

# CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT



# Enriched Environment

- Think of your favorite restaurant, vacation site, thinking space at home, favorite childhood memory..... What locations and situations come to mind? Describe it-----the sights and sounds, the feelings, the intangible impressions.....the thoughts.



- No Surprise!!!!!!!!!!!!

What you describe is a location with situations that drew input from all 19 senses. An enriched environment is one which awakens the entire nervous system, one which is stimulating, curiosity feeding, capable of answering many questions, a setting which is alive with resources, reflective of real life and bursting with energy.



# THE 19 SENSES

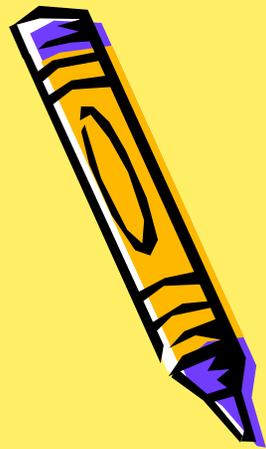


- This will maximize dendrite growth
- This will elicit maximum activation of students' brains
- Our brains make connections
- Long term memory is activated
- Total immersion causes chemical soup of the brain to wake up



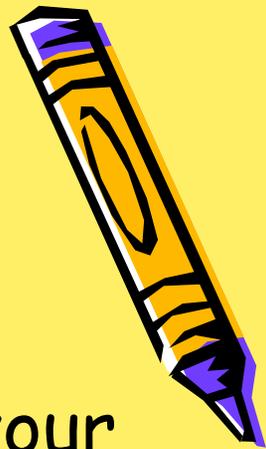
# So why does Learning environment matter?

The key question is how to elicit maximum activation of students' brains? Not surprisingly, there is a direct correlation between the number of senses activated and the amount and locations of brain activity. In the typical setting of lecture and textbooks, only two of the 19 senses are involved. If we want education to be powerful, we need to provide input that involves **all 19 senses**.  
(from Robert Samples' *Open Mind, Whole Mind* (1987) p. 13.)



# Another example...

- Now, think of your worst day at work, your worst experience at a restaurant/hotel, or your worst holiday ever. What does it look like? Sound like? Can you remember all the emotions and feeling you had that day?
- How do you feel?
- Can you feel the difference in your whole attitude, thought processes, mood?



Compare these 2 examples with your classroom...



Is it barren, sterile, unpleasant and restrictive? Is it over stimulating in its input to cause discomfort for the students?

Or

Is it inviting, warm, a place YOU like to be? Do your students feel safe and are willing to participate, take risks in your classroom?



# CLASSROOM LAYOUT

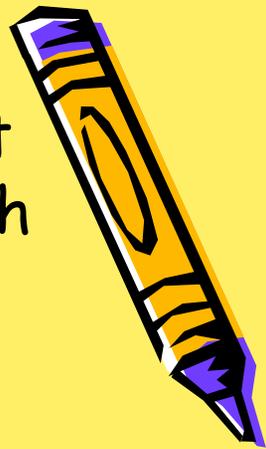
## safe & relaxing



- Warm, well-run classrooms begin with the room's physical layout — the arrangement of desks and working space, the attractiveness and appeal of bulletin boards, the storage of materials and supplies.
- The physical layout reflects your teaching style.



The physical layout should also reflect you. Don't hesitate to give the room your personal touch with plants, art, rugs, posters, and maybe some cozy pillows for the reading corner.

