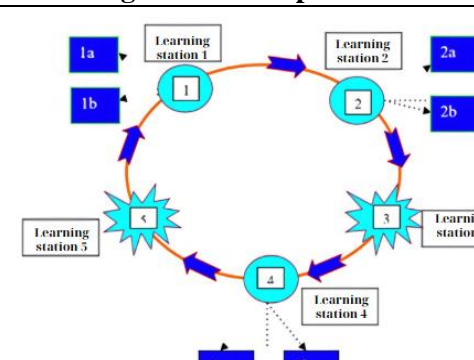
Sixth, teachers must observe, assist, and intervene when necessary, ensuring that students complete tasks at stations and do not encounter too much difficulty.

3.1.3. Types of station-based teaching

Table 1 describes general approaches to organizing station teaching.

Table 1: Types of station teaching

	Buffer station	Monitoring-service station
By location	 <p>Learning circle with a buffer station</p> <p>The buffer station supports the central station, is usually close to the main station, and can be done first.</p>	 <p>This station is in the center of the learning circle, providing information and answers for students to compare results.</p>
According to the level of task requirements	 <p>Self-service station</p>	 <p>Required station</p>

	This mandatory station provides the core knowledge and minimum skills of the lesson.	This station has extensive content, allowing students to choose according to the learning level and style of the individual or group, with the number of stations specified depending on the lesson.
By teaching medium	Stations using teaching aids These stations require media to support learning, such as pictures, photos, videos, maps, etc.	Stations not using teaching aids Only textbooks are used; these stations usually help prove the complete theory.
	Training - reinforcement station Students are required to use the knowledge they have learned to solve exercises.	New knowledge building station Students must focus on studying documents to acquire new knowledge actively.
By form of work	Individual work station Students perform tasks at the station independently, proactively, and without depending on others.	Team work station There are common stations. Students often work in small groups. However, there are also separate stations for testing and developing personal skills.
	Closed learning circle  This learning station sequence has a fixed order, starting and ending at a designated station.	Open learning circle  Students can choose the order and start/end at any station.
According to teaching form	Dual learning circle  There are two parallel learning circles: mandatory stations in the outer circle and supplementary stations in the inner circle.	Learning circle with optional stations  Materials and equipment are selected to develop learners' abilities to work individually or in groups and to choose topics freely.

3.2. Applying station-based teaching in History and Geography 4

3.2.1. Selecting teaching content by station

The History and Geography subjects of 4th grade have many advantages in applying the station teaching method due to the specific characteristics of the subject and the program content (Stolzer & Rigolosi, 2022; H. L. Nguyen, 2021). *Firstly*, the diverse content with topics such as historical events, national culture, and natural geographical features creates favorable conditions for designing learning stations with rich and diverse tasks. *Secondly*, this method stimulates students' thinking and experience through activities such as map observation, image analysis, role-playing, or group discussion, thereby improving their ability to think and learn actively. *Thirdly*, the high interactivity in the station teaching method helps students develop teamwork and communication skills. Finally, using supporting tools such as maps, pictures, authentic documents, or illustrative videos suitable for the subject's characteristics improves the intuitiveness and effectiveness of knowledge acquisition. These factors show the great potential of the station teaching method when applied to History and Geography subjects in 4th grade.

The selection of lesson content and topics should have one of the following characteristics:

+ *Practical content*: Content relevant to real life or highly applicable will create interest and help students easily participate in activities at the learning station, such as learning about natural disasters, the local environment, or cultural heritage.

+ *Diversity of knowledge*: Lessons with different aspects (theoretical, practical, analytical) would be suitable for being divided into tasks at different stations. Lessons can be divided into tasks or activities appropriate to each station, for example, learning about historical figures, analyzing maps, and comparing geographical features between regions.

+ *Content suitable for experiential activities*: Content can be combined with practical, experiential activities, such as mind mapping, map reading practice, or reenacting historical events, making it ideal for station teaching.

Table 2 presents some suggested History and Geography 4 lessons that can be applied to the station approach (H. L. Nguyen, 2021).

