



ENTRE**COMPEDU**

**Module 2:**

**Go Deeper 2.3 Making the most of  
learning spaces and other  
resources**



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## Making the most of learning spaces and other resources

Learning spaces come in all shapes and sizes, from flexible, open-plan environments to rectangular rooms built for 30 students and virtual spaces. For example, the use of virtual studios offers scope to develop students' creativity at huge scale. Here students discuss online half-formed ideas by sharing digital sketches, models, and artefacts. Linear ways of thinking are challenged as students embrace uncertainty. Tutors provide rapid feedback and ideas are captured, reflected upon, and archived. Virtual communities can comprise thousands of students, who might otherwise find it impossible to meet face-to-face. The Open University runs OpenDesignStudio which allows for social comparison with hundreds of other students. In one activity, students are asked to design a T-shirt, and are guided by seeing the work of their peers.

Many schools make use of their grounds as integral learning spaces. While walking around the school grounds, a simple question such as 'I wonder how that works?' can spark creativity, curiosity, and investigation. Simple observations of nature have inspired all sorts of inventions – from the burrowing earthworm (mining drill) to the seagull (which inspired the spitfire during the Second World War).

The school foyer is an ideal space within which to demonstrate to visits the process of how students have generated ideas with a dedicated working wall to which parents and the wider community can contribute. One Japanese kindergarten teacher has her young children create their own 'frames' in which their learning journey is recorded.<sup>1</sup> And, of course, the local community offers many potential spaces for students to generate ideas - whether in museums,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by McIntosh, E. (2015) How to come up with great ideas and actually make them happen, NoTosh Publishing, p.75



galleries, parks, woodlands (e.g. "Forest schools"), retail outlets or factories. In short, entrepreneurial learning needs to take students beyond the school gates.

## Seating arrangements

For many years, there have been debates over what are the best seating arrangements to facilitate learning. Given that collaboration is central to entrepreneurial learning, it follows that space should be designated for regular group work. Research on seating arrangements in fourth grade German classrooms shows that a semi-circle better facilitates questioning than traditional rows and columns. Although even in the latter, students asked more questions when seats were arranged in 'T' and triangle shapes.<sup>2</sup> A study of elementary classroom arrangements in the Netherlands found that Dutch teachers said that they started the year with rows to get students to concentrate and try to work with groups later in the year.<sup>3</sup>

Seating arrangements should be used to support the nature of the learning and type of behaviour. If, for example, educators want students to work independently and concentrate on a specific task then it makes sense to use rows. On the other hand, if interaction in a project is important to its success then desks should be re-arranged into clustered desks or a semi-circle. Clearly flexibility is the key. It has been said that the traditional classroom should be transformed into a 'clash room' when it comes to practical entrepreneurial activities. Given the importance of

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<sup>2</sup> Marx, A., Fuhrer, U., & Hartig, T. (1999). 'Effects of classroom seating arrangements on children's question-asking'. *Learning Environments Research*, 2(3), 249-263.

<sup>3</sup> Gremmen, M. C., van den Berg, Y. H., Segers, E., & Cillessen, A. H. (2016). 'Considerations for classroom seating arrangements and the role of teacher characteristics and beliefs'. *Social Psychology of Education*, 19(4), 749-774.



social skills, discussion, and interaction to entrepreneurial learning, then educators should reflect carefully on how they arrange seating.

## Activity Seating

Click [here](#) to download seating templates or see the diagram below. Discuss these with your students - which ones do they prefer and why?

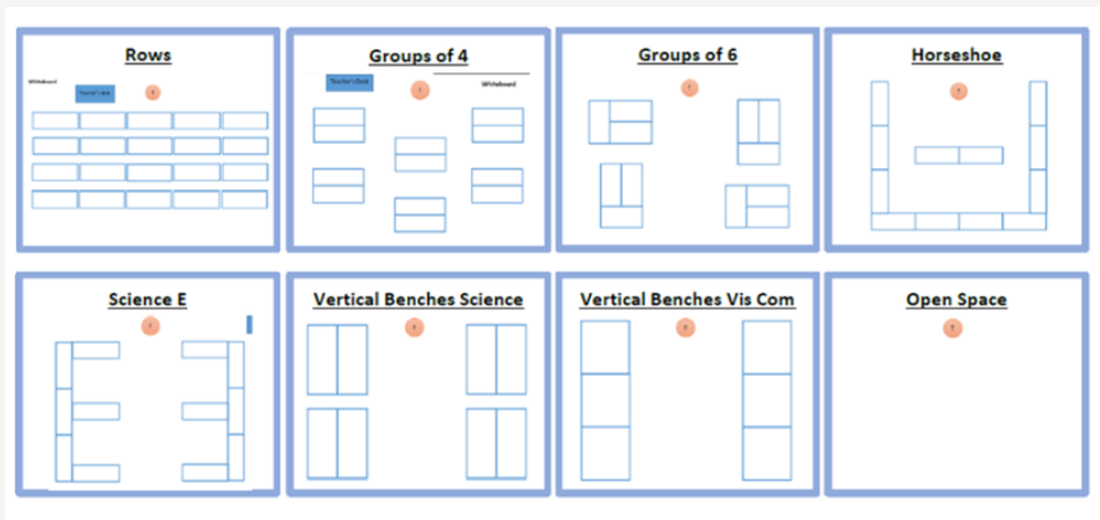


Fig 2.3.1 Seating templates Source: <https://teachertrackertool.weebly.com/classroom-layouts.html>

