



## 4 Big Changes for a Better Classroom

Although the classroom is where learning and teaching happens, this important space is often given far less attention and thought than many other spaces in the school. A well-laid-out classroom can make all the difference in how both student and teacher relate, and how education really comes alive, regardless of the type of curriculum. Here are 4 usable ideas for a better classroom, and thus better learning:



### 1. Improve the basic layout plan design

The basic area for a learner-centric classroom of 30 students is about 150 sq. metres (1500 sq. feet). Anything less is considered a compromise. The space accommodates individual chairs and desks, the teacher's table, boards and cabinets, all contained within four walls, windows and a door.

The position of the door is most important. Near the teacher's table at the head of the space, where access can be controlled, or at the back, minimising student distraction? The latter is most often better. The marked areas of instruction and interaction are also very important for controlling the flow of traffic and for reducing interruptions in the event of an ongoing class.

### 2. Reducing visual and auditory clutter

We all desire that students naturally concentrate when a class is in session. Visual and auditory declutter helps the mind focus on what's essential to the directed learning experience. Diffused, indirect or ambient light are better than direct overhead lighting since they reduce harsh shadows and relax the eye. Controlling the windows helps manage invasive sounds, distracting sights and extreme natural light.

Avoid bright wall colours, regardless of student age. Wool white or light brown pastels are best, as they make for a brighter space and promote focus. The right plants inside the space, or just outside the windows (lucky if you've got trees), are good for the eyes (and also gives the students a simple gardening activity).



### 3. Collective focus makes for a rounded individual

Classrooms typically have a single-desk approach for each student. While this individual space is necessary for work and focus, the benefits of learning through interaction with other classmates is important for many reasons, and there's only so much a student can truly learn while seated alone. Adopting a group worktable approach, where a group of students come together at one common table, helps students learn from each other and collaborate, leading to the development of new skills. The group worktable approach is even more imperative to develop social skills and promote inter-dependency when each student has a laptop or computer at their desks.



### 4. Promoting learner-centric activity

To make learning interesting and relevant, the best way is to increase participation from students in a truly interactive approach, where the teacher and even other students can be involved at the same time. This is made possible with a dedicated space for various tools for 'learning by doing', such as interactive projectors and printers.

Interactive projectors are demonstrative and engaging, and are good for both problem solving and conceptual learning. With a printer, students can develop projects on the spot, and use pin up boards around the classroom.

These changes are powerful, easily achievable and lead to visible results, creating classrooms that are evolved and the best place to learn.