BEST PRACTICES RESEARCH

Classroom Seating

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Haghighi & Jusan (2012) found that most educators use three primary seating arrangements: cluster, horseshoe (semi-circle) and row. The authors examined the link between question asking and classroom seating. Semi-circles were found to be most effective. These arrangements allow for instructional sharing.
Seating Arrangements that Promote Positive Academic and Behavioural Outcomes: A Review of Empirical Research

Wannarka and Ruhl (2008) found that students seated in rows had more positive results in completing independent class assignments and improved classroom behaviors. However, different classroom seating arrangements should be considered depending on the class activity.

Individual assignments have better results when students were seated in rows. However, semi-circle or group seating is more conducive to group work, student questioning, or brainstorming type activities.
Effects of Classroom Seating Arrangements on Children’s Question-Asking

Marx, A., Fuhrer, U., & Hartig, T. (1999) found that classrooms that were arranged in a semicircle layout had a positive effect on student’s question-asking and could lead to more equal opportunities for all children in the class. Classrooms arranged in the traditional row-and-column format lead to action zones that only promoted questioning from certain areas of the room.
Completing Independent Work

Bicard et al (2012) found independent work was completed with less inappropriate behaviors when students are seated in teacher selected seats and in rows.
Sitting Closer to Disliked Students

Results: Improved peer relations and reduced problem behaviors between peers (van den Berg et al, 2012).
Schilling, D., Washington, K., Billingsley, F., & Deitz, J. (2003) found that children with ADHD showed an increase in academic performance and improved in seat behavior as compared to sitting in a chair to complete work. Teachers and other general education students also preferred the therapy ball to the classroom chair.
Seating for Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Guardino and Antia (2012) found a relationship between the physical environment and increase in engagement and decrease in disruptive behaviors.
Schilling & Schwartz (2004) found that considering seating arrangements allow educators to provide students with ASD an opportunity to modulate sensory input while maintaining the level of appropriate behavior required at school. 95% of children with ASD exhibited sensory modulation difficulties. To modulate their behaviors they engage in perseveration or stereotyped movements in an attempt to regulate their sensory system. Therapy balls were found to be most useful in helping students attend to the lesson.
Functional Seating for School-Age Children with Cerebral Palsy: An Evidence Based Tutorial

Costigan & Light (2011) found that little information is known about functional seating and participation for students with cerebral palsy. Students need to be safe but also need to be able to participate in lessons to the fullest extent possible. The better the seating arrangements for these students the better their educational outcomes. They found that there is no “gold standard” for seating arrangements. Depends on the child and the individual needs of the child.
Activity

You are mentoring a new teacher. What will you share about classroom seating best practices?

Write on the paper provided what you will share with the new teacher. Designate one person to share with the class.