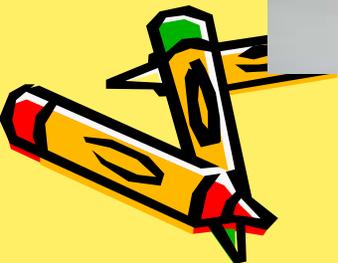
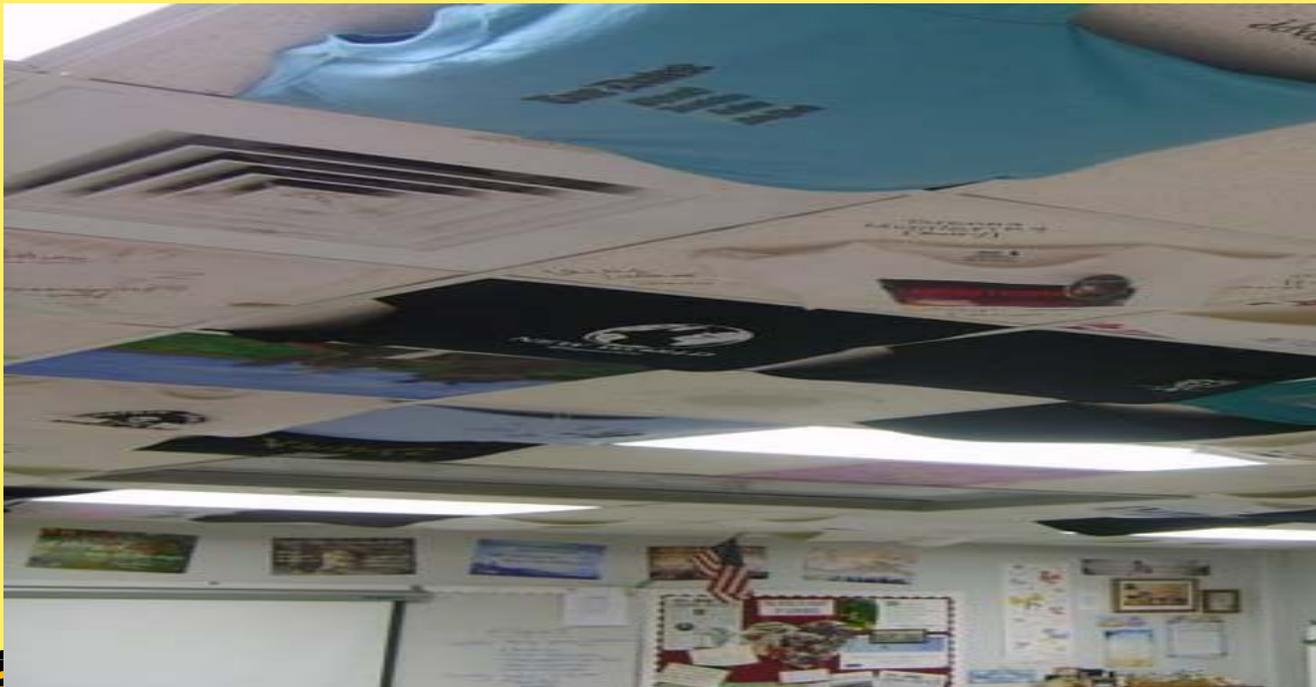


# Enriched Environment

Based on the *"being there"* experience, develop lots of group and individual inquiries that provide opportunities for solving problems and producing real products, including social/higher-level thinking action projects.



Every year, Fredricksburg High School students in Natalie Smith's junior AP English classes complete a project at the end of the first semester. In this project, they imagine a "rock band" based on people and events in a literary time period they've covered in class, do a mock-interview video, create an advertisement for the band's concert and a CD of songs their band would play. Students in the Fredricksburg ISD classroom also create T-shirts with their bands' logos, which Smith then proudly displays on the ceiling. Smith says she got the idea from a beachfront eatery while vacationing in Cozumel, Mexico.



If you want students to collaborate in small groups, organize them around tables or clusters of desks.



Move the students' desks on a regular basis so *the students* learn to cooperate with *all* students.

For frequent whole-group discussions,  
try a circle or U-shaped desk  
configuration.



# Environment to Enhance Using Enriched Development of Intelligence

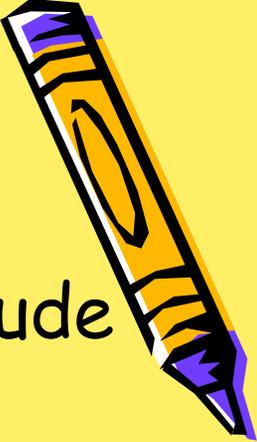
Base curriculum for classroom on "*being there*" interactions make connections for the students with the "*real world.*" Provide "*being there*" early on in the concept introduction. Later revisit and again at the end. This will assess students' ability to apply what they understand and whether the concepts and skills have been wired into long-term memory.



If you plan on an individualized, self-paced curriculum, you might set up individual spaces.



To make her students feel like they are in a "real life work setting" Renate Vanderburg has set her classroom up like an office, with cubicle stations and a "lounge" where students go to relax.



Other important environmental features include  
**temperature,**  
**lighting,**  
**and noise level.**

These factors affect students in different ways and are directly related to individual learning styles. Studies suggest that when teachers adjust the environment to students' preferences, the students perform better academically and are better behaved.





