What Are My Students Thinking?
Teaching and Learning in Flexible Classrooms
Objectives

1. Analyze how teaching and learning are shaped by classroom spaces

2. Discuss the underlying principles in the design and use of these spaces

3. Create a list of practical strategies for applying these principles
Learning Spaces Activity

1. What is your initial reaction?

2. What defines each space (furniture, tech, layout)?

3. What activities suit each space?

4. Who talks and makes decisions in each?

5. How could learning be assessed in each?
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6. What are the principles guiding this movement toward flexible spaces?
Principle 1: Student Centered

- Focus on student needs & abilities
- Student learning vs. teacher coverage
- Power, authority, and voice get shared
Principle 2: Active Learning

• Students are not passive recipients
• Learning requires active participation
• Experience/opinion are validated
• Interactivity → hypothesis testing
Flexible Spaces

• Class is *physically* student centered
• Actively engages students
• Sets expectations (in a lecture hall, we are programmed to be passive, etc.)

• **Flexible auditorium**
Visible Student Thinking

- Use student created work & ideas
- Synthesis requires active participation
- Formative evaluation facilitated
Flexible Use of Time

- Still use lecture as an ingredient, BUT
- Divide time among different activities (15 minute rule)

- Provide time for student centered activities
Using These Ideas

1. How can you exploit the space if everything’s nailed down?
2. If you’re in a tradition classroom—how can you make student thinking visible?
3. How can you deal with student resistance to new activities?
For More Information

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