

Our Lady of the Cape Flexible Learning Spaces Guidelines Years 4-6



What is the purpose of having flexible learning spaces?

Our objectives:

1. Encourage and teach student well-being and body awareness.
2. Foster cooperative and individualistic teaching and learning approaches.
3. Enhance opportunities for formative assessment and feedback.
4. Foster independence and intra-dependence in our students.

1. Student Well-Being and Body awareness

Much of the research comes out of Curtin University via Professor Leon Straker - BAppSc(WAIT), MSc(Lond), PhD(Syd) <http://goo.gl/sIJNP9>

Professor Straker is a nationally recognised leader in physiotherapy. He has developed Guidelines for children, particularly when using technology, to encourage appropriate physical development.

At OLC we see this learning of life skills for our students, particularly in the middle to upper grades, as our moral imperative.

In the OLC flexible learning spaces, students learn in a variety of sedentary, standing and active tasks. The students are purposefully changed in positions at the conclusion of tasks to allow for postural variety.

Find these guidelines by Professor Leon Straker at this link:

<http://goo.gl/KMIWjp>

	<p>Hokki stools have been highly recommended by experienced physiotherapists for encouraging good posture and developing core strength. Traditional classroom chairs are also provided in the classrooms</p> <p><i>NB: OLC is hoping to develop a partnership with Professor Straker and his team in the near future.</i></p>
<p>2. Cooperative and individualistic teaching and learning approaches</p>	<p>Learning to learn with others and individually is a vital part of today's educational world. Having flexible spaces easily enables teachers to develop cooperative and/or personal learning tasks in a practical and efficient way that keeps the learning objective central to the task.</p> <p>Professor. John Hattie http://goo.gl/TwSMh0 is a researcher in education. His research interests include performance indicators, models of measurement and evaluation of teaching and learning.</p> <p>Professor Hattie has developed, through rigorous research and meta-analysis, 138 influences and effect sizes related to education and student achievement.</p> <p>These can be found at this link: http://goo.gl/YD2qmT</p> <p>Both cooperative and individualistic learning approaches are crucial elements to effective learning at OLC.</p>

<p>3. Enhancement of opportunities for formative assessment and feedback</p>	<p>Formative assessment and teacher-to-student as well as peer-to-peer feedback rank in John Hattie's top 10 influences on student achievement</p> <p>Our flexible learning spaces enable our teachers "ease of access" and enrich the opportunity to give daily student feedback as well as formatively (ongoing, during the learning) assess individual student learning.</p> <p>Hattie's Influence ranking: http://goo.gl/YD2qmT</p>
<p>4. Fostering independence and intra-dependence in our students.</p>	<p>We know that one of the ways children flourish is when they have opportunities for independence and autonomy. The work of Professor Fiona Stanely states this clearly.</p> <p>We aim to give our students the opportunity to be independent, when appropriate, to choose their learning space.</p> <p>Our teachers direct and select student learning, whether cooperative or independent depending on the learning task, and also at times allow students to chose the "space" they would like to work at; standing at a hard surface bench, sitting at a table, or gathered around a low level table in a small group. This is always done in a purposeful manner with clearly set expectations.</p>

Some teacher reflections on using flexible learning spaces can be found at the following link.

<http://goo.gl/qDarje>

Other examples of flexible learning spaces can be found here:

<http://goo.gl/TdSR2F>

We believe that **our teachers ultimately have the greatest influence** on student learning and achievement in the classroom. The opportunities that flexible learning classrooms provide however enable us to do what we do best: Provide quality education with proven effective strategies.



Flexible Learning Spaces

Years 4-6

Guidelines for OLC Teachers and Students – 2015

1. The classroom spaces must provide a seated (Hokki stool or traditional classroom chair) place for each student so that all students can be seated comfortably at a hard surface at any given time.
NB – OLC greatly values handwriting in all years. Handwriting lessons and tasks involving significant written responses are practiced regularly and only completed when seated at a hard surface. This includes the middle and upper primary year levels.
2. Furniture that is only conducive to student well-being is to be used. Bean bags are not used. Classroom couches are included but are to be used for only short periods of time during activities such as individual or small group reading, small group discussion, and teacher-led instructional sessions with a small group. Couches are often used as “caves” or reading corners.
3. **Both** cooperative and individual learning strategies are to be utilised.
4. Both standing and seated learning positions are encouraged and implemented for the students by the teacher when each is appropriate. Teachers are to remain aware of long sedentary periods as well as ensuring postural variety occurs for students throughout the day.
5. Floor space is utilised during whole class, direct instruction sessions or for short periods during activities such as small group discussions or planning that does not require rigorous written tasks. Sitting upright on the floor is only acceptable; laying on stomachs for reading or when using an iPad is not acceptable. Kneeling at a low table for short periods for activities such as reading or low-level written work is acceptable.