Care Bear theme in Rebecca Cuevas' classroom. The students take lessons from the bears.



- Help students become aware of their own temperature preferences and encourage them to dress accordingly.
- Temperature preferences vary dramatically, and most students can't concentrate when they are either too cool or too warm.



Create both well-lit and dimly-lit areas in the classroom by using bookcases, screens, plants, and other furniture.



- Some children learn best in bright light, but others do significantly better in low light.
- Bright light actually makes some students restless and hyperactive. Try allowing students to sit where they feel most comfortable, or try placing fidgety children in low-light areas and listless children in brighter areas.





Front of the classroom,  
lots of windows, and  
bright light for those  
students who need to  
wake up.



Back of the classroom, low light and  
lamps create a quiet place for  
students who a more calming area to  
do their work.



# Provide opportunities for children to move around.



- Most of us have the mistaken impression that children learn best when sitting still, but research now proves that many children need extensive mobility while learning.
- These children learn significantly more if they move from one area to another as they acquire new information.



# Take Off/ Touch Down



- Take Off-Touch Down vs Raise Hand
  - Better nourishment- 7-10% more brain at work
  - Brain craves novelty and change
  - Brain pays attention to varied stimuli
  - Major muscles used results in triple the brain fuel





Travis Middle School eighth-grade science teacher Lynnette Bachand turned studying TEKS objectives into something interactive and fun. Ten stations are located around the Irving ISD classroom, each based on a TEKS objective. One station features mini-laptops Bachand bought with her winnings from a Best Buy Teach Award; the program on the computers allows her students to manipulate mountain ranges to **INCREASE THEIR UNDERSTANDING** of topography and mapping.

