

Dynamic Classrooms

What is a Dynamic Classroom?

Lots of terminology can be used to describe a dynamic classroom, including collaborative work spaces and 21st century classrooms. The main intention of this type of classroom set up is to provide a working environment for teachers and students that meets the physical and learning needs in a more fluid, fun and effective manner

Typically this would be an open space that is flexible and moveable. There is a range of different work stations including desks and chairs, different types of chairs, standing work stations, break out spaces where students can work independently, floor space for laying and couches and other alternate seating. There is also different work surfaces such as whiteboards on table surfaces, standing blackboards and whiteboards, interactive technology and traditional paper and pencil tools.

Benefits

Students have access to a variety of work stations rather than one allocated work surface (which is traditionally a desk and chair). Students have the freedom a lot of the time to choose where they work and this is based on personal preference and how their learning needs are better addressed.

This also allows for students to work together better in partnerships or in teams as the physical set up allows for more interaction

The physical benefit of having a variety of postures in which they work increases dynamic postures which promote blood flow through the body. This improves focus and attention in the child. The other benefit is that stimulation of the core muscles trigger proprioceptors – which are sensory receptors that help maintain attention and arousal levels. Hence by moving and changing postures the body is more consistently stimulated and hence allows it to be more “switched on” .

This also has links to better meeting the physical activity requirements for children as recommended by the Australia government <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-phys-act-guidelines>

This is of great benefit to children who have difficulty with maintaining attention and self regulation. For those who don't have difficulty with attention and focus, it can enhance their learning experience.

Evidence

- Immature sensory processing can impede classroom function and can be the root of behaviour and attention problems
- Best method is to make environments meet the need rather than the child meet the environment
- There is not one best style of furniture that addresses all children's needs or improves their learning outcomes, hence that is why a variety of options are required

Ivory, D, 2011, *The Impact of Dynamic Furniture on Classroom Performance, A Pilot Study*, University of Puget Sound, Washington



What is required

- Equipment
 - Standing work station
 - Sitting stations with various chairs including movement chairs
 - Laying spaces
 - Couches
 - Whiteboard and blackboards
 - Technology links – ipads / smart tv's
 - Break out / retreat spaces
- Clearing unnecessary equipment and resources out of room
- Movement and variety
- Student self direction



Costs

It can cost significant money to buy “off the shelf” furniture and create a classroom from a blank canvas. However if each classroom had a budget of **\$700- 1000** then a minimal amount of equipment could be sourced (such as hokki stools, height adjustable u shaped tables). Additional resources could be sourced from the community, such as old couches, bean bags or recycle other school equipment back into the classroom (ie science or art benches into the classroom)

Useful Links

<http://www.edutopia.org/practice/flexible-classrooms-providing-learning-environment-kids-need>

<http://classroom.4teachers.org/>