



Question:

What should an appealing and welcoming classroom look like?

Andie's Answer:

I am asked this question frequently, so you are not alone in wondering what the answer is. I suggest that you first start with your classroom as it exists now and then work toward making changes.

As you contemplate the beginning of a new school year, you may want to take inventory of your classroom. Your aim should be to have a classroom that is a warm and inviting place for teaching and learning. So, what can you do in our classrooms to ensure that students will want to be there?

I've done some research and have created a list of some of the suggestions that I found in research.

- Pleasant smells—Inexpensive room deodorizers work great.
- Living plants—Move plants into your classroom. You can move your own outdoor plants inside as the winter months approach.
- Attractive, up-to-date bulletin boards—Bulletin boards should be changed every two months. This is a great place to display your student work no matter what grade level you teach. You can also have students collect newspaper articles on particular subjects and post them on a bulletin board.
- Soft lighting—If you have windows, turn off the overhead lights and use inexpensive floor lamps.
- Soft music—New brain research shows that greater brain activity occurs when music is playing. When students are doing individual or group work, music may help them focus on the assignment.
- Attractive pictures—You can use posters or pictures that focus on the content or the process that you will be teaching. Pictures should be changed to fit the instructional activities of the class.
- Books and magazines—Classroom libraries foster and support effective reading. You can encourage students to read books and magazines of their choice while other students are completing assignments. Providing these kinds of options will ensure that all of your students have something constructive to do. Keep in mind that your classroom library should be updated each month.



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- Positively worded signs—Your classroom rules and procedures should be posted in a visible place in your room, and they should be written in positive terms.

Example:

Negative—Don't talk while others are talking.

Positive—Be respectful of others in the classroom and allow everyone an opportunity to express thoughts.

Take it from me, when you make your work space and your students' work space pleasant and attractive, your classroom will be a much happier place.