

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION



Physical Setup

The physical setting and layout of a differentiated classroom should provide for as much flexibility as possible, given the constraints of classroom size, furnishings, and equipment and the number (and size) of students and teachers sharing the space. Many teachers prefer to set up their classrooms so that there are areas around the room devoted to a variety of small- and large-group purposes, although this is clearly more problematic for teachers who share their classrooms with other teachers or activities. Some teachers plan a variety of room setups for diverse purposes and ask students to move the furniture into the appropriate configuration for that day's activities. As long as students are taught how to move the furniture and equipment properly and safely, they can be a part of this process. Whatever the age of your students, it will be necessary for them to practice changing from one setup to another, as well as moving from space to space within the room.

Students can also contribute to designing the "look" of the classroom, which, along with other classroom routines, contributes to creating an inviting environment and developing a sense of community in the classroom. Letting students help you pick educational posters or quotations to decorate your classroom gives them an opportunity to have a say in what they look at every day and also gives you an opportunity to use the materials themselves as discussion topics.



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SECTION

PHYSICAL SETUP

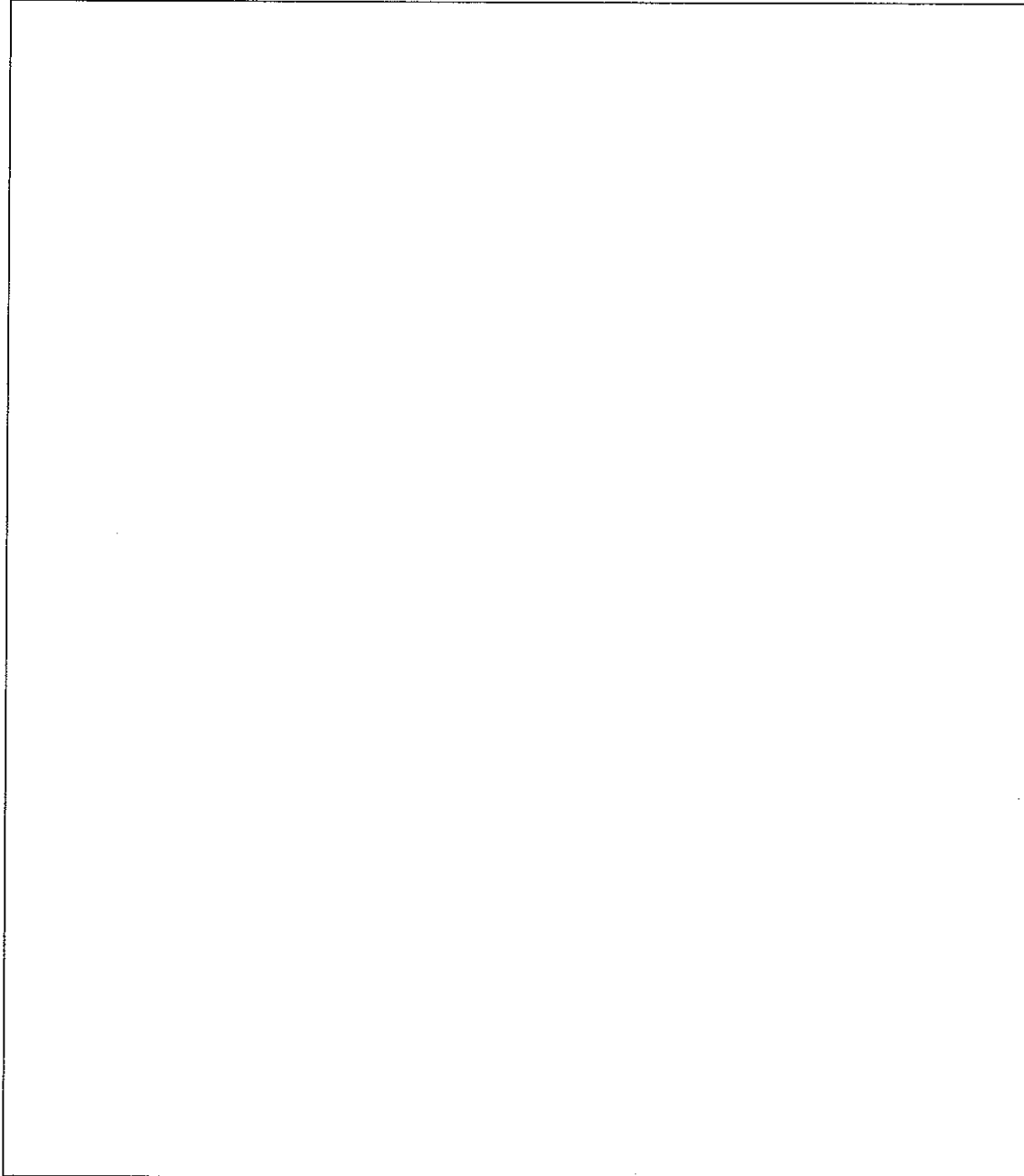
Tool: Planning for Flexible Classroom Space

This tool will help you plan room arrangements that will meet the needs of you and your students. You may also want to develop questions to ask your students to determine their preferences (within reason, of course) for work space and room setup arrangements, so they contribute to the physical setup and flexible use of the classroom.

