Enriched Classroom Environments & Flex Spaces

Enriched Classroom Environments
http://tinyurl.com/n6v852k
Brain-Compatible Classrooms

- Lighting
- Organization
- Colors and Patterns
- Wall Space
- Music
- Plants
- Materials
- Movement
- Choice
Several studies show students learn best in natural light.

Variety of light options is optimal:
- Brightly lit areas are energizing
- Darker areas with lamps are calming

Resource: Lighting Tips from Starbucks
Organization

Ditch the Clutter
If you haven’t used it in a year, get rid of it.

Uniformity
When possible, keep organization items such as bins and baskets uniform in style/color.

A Place for Everything and Everything in its Place
Students can learn where everything goes.

Resources:
Physical Clutter Negatively Affects your Ability to Focus
How Clutter Affects your Brain
Colors and Patterns

- One main color
- One (maybe two) accent colors
- Neutrals
- Natural materials
- Think “home-y”; not “classroom-y”
- No pattern overload
- Natural materials (wicker baskets, burlap ribbon, fabric, etc rather than plastic)
Sample Color Palettes

- Pumpkin
- Cider Spice
- Seasoned
- Hay Bale
- Vine Green
- Harvest Green
Wall Spaces

- Bulletin boards
  - Made of fabric
  - Textured or natural materials for borders (such as ribbon rather than paper)
  - All bulletin boards made of the same colors & materials. Not a hodgepodge.
- Purposeful! If it doesn’t serve a useful purpose, take it down.
  - Put something up when you need it; take it down when you don’t. Items can be accessible without being on the walls.
- Uncluttered method to show student work
- Visible thinking walls
Flexible Spaces

What are your students doing in your classroom? What spaces are needed to support those activities?

- Standing Table
- Table with regular chairs
- Floor Table
- Movement Stools (if possible)
- Variety of Tables & Spaces
  - Large Group
  - Small Group
  - Individual Spaces
- Choice
- Get rid of excess furniture
- Community Supplies
- Makerspace (all supplies available for students)

Resource: Spaces Designed for Active and Engaged Learning and Teaching
Bang For Your Buck

- Organization considerations
  - Student items (folders, notebooks, books, etc); community supplies
- Choose colors
- Fabric and ribbon for bulletin boards
  - Coordinating fabric for curtains or faux curtains if possible
- Lamps
- Plants
- Re-Use furniture for flexible spaces
- Tie it together with details: Spraypaint bins, cover magazine holders in contact paper, mason jars of pencils, picture frames, words, labels, hide clutter with fabric, etc.
$10 thrift store table and paint; stools decorated to coordinate

Re-purposed church pews and a school table to make a comfortable booth.

Chalkboard Paint
Photos

Open Space

Visible Thinking Walls & Tables
Photos

Seating Choices:
High, Low, Floor,
Standing, Stools,
Soft Surfaces,
Conversation Area