

Informal Preliminary Report, Submitted on 24 Feb, Regarding Aspects of Active and Collaborative Teaching-and-Learning in the Multi-Purpose Room on Level 5 of the Library: With Special Attention to the Positions of the Students' Chairs

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Class: *Short Story Classics* (Jan-April 2012)



Row 1 has 10 chairs. Row 2 has 12 chairs. Row 3 has 15 chairs.  
Row 4 has 3 chairs. The total number of chairs is 40. (There are 46 Students in the class, so sometimes some wooden chairs are also used.)



This seating arrangement brings the students as close as possible to the Instructor and to the whiteboard. People do not have to speak too loudly -- the tone can be maximally conversational.



The screen is eye-level to, and beside, the Instructor



The Instructor can gesture towards the screen. The screen is not distant from or towering above the Instructor and Students. This proximity of the screen yields feelings of warmth, manageability, and relatedness. Things are on a human scale.



The Instructor is sitting in front of, and beside, the screen. He can swivel to look at the screen or at the Students. He can review the material on the screen, with the Students, in a relaxed manner.



The Students are divided into 2 groups, facing each other.  
A sort of debate is occurring between the members of the 2 groups.



The Students in groups of 2.



The Students in groups of 4.

Notes:

When conducting a class, I tend to speak for a maximum of ten minutes at a time. Then I ask the Students for their input. Sometimes I set a question or problem before them, and ask them to try to solve it. If they are shy to speak to the entire class, I may place them in groups of 2, 3, or 4. Then, a spokesperson for each group may report the group's findings to the entire class.

At the beginning of the current 14-week course, I assigned approx 3 students to co-teach each week's lesson with me. This ensured that I would have 3 students who had very thoroughly read the reading and written the assignment. I could then interact with these 3 students in front of the entire class.

Regarding chairs: My personal teaching style prioritises 1) physical proximity (of the students with me, and of the students with each other); and 2) flexibility as to where the Students are positioned, and the direction in which they are facing. Thus, from my perspective, the ideal would be chairs that have wheels, and flap-desks. I know that flap-desks tend to break easily -- but it would seem that a flap-desk design could be found, or created, that would be sturdy and durable.

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