Large-Group Layouts

- What kinds of activities are you likely to engage in that would best take place in a large-group setting (e.g., class discussions, lectures, direct instruction, modeling, presentations, guest speakers, debates)?
- For each type of large-group activity, what would the ideal setup look like?

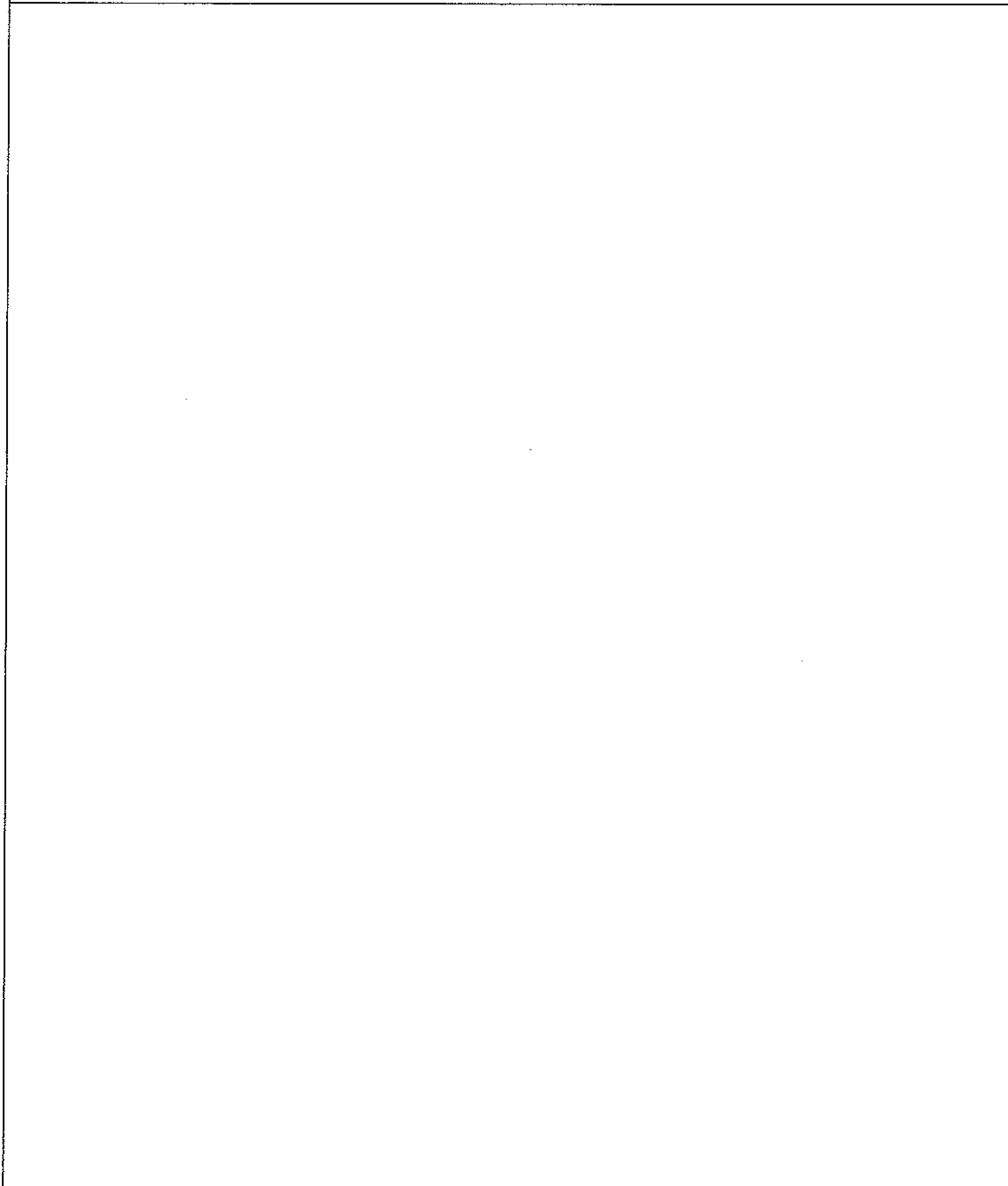
Use the space below to design one or more layouts for large-group activities that would work given the physical space available and the number of students you have to accommodate.



Individual-Work Layouts

- What would you like the classroom to look like when students are working individually (for seat work, homework, assessments, journal writing, etc.)?
- Consider the amount of space individuals will need for their work. Also consider privacy concerns.

Use the space below to design one or more layouts that would work given the physical space available and the number of students you have to accommodate.





