

## Design the Classroom Together

Rather than having everything determined before students arrive, have them help determine how the classroom will be arranged, and where their work will be displayed. Rather than leaving things completely open, provide several alternatives, and vote on them.

How will the desks be arranged? Circular, a U, in four desk tables, or in rows?

What other space is needed in the room? Is there open space for a class meeting? Is there a quiet place for working alone or reading? Is there space for group work? Is there space to move? Is there a mail system for handing in a returning work, or communicating in writing with one another?

How will wall space and board space be used? What is necessary? What is desirable? Where will the daily schedule go, and the list of assigned tasks for each day or week? How will student work be displayed, and what criteria will be used for putting something on the board? Where will the class constitution go?

You might use graph paper to lay out a plan. You can do this as a whole group, in small groups, or individuals depending on the age and skills of the class. Each box on the paper represents a foot square. Measure the room and outline the shape of the classroom. Measure the furniture, and cut out measured shapes to represent each desk/chair. Make shapes to represent the other furniture. Arrange and rearrange until all the necessary spaces are possible. If the space is tight, some rules may need to be made to keep everyone safe and comfortable, such as no running inside the classroom, keep hands and feet to yourself, speak with a 12" voice, and so on.

Take a digital photo of your classroom and send it to [Sue@aeideas.com](mailto:Sue@aeideas.com). We'll post it for you.