Table 2: Suggested types of lessons that can be applied to the stations approach

Content flow	Topic	Suggested stations
Northern midlands and mountains	Nature	Closed stations/Stations for building new knowledge
	Population, production activities and some cultural features Hung Temple and Hung King's death anniversary	Open station/Station with teaching aids
Northern Delta	Population, production activities and some cultural features Red River and Red River civilization	Optional stations/Stations for building new knowledge
	Thang Long - Hanoi Temple of Literature	Dual stations

Content flow	Topic	Suggested stations
Central Coast	Population, production activities and some cultural features Hue ancient capital	Dual Stations/Stations with teaching aids
	Hoi An Ancient Town	
Central Highlands	Population, production activities and some cultural features	Closed stations
	Central Highlands Festival	Dual stations
Southern Vietnam	Population, production activities and some cultural features	Closed stations/Stations for building new knowledge
	Ho Chi Minh City Cu Chi Tunnels	Open station/Station with teaching aids

3.2.2. Proposing the process of applying station teaching method in History and Geography subject for 4th grade

The implementation of station teaching in History and Geography subjects for 4th grade needs to follow a scientific process, ensuring effectiveness and suitability to the psychological characteristics of primary school students (Phan, 2021; Stolzer & Rigolosi, 2022). A clear and structured process is essential to effectively implement the station teaching method in the History and Geography curriculum for 4th grade. The process includes two main stages: preparation before class and classroom implementation.

Before the class, the teacher should begin by defining the teaching objectives. This involves analyzing the lesson's content to identify the learning requirements and select suitable knowledge components for organizing into stations. Formulated objectives ensure alignment with curriculum goals and guide the subsequent design of learning tasks.

Next, the teacher designs the learning stations. The number of stations typically ranges from three to five, depending on the lesson's content, number of students, and time allocation. For new knowledge formation lessons, suggested station activities might include: (1) exploring basic knowledge through documents, pictures, and maps; (2) analyzing or solving problems such as reading maps or processing historical/geographical data; and (3) engaging in discussion or creative work such as mind mapping or drawing diagrams. For review and practice lessons, each station might be structured around specific “missions” that help reinforce previously learned content.

An example is the lesson “Topic 6: Southern Vietnam - Lesson 29: Review” (from the Grade 4 History and Geography textbook series *Connecting Knowledge and Life*). In this lesson, five open stations are designed as follows:

- Station 1 - *Choose Wisely*: Select and connect appropriate information on the Central Coast, Central Highlands, and Southern regions.

- Station 2 - *Some Regional Characteristics*: Search for information and complete a table on population traits, economic activities, and cultural features of the three regions.

- Station 3 - *Festivals*: Use illustrations to draw a mind map of typical festivals in each region.

- Station 4 - *Virtual Reality Tour*: Explore a heritage site (Hoi An Ancient Town, Hue Imperial City, or Cu Chi Tunnels) in virtual reality and record personal impressions on a worksheet.

- Station 5 - *Tour Plan*: Collaborate with peers to plan a visit to one of the historical or scenic sites studied.

In addition, optional waiting stations can be included for groups that complete tasks early:

- Waiting Station 1 - *Game: My Favorite Colors*: Identify provinces/cities by region and color them consistently using a mystery box of names and colors.

- Waiting Station 2 - *Game: Who Were Millionaires?*: Answer a set of ten multiple-choice questions to accumulate points.

Following station design, the teacher prepares the necessary materials and facilities. These may include study sheets, maps, illustrations, videos, and digital tools. The classroom should be arranged to allow flexible movement and marked areas for each station. Sufficient space and resources are essential for smooth rotation and practical group work.

Students should then be grouped strategically, consisting of 4-6 students, to ensure diverse skill sets and promote cooperation. In the example lesson, students are divided into five groups of six.

The teacher begins with a warm-up activity and an introduction to the station model during classroom implementation. For example, the teacher may organize a game like "Transmitting Electricity," in which students respond to questions by identifying which region a province belongs to. This activity both engages students and recalls prior knowledge. The teacher then outlines how station-based learning will proceed, assigns roles within each group (e.g., group leader, secretary), and explains the norms to follow, such as completing one station before moving on, going to a waiting station if no new station is available, limiting each station to 5-7 minutes, raising hands for assistance when needed, maintaining order and hygiene, and promoting active participation.

As students rotate through stations, they complete tasks collaboratively, record responses on worksheets, and prepare to share results. The teacher provides support when requested, observes group dynamics, and encourages critical thinking through guiding questions.