Section: Physical Setup

Planning for Flexible Classroom Space

TOOL

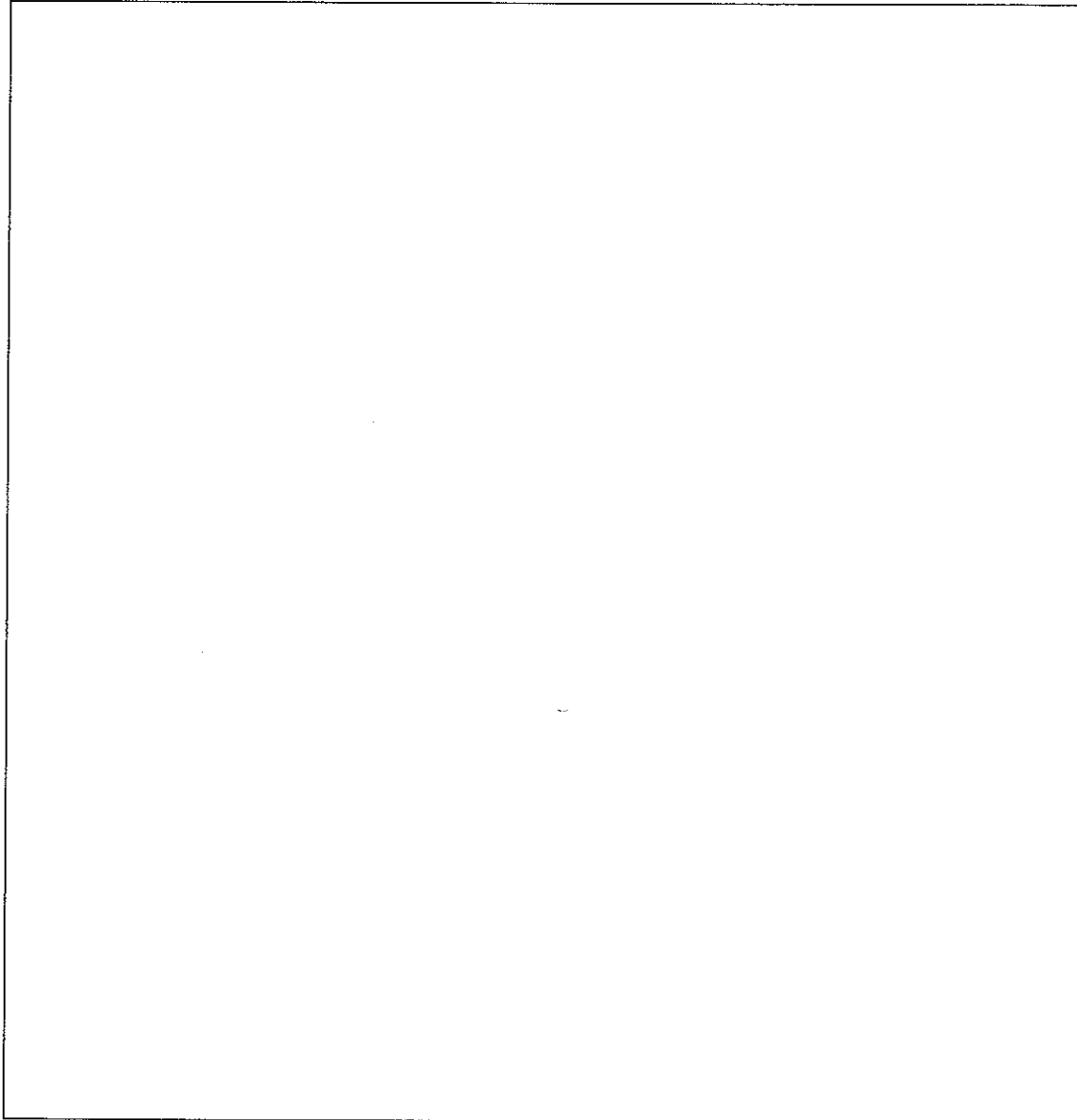
Equipment and Furniture

What I MUST have in the room: <i>(Student desks or tables, teacher desk, lab equipment, technology, classroom supplies, resources, etc.)</i>	What I would LIKE to have in the room: <i>(Furniture and equipment that would enhance the atmosphere or increase the comfort of those who inhabit this space.)</i>

Small-Group Layouts

- What kinds of activities are you likely to engage in that would best take place in a small-group setting (e.g., collaborative and cooperative groups, small group tasks or projects, discussions, inquiry-based activities, minilessons, coaching, literature circles, learning centers)?
- Consider the various sizes of groups that you are most likely to use (pairs, triads, quads).
- Don't forget that, at times, you may wish for students to have a choice as to whether they work in a group or on their own.

Use the space below to design one or more layouts for small-group activities that would work given the physical space available and the number of students you have to accommodate (table groups, clusters of desks, floor space, a combination of these, etc.).



Management Hints

- How will you help students learn to help you change from one configuration to another as efficiently as possible?
- Consider posting diagrams or maps showing how to move from one setup to another. (Students can help with this!)
- Is there a clear path for you to get to each student no matter which configuration is in use? This is especially important when students are working in small groups so that you can circulate easily.
- Is there a clear path for students to access the materials they will need?
- Be sure that you consider the needs of students who prefer a relatively quiet space to work, who need protection from distraction, or who need the opportunity to move around the room easily.
- If other teachers share the space, how will you ensure that you and your students are good "roommates"?

Use the space below to brainstorm directions you might give students, design rehearsals for the "stage" or "set" changes, and consider ways to assign tasks to individuals and groups.