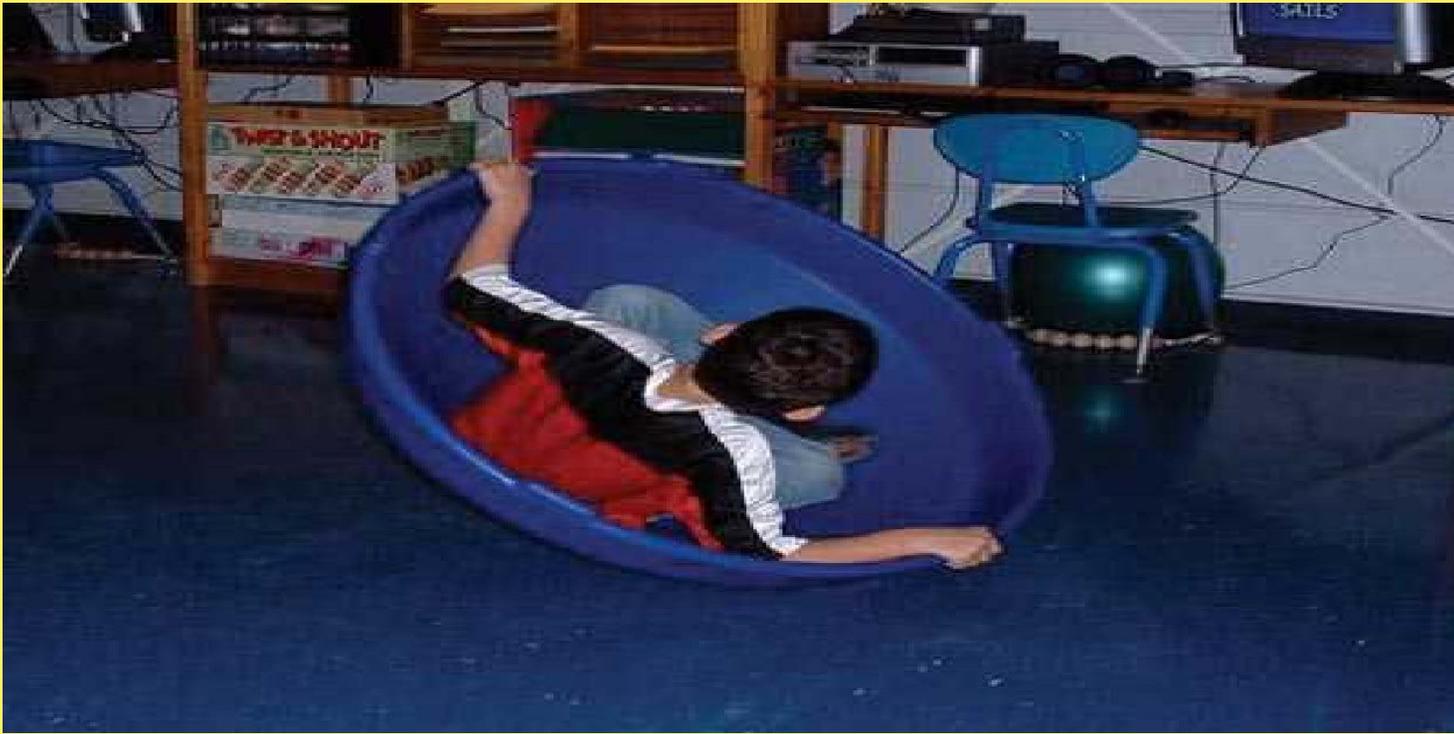


# Establish informal furniture arrangements where students can sit on soft chairs or pillows, or lounge on the carpet.



- Another myth is that children learn best when sitting up straight in hard chairs. About 75 percent of the total body weight is supported on only four square inches of bone when humans sit up straight in a hard chair, so it is easy to understand how the resulting stress on the buttock tissues causes fatigue, discomfort, and the need for frequent changes in posture.
- Research supports the common-sense notion that many students pay better attention and achieve higher grades in more comfortable settings.





Connie Headrick is proud of her nontraditional classroom. Her students often experience "wiggles", which can take their attention off the task at hand. The many varieties of seating, tactile toys and exercise equipment allow the students to calm themselves before, during, and after completing their work. She even uses a balance ball as chair herself to lessen the load and get out her own wiggles as well!

