Organizing Your Classroom

"Miss Marpole, I need to talk to you about your seating arrangement."

Arranging the Classroom

Classroom Management Plan
- Describes how you will set up your classroom and teaching so that students participate in a learning community that supports student learning and well-being.
- Includes a map of your proposed classroom setting that indicates the location of the teacher’s desk, student stations, chalkboards, learning centers, small group instructional areas, bulletin boards and display areas.

Seating Assignments
- “The effective teacher assigns students to their seats on the first day of school.” Wong, page 119.
- Journal Response #3: Present a case, giving at least three reasons, for assigning seats or allowing students to sit where they choose.

Assigning Seats
- Video: Part 2: The First Days of School by Harry Wong – 12:40-19:00
- Reasons for a Seating Chart
  - Facilitates roll taking
  - Aids name memorization
  - Separates potential problem students
  - Wong, page 119

Classroom Environment
- Take a few minutes to carefully read The Code of Ethics and the Principles of Professional Conduct of the Education Profession in Florida.
- How does the Code of Ethics relate to the learning environment?

Physical Classroom Arrangements - 1897 to Present
- From 1929 through 1960, photographs and feature stories from The Nation’s Schools provide us with a glimpse of the “modern” classroom.
- These classrooms do not necessarily reflect what all classrooms across the nation looked like but merely what someone thought they should look like.
- The magazine sought innovative schools to feature in its magazine so what you are seeing is the best representative sample at that time.

http://ematusov.soe.udel.edu/classrooms/usa.htm
Pictures taken from *Public Schools of Philadelphia* by John Trevor Custis. Philadelphia: Burk & McFetridge Co. (1897)

Coulter Street Secondary School, Germantown
Blackboard Exercises

Francis M. Drexel School

Kindergarten Department
James Forten Elementary

1929
The New Holbrook - Hamtramck, Michigan

Fourth year class, early 1930's
1936 - Jamestown, New York

Primary group of children explore chickens and eggs, 1936

First year, Late 1930's

Bailey Elementary School, Hillsdale, Michigan

1952
Rosslyn Heights Elementary School

1940

1962
Cicero Elementary School Cicero, Illinois
Positive Expectations

- Classroom climate/arrangement communicates positive relationships.
- High expectations lead to high performance.
- An effective classroom allows the students to work cooperatively with their peers.
- Desks are arranged in pairs, or small groups, that are designed to reduce distractions and provide an optimal learning environment.
- The classroom is decorated with educational posters as well as motivational phrases that do not distract from the learning environment.
Environments That Promote Learning

Keep in mind that:
- The classroom layout needs to work for both the teacher and the learner.
- Overcrowded centers can result in behavior issues.
- Pre-planning on the part of the teacher can alleviate overcrowded centers.

Class Set-Up tool
- http://teacher.scholastic.com/tools/class_setup/

Classroom Architect
- http://floorplan.altec.org/

Have a Room Arrangement that Facilitates Effective Classroom Management

5 Keys:
- Arrangement
- Congestion
- Teacher View and Access
- Material Access
- Student View and Access

KEY 1: Arrangement
Use a room arrangement consistent with your instructional goals and activities.

- You will need to think about the main types of instructional activities that will be used in your classes and then organize the seating, materials, and equipment compatible.
- Teacher-led presentations, demonstrations, or recitations will require students to be seated so they can see the instructional area.
- In contrast, small-group work will require very different room arrangements.

KEY 2: No Congestion
Keep traffic areas free of congestion

- High traffic areas include the space around doorways, the pencil sharpener and trash cans, group work areas, certain bookshelves and supply areas, the teacher’s desk and student desks.
- High traffic areas should be kept away from each other, have plenty of space and be easily accessible.

KEY 2: No Congestion
Keep traffic areas free of congestion

- Keep pathway clear of cords, boxes, etc.
- Maintain easy access to pencil sharpener, trash can, doorways, bookshelves, supply areas, teacher’s desk, computers
- Easy provision of student supplies (include pencil bag w/highlighter, pen, pencil, etc in notebook as part of points)
- What and how will you provide? (set of boxes w/glue, markers, tape, ruler, crayons, post-its)
KEY 3: Teacher Access

Clear lines of sight must be maintained

- Be sure students are easily seen by the teacher.
  - Control all parts your room by desk in one spot, lectern in another.
- Make sure all students are easily accessible by the teacher.
  - Don’t avoid students because you can’t get to them.
- Be conscious of the placement of bookcases, file cabinets and other pieces of furniture that can block your line of vision.

KEY 4: Material Access

Keep frequently used teaching materials and student supplies readily accessible.

- Determine what students will retrieve versus what you will supply:
  - Class texts, notebooks, returned homework, art supplies, lab materials
  - Have space for students to store their notebooks.
  - Assign responsibilities to reduce congestion and limit who has access.
  - Post daily activities so students will know what is needed when they enter the classroom.

KEY 5: Student Access

Be certain students can easily see instructional presentations

- Determine regular room arrangement by
  - your most common instructional format,
  - how often you use chalk/whiteboards, overhead/LCD projector, TV/VCR.
- The seating arrangement should allow all students to see without moving their chairs, turning their desks around or craning their necks.

Classroom Arrangements

- Activity
  - Examine the different classroom arrangements.
  - Identify positive aspects of these arrangements.
  - Identify potential problems with these arrangements.

Environments that Promote Learning

- Remember: There is no one way to arrange a classroom.
- Room arrangement will differ according to the ages and previous experiences of the students, the background knowledge of the teachers, and their willingness to experiment with new ideas.
- The goal is to create an environment for students that will nurture their explorations, language, and ideas.
- In planning your room environment, you should act on what you know about children and their development.

Resources

- Physical Arrangements of Historically and Ethnically Diverse Classrooms
  - http://ematusov.soe.udel.edu/classrooms/
- Seating Arrangements
  - http://www.uwsp.edu/Education/pshaw/Seating%20Arrangements.htm
- Sample classroom floor plans
- Twelve rules for arranging your classroom
  - http://ematusov.soe.udel.edu/classrooms/friends_select_school.htm