



B.7.-Setting Up your classroom



Room Arrangement Basics

1. Provide students with **adequate space** around their desks. If students are seated so that they can touch each other easily without getting up, stealing and hitting problems could escalate.
2. Keep all items not in immediate use **in cabinets or closets**. Lock the cabinets or closets if possible. The more items available for an angry child to throw, the more rewarding and potentially harmful the tantrum becomes.
3. Keep scissors, knives, and other potential weapons **out of students' reach**.
4. **Closely supervise art and cooking activities**. Make it clear that these activities will stop if rules are not followed.
5. If necessary, **arrange furniture** to provide students with visual barriers during independent work times.
6. Make areas of the room **activity specific**. For example, desks are for work; the rug is for play; the large table is for group discussion; and the time-out corner is for cooling off and thinking. This helps the students develop constructive classroom behaviour habits and reduces confusion over what behaviour is expected at a given place and time.
7. Check activity-specific areas for **appropriate space, lighting, storage, and furniture** needs.
8. **Remove** everything from the room that is not absolutely necessary.
9. Make **furniture and materials accessible** to students in order to increase productivity and decrease anger and frustration.
10. Actively enforce the rule that **people are not for hurting**.



Setting Up Your Classroom

Classroom setup can dramatically affect students' attitudes toward and habits of learning. Students need an environment that is organized, stimulating, and comfortable in order to learn effectively. Creating such an environment entails arranging a practical physical layout, supplying diverse materials and supplies, and encouraging students to have a sense of belonging and ownership.



Tips for Getting Started

- Ask students where they think the different learning centres should go.
 - Let students help to define what behaviour is appropriate for each learning centre.
 - Help students learn how to behave appropriately by role=playing and practicing with them.
- Post procedures for learning centres where students can refer to them.



Arranging the Learning Centres

Take the physical features of your classroom into account when planning. As the year progresses, you can add different kinds of learning centres to fit your class's evolving needs.

- Keep computers facing away from windows to keep glare from sunlight off the screens.
- Use bookshelves to isolate different areas.
- Provide comfortable seating.
- Save space by using walls for posters, display shelves, books, and supplies.
- Build a loft to save space while creating a private spot for independent reading.
- Separate learning centres of high activity, such as the cross-curricular centre, from areas like the Reading/Language Arts Centre, where students need quiet.
- Set aside an area to meet with small groups. Allow enough seating for about eight students.

Arranging the Whole-Group Area

- Make sure that all students will have an unrestricted view of the chalkboard.
- Consider using a rug to mark off the area if you have a primary-grade classroom.
- Consider what whole -- group activities will take place to determine how to arrange students desks. Keep in mind that arranging desks in a circle promotes discussions and small clusters of desks can double as small-group meeting areas.
- Your desk should be out of the way, but in an area where you can view the entire classroom. Set aside an off-limits zone for your records and supplies.

Learning Areas

Whole-Group Area

For whole=class lessons -- this includes informal discussion, direct instruction, and student presentations. This is a good place for an Author's Chair from which students can read their writing to the class.



Small-Group Area

Here you can give small-group instruction or allow groups of students to gather for peer-led discussions.



Reading Area

This is a place for students to read independently or quietly with a partner. It should provide comfortable seating, a variety of books, and a quiet, secluded atmosphere.



Writing Centre

Here students write independently and collaboratively. The area should contain comfortable space for writing and a variety of supplies.

Cross-Curricular Centre

This is an active centre where students explore relationships across different curricula, including literature, science, social studies, art, and math.



Computer Station

This area is for computer use in writing, math, reading, keyboard practice, research, telecommunications, and creative games.



Creative Arts Centre

This area is where students can get involved in visual art and dramatic play. It should have a variety of art supplies, costumes, and props.

Communication Area/Post Office

This area has mail slots for students and teacher to exchange written messages and suggestions.

Listening Station

Here students listen to tapes of books, stories, songs, and poems.