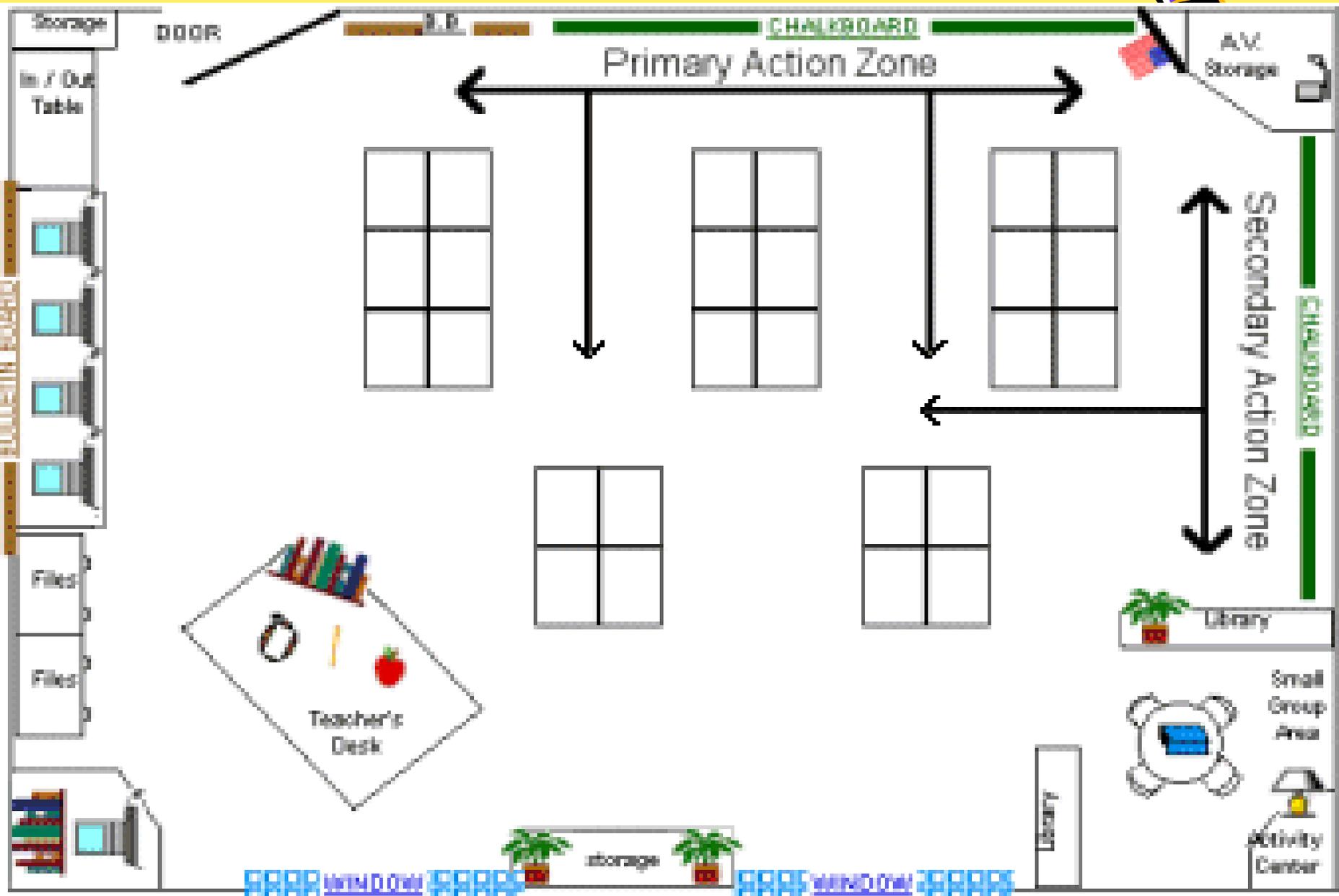


Many children disprove another commonly held conception: that silence helps kids concentrate better.



- **Establish listening stations with headsets for children who need sound.**
- **Establish quiet study areas for those who work best in silence.**





