

Classroom to learn II

By [TeacherPlus](#) | Feb 12, 2016

I am one of the few fortunate teachers who has only 25 students in a class. However, I find that even with this small number, the school follows the traditional classroom layout where students are sitting in neatly arranged rows. Are there no other strategic layouts for better interaction with the students?

The conventional or traditional classroom layout consists of having students sitting in five or six perfectly aligned rows, each with five or six chairs equidistant from one another. The primary reason for this seating arrangement is that it appears more tidy and more importantly, it occupies less space. Most schools do not have the luxury of a large classroom. The teacher needs enough space to get to the board and the students also need to have their own space between and within the rows. They also need to be able to see the board. However, in this kind of seating arrangement, each row feels that it is an island and automatically alienates itself from the other rows. There is less warmth and friendliness in this kind of seating arrangement because the students do not SEE each other. They are unable to imagine the ecstasy on the face of the student when she gets the answer right, the agony when she doesn't know the answer or even the embarrassment when caught doing something wrong. On account of this, most students are not able to relate to each other and there is also occasionally a strong sense of segregation between the various rows. Hence many students tend to chat amongst themselves when a fellow student is struggling to answer the teacher's question.



In the first few months of school, it would be delightful and ideal if the students were able to see each other so that they recognized one another and also learned to relate to one another. It would be good for the teacher to occasionally let them sit in a semi circle or in the shape of a horseshoe. This will facilitate not only interaction between student and teacher, but also among the students. If the school administration does not object, the class could be arranged in this layout, perhaps every Monday morning. Children would be able to study one another's body language and perhaps without any great effort make theirs also more positive, because they would be learning from one another. Is the smart one really smart or does he make himself look smart by smiling, nodding and looking confident? Is the 'dumb' one really dumb or is it because she stoops and looks so uninterested in what is happening in the classroom? Children 'study' all this discreetly and smartly. Why not be the facilitator in this kind of education also?

Don't groan that it will be too much work for you! You have a lot of helpers who would love to lend a hand, provided you ask the right way! Enlist the help of seven of your students every Monday morning. Have a list of students who will come ten minutes early that Monday morning and turn the class around without damaging property and without making too much noise. Children will love this responsibility. Involve every one of your students. You will notice that you will never have to remind them when it is their turn if you put up

the names on the notice board before the weekend. Parents will appreciate the responsibility you are giving their wards.

When all the children in a class are able to see one another, you will find that they are at their best behaviour. There are no longer any back benchers (who have the liberty to misbehave) and no front-benchers (who are considered the nerds and the teacher's pet!). Everyone feels equal, and you too are able to strengthen the feeling of oneness in them. Within the circle, get children to occupy different seats. Do not let them become comfortable in a particular position. They must learn to move around the semi-circle and yet feel comfortable. The more mobile the students are, the broader is their perspective. They will sit with others different from themselves and be able to tolerate and accept their perspective also! This itself is a good enough education!

With the kind of activity based syllabus that most schools are adopting, this kind of seating arrangement will make it possible for students to work together to attain their learning goals. Instead of just focusing on the syllabus, should we also not be moving towards the dynamics of the physical realm of the classroom?

Check the part I [here](#)

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Grade/Standard: Class 1-2

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