Once station work is complete, groups present their results. This may be a gallery walk, where each group displays their worksheet on a designated board and visits other groups' displays to comment and ask questions. Each group assigns a representative to stay on their board and explain their work. The teacher then summarizes key findings, offers feedback and corrections, and praises students' efforts and creative approaches.

Evaluation follows based on both individual and group performance. Individual assessments may draw on worksheets, task contributions, and participation. Group assessments are based on final products, teamwork, and presentation skills, reflecting the degree to which learning objectives have been met. Students also reflect on their experiences, sharing what they found difficult or enjoyable. Finally, the teacher reflects on the lesson's effectiveness by reviewing learning outcomes and student engagement, using this insight to refine future applications of the station teaching model.

3.2.3. *Proposing some conditions for organizing station teaching in History and Geography 4*

To effectively implement station teaching, the following conditions must be met:

- The classroom should be arranged to be large enough to be divided into learning areas or stations. These areas should be easily accessible and flexible enough to allow

students to move easily between stations. Proper space planning maximizes interaction and creates a comfortable learning environment.

- Station tasks should suit the student's level and ability while encouraging active participation, creativity, and critical thinking. Task content should be practical and encourage students to discover knowledge for themselves.

- Teachers need to calculate the appropriate time for students to complete the tasks at each station. The allocated time must be balanced enough for students to understand the problem and complete the exercise without creating time pressure or reducing learning efficiency.

- The tasks at the station should be designed to suit the level and ability of the students while encouraging active participation, creativity, and the development of critical thinking. The content of the tasks should be practical and encourage students to discover knowledge independently.

- Teachers need to be appropriately trained in the station method, including organizing, managing the classroom, and evaluating effectiveness. Students must be given specific instructions on participating in station activities, including reading instructions, performing tasks, and following station rules.

- Students must be trained in practical teamwork skills, such as dividing tasks, exchanging ideas, and resolving conflicts. These skills not only support the learning process at the station but also contribute to improving soft skills necessary in life.

- Teachers must develop a learning performance assessment system appropriate for each station, ensuring fairness and comprehensiveness. Assessment may include criteria such as task completion, active participation, and quality of learning products. In particular, teachers must be careful to avoid imposing overly rigid criteria to ensure flexibility in assessment.

By complying with the above conditions, station teaching can be successfully implemented, improving teaching quality and comprehensively developing students' qualities and abilities (Bui & Luong, 2019; H. C. Nguyen, 2004).

4. Conclusion

The study confirms that station teaching is an effective teaching method in teaching History and Geography for 4th grade, contributing to overcoming the academic and passive nature of the subject while creating conditions for personalizing learning according to the learner's ability. The research results have proposed specific scientific teaching contents, processes, and conditions suitable for the subject's characteristics and the requirements of educational innovation according to the 2018 General Education Program.

The difference and creativity of the study lie in the design of flexible station teaching content, effectively combining individual learning and group cooperation, making the most of visual teaching aids. Compared to previous studies, this study emphasizes the feasibility of teaching practice, providing teachers with a comprehensive and coherent view of applying station teaching in History and Geography 4. At the same time, the study proposes solutions to help teachers overcome difficulties when implementing this method, especially in organizing, managing classes, and optimizing learning resources.

Station teaching still has challenges in preparing materials, managing time, and organizing activities. However, with reasonable adjustments, the station teaching method will become a practical approach, improving the quality of teaching History and Geography in 4th grade, stimulating interest, and comprehensively developing students' abilities.

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TÓM TẮT

VẬN DỤNG DẠY HỌC THEO TRẠM TRONG DẠY HỌC MÔN LỊCH SỬ VÀ ĐỊA LÝ LỚP 4

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Ngày nhận bài 16/01/2025, ngày nhận đăng 19/3/2025

Dạy học theo trạm (*station teaching*) là một phương pháp tổ chức dạy học linh hoạt và tương tác, nhấn mạnh tính tích cực, hợp tác của học sinh. Bài báo này trình bày quy trình vận dụng dạy học theo trạm trong môn Lịch sử và Địa lý lớp 4, nhấn mạnh các nguyên tắc, điều kiện thực hiện, và lợi ích mang lại cho học sinh. Kết quả thực nghiệm cho thấy phương pháp này góp phần nâng cao hiệu quả học tập và phát huy tính tích cực hoạt động của học sinh.

Từ khóa: Giáo dục tiểu học; phương pháp dạy học; dạy học theo trạm; học tập tích cực.