RRR WWW.DOWN RRRR WWW.DOWN RRRR



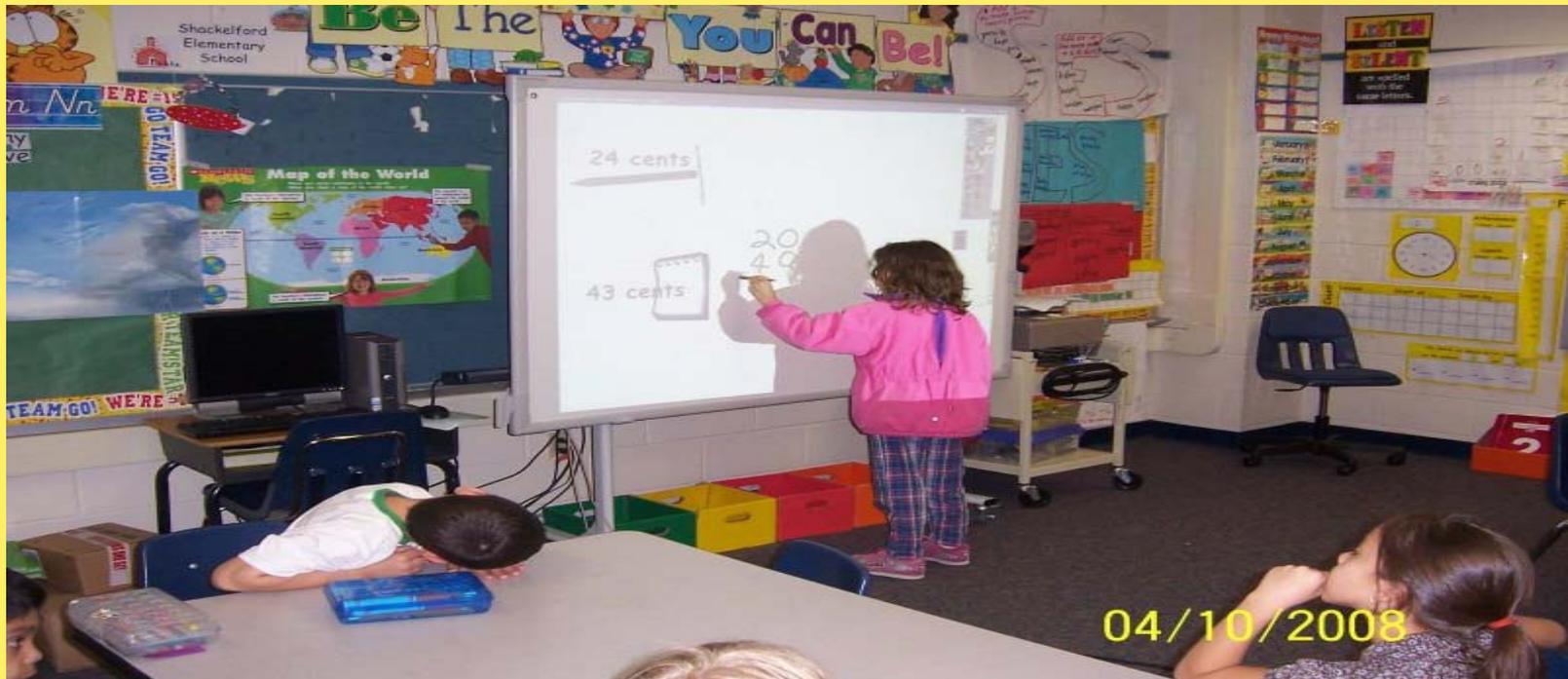
# Enriched Environment



Take time to access prior experiences of students. Tapping existing memory gives a "post office" address in the brain making new learning more efficient and giving the teacher an opportunity to detect and correct misconceptions.



Shackelford Elementary School second-grade teacher Angie Hill and her students use an interactive Promethean Active Board to complete their work on a daily basis. Hill's Waxahachie ISD students have excelled in their learning through the visual and hands-on interaction afforded by the technologically advanced whiteboard.



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# Enriched Environment

Provide a complete immersion experience reflecting on the concept. Have many resources (print and nonprint) related to the current topic at hand for students such as real things, models, diagrams, blue-prints, sketches, and art objects.





In Gary Leslie's music class, images of a diverse group of students mingle with musical instruments and examples of musical notations on the walls.

# Feels Like Home



# BRAIN FRIENDLY



# Classroom Management Setting the Stage

- Establish signal to get students' attention
- Appeal to different learning modalities
- Clearly state directions, objectives, requirements and time limits
- Review method of evaluation
- Model behavior and attitude expected
- Address problems confidentially
- Offer choice in assignment or methods of completing work
- Give feedback and encouragement
- Reflect at the end of each lesson to allow for retention of information



# How can we get the students to feel comfortable?



- Students feel comfortable if you feel comfortable and seem genuinely happy to be with them.
- Walk into the classroom with a positive attitude. If you shuffle in and look straight ahead to the front of the room, you are not including the students; instead it's the "me against you" atmosphere.
- Your body language lets the student know that you want to be there, so put some zip to your stride. Smile; take the time to say hello to those who look at you; greet the students with friendly greetings: "Hi, how are you? Did you have a nice weekend or did you have a good break?" Be sure that you maintain eye contact.
- At every opportunity, tell them you are eager to see them progress, enjoy the course, have fun. Show them that you enjoy what you do by being totally prepared for the lesson.
- Don't hide your passion for your subject matter. At first, they may think you are a nerd, but being consistently passionate can be contagious.





In Pat Lowe's High School English Class, she enjoys traveling and meeting famous people and the proof is in her pictures on her "wall of fame." She enthusiastically shares with students her passion and vivid stories.



# USE LEARNING STYLES



# Who Makes the Rules?

- Limit classroom rules to five
- Students should have input into rules
- Rules can change throughout the year
- Some rules are non-negotiable
- Consequences should be logical
- Class rules should be consistent with school procedures
- Teacher must always follow through



# State the facts

- Consistent with school rules
- Understandable
- Doable ( students able to comply)
- Manageable
- Always applicable (consistent)
- Stated positively
- Stated with philosophy of how students learn best



# IT WORKS

- Classroom procedures should form the framework for the climate of the room to be conducive to students and teachers working together cooperatively.
- Classroom procedures form the heart and soul of caring, cooperative students.
- If students are going to buy into the system, they must be a part of the process.
- Students are much more likely to follow a rule if the rationale has been explained to them.



# Establish Collaborative Code

- Give students many opportunities to contribute to group learning
- Encourage student to share leadership roles
- Make learning interesting, meaningful, and relevant
- Challenge students
- Allow students to learn from each other as well as the teacher
- Students challenge and encourage each other



**"If you have a child's heart,  
you have his head."**

*Flip Flippen*

### **Social Contracts**

- In developing the social contracts at school, students answer three questions:
- How should we treat each other?
- How should we treat our teacher?
- How should we treat each other during conflict?



# Where will your classroom environment take you?



What is the coolest classroom you have created or seen in a school? Describe the room in detail. Why were you drawn to the room?

What are all the possible ways you can arrange your classroom? Describe each area of your room and your rationale for arranging it that way.

How can you make your classroom an exciting place for students?

What can you do if you HATE to decorate your room?



Learning Environment  
is all about the  
Kids.

