Designing an Inquiry Classroom

Who We Are
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Who We Are:
● Relationships
● Culture of Innovation
● Student and Staff Wellness
● Parents as Partners

What We Do:
● Inquiry-based Practice
● Technology Enhanced Learning
● Meaningful Curriculum Implementation
● Authentic Assessment
● Environmental and Outdoor Education

How We Do It:
● Collaboration
● Communication
● Research Focus
● Leadership
● Lifelong Learning

Why We Do It:
● Engagement in Learning
● Student Success

Today's Agenda

● Who We Are
● Our Inquiry Classrooms
● Inspiration
● Your classroom today
● Implementation & Student Data
● Inspire Your Own Redesign
● Challenges
● Reflection
An Inquiry Classroom

Current classrooms were too rigid
Our students had a variety of learning needs
Could the classroom environment better support inquiry learning while being more inclusive? And what would that look like?

Table Talk - Your Classroom Today

1. Consider your current classroom space, what kinds of things help and/or hinder how you use your space on a daily basis?
2. How do you want students to feel while using your classroom?
Collaborative Planning

“One of the first design principles that teachers should recognize as they design an optimal learning space is to start by talking to the students. They are the ones who will really define comfort and speak to the essential nature… comfort also creates more stamina for the current task at hand.”

- Redesigning Learning Spaces

Collaborative Planning

1. Teacher reflection - what currently works well in our space, and what can be improved to enhance teaching and learning?

2. Student reflection (buy in) - thinking about our current environment, what do you like about the space and what do you imagine in our space to make it even better?

What do you currently like about our classroom environments?

“I like how in Mrs. Price’s room, the tables and chairs allow us to face both white boards. I like the creative desk placement in Ms. G’s room.”

“Peers, space, organization, bean bags, activity’s, iPad.”

“That we have table groups so we can ask our neighbor if we have a questions.”

What helps your learning?

“Working in a quiet place.”

“Sounds, quiet music, coat hooks, neat and tidy.”

“The way we sit in groups and in chairs.”

What takes away from your learning?

“The chairs make lots of sound when I wiggle on them.”

“People who are having conversations.”
**Implementation**

1. Parent Notice & Work Bee
   - Cost effective & labour support

2. Furniture Introduction Phases
   - Clear guidelines for the space and how we care for it

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**Table Talk - Imagine YOUR Redesign**

1. Consider planning your redesign using the following questions:
   a. What would you keep the same? Why?
   b. What might you like to change? Why?
   c. How could you use what you already have?
   d. What would you add? Why?
Student Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Student Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel about the changes we made to our classroom this year?</td>
<td>- 80% of the students responded positively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did our classroom changes help your learning?</td>
<td>- 75.6% of the students responded that the changes had a positive impact</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In what way was your learning improved?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I was more comfortable (46.6%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- I could find a spot place (41.7%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The room was very (36.0%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- I could move and wiggle when I wanted to</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- I could share my desk space (37.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- I had more choice for work spaces (36.7%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- It helped me focus (39.9%)</td>
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<tr>
<th>What were highlights of the redesign?</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>&quot;I usually forget a lot and this allows me to move around.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;My favorite part is that everyone will get a turn to sit in the new furniture and that you don't have to keep worrying about, you can sit where you think is best for you.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;I like the regular desks and chairs, because they're the right height and enough space for me.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;The classroom changes, &quot;made me more focused, and more comfortable.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>What classroom changes specifically helped your learning?</th>
<th>Reported by the majority of students:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Ball chair (77.0%)</td>
<td>Ball chair (77.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Short desk height (51.0%)</td>
<td>Short desk height (51.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Turnable chair (57.0%)</td>
<td>Turnable chair (57.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New Desks (57.0%)</td>
<td>New Desks (57.0%)</td>
</tr>
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Challenges

- Maintaining teacher preferred student groupings, while honouring student seating preferences
- Caring for the furniture - wear and tear
- Social coaching around appropriate use
- Different response to the room layout with a new group of students
Table Talk - Overcoming Challenges

1. What is possible for your space?
2. What barriers might you face during a classroom redesign? How can you overcome them?

Reflection

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<tr>
<th>Student success</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student learning was enriched through allowing student choice, improving the physical environment, encouraging self-advocacy &amp; responsibility in personal learning decisions</td>
<td>Positively impacted teacher-student relationships through investing in an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning</td>
<td>Budget for repairs &amp; continual sustainability. Consider donations, and second-hand options</td>
<td>In order to make a redesign purposeful, it requires time for thoughtful planning and implementation</td>
</tr>
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Moving forward, questions to consider: How do we make this sustainable and effective each year?

References

Just as we would not expect doctors to be using the exact same techniques and medicines that were prevalent when you were a child, teachers’ methods are evolving and transforming via a powerful collection of expert knowledge about how the mind functions and how to design effective instruction (Wiggins, 2013)