

Ruple: Teaching Health Careers Education

Strategies for Classroom Arrangement

How your classroom is arranged will have an effect on both your ability to teach and the student's ability to learn. We want students to be comfortable in the classroom setting. The following are some ideas on arranging your classroom.

1. **Arrange the space based on the instructional objectives.** When working in small-group work, have the students move their desks into pods of three or four. When having a full-class discussion, move the desks into a U shape so students can see and interact with one another.
2. **Don't feel compelled to change the classroom arrangement every day or for every lesson.** Students should feel some ownership of their classroom space. Give the students time to get used to a new arrangement before changing the setting.
3. **When giving a test, keep the usual class seating arrangement.** Some students make connections between where they were sitting when they learned something and where they are sitting when they have to remember what they learned.
4. **Try putting your desk in the back of the classroom.** This creates a student-centered atmosphere. You will have more space to move around and observe students.
5. **If you always are assigned to the same classroom or laboratory, try to minimize your "personal" effects in the room.**
6. **Make sure your classroom looks like a classroom, not the faculty lounge.** The way you arrange your classroom sends a message about authority, ownership, and expected methods of interaction. Arrange your classroom in a way that reflects your educational philosophy. Promote a classroom setting that allows your students to move around and interact in a way that meets your approval.
7. **Make the classroom environment work *with* you, not against you. Consider the following:**
 - Where will you position yourself in the classroom? Behind the podium or desk, among the students, off to the side?
 - Do you prefer students to sit in small groups or the traditional "chairs in a row"? Many times the arrangement will depend on what you are teaching and how much interaction among students you want to occur.
8. **Remember to abide with all safety and fire codes.** Never block doors or windows, and make sure that emergency evacuation notices and instructions are clearly displayed.

Adapted from PEAK Learning Systems (2004). Classroom arrangement. Retrieved March 25, 2009 from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/311>