

# THE INSPIRED & INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM

YOUR GUIDE TO SETTING UP DYNAMIC,  
ADAPTIVE LEARNING SPACES

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What in Classroom  
Design Matters  
Most to You?

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# Dear Educators,

What does an inspired, truly interactive classroom look like in 2018? The truth is, there is no single answer. Your learning spaces have to meet the needs of your students, teachers, and community. The good news is there are many forward-thinking solutions that can help you create adaptive spaces for the students you have today, and tomorrow.

In the following pages, you'll find some helpful resources to help you identify what's most important to you in classroom setup, technology, and design. You'll also read about one amazing school that has truly transformed their learning spaces.

We hope you find this guide useful and inspiring. To download additional copies, visit [schoolleadersnow.weareteachers.com/interactive-classroom](http://schoolleadersnow.weareteachers.com/interactive-classroom).



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## QUIZ:

# WHAT IN **CLASSROOM DESIGN** MATTERS MOST TO YOU?

**Imagine your ideal classroom. What projects are students working on? What artifacts hang on the walls? What tools and resources provide the driving force behind it all? Choose your top three values from the list below and use those to help guide your technology purchases.**

### ☐ **Sharing**

When our students explain something, they really know it. They use technology like interactive projectors and whiteboards to help them share what they know.

### ☐ **Creativity**

Our students are constantly

building, creating, and producing content. Tools like printers and scanners help them build vivid reports and add to their portfolios.

### ☐ **Interactivity**

Our students learn by doing. Classroom technology provides ways for students to engage, from interactive games to interactive projectors that allow students to “get their hands dirty” while exploring maps, biomes, and more.

### ☐ **Collaboration**

Students learn best when they can share ideas and build on one another's thoughts. Technology should bring people together and is best used when experts can Skype in to a classroom discussion.

### ☐ **Flexibility**

Students learn best and teachers teach best when they have the ability to choose how they engage with technology to drive learning. Technology that can move and change, like interactive projectors positioned to project a map on a table, are flexible enough to bring learning to students.

### ☐ **Differentiation**

Technology should give teachers the information they need to individualize and advance instruction. Exit tickets or lesson checks given on student devices can provide immediate feedback on student learning.

### ☐ **Motivation**

Technology should serve as a motivator and increase student

engagement either by bringing content that's of interest to students into the classroom or by providing ways for students to produce material using technology.

### ☐ **Accessibility**

Technology should make learning accessible for all students. Technology that makes content audible and visible for all students, like microphones, speakers, and large-scale projectors, is important for creating an inclusive classroom. ■

## How Tampa Prep Brought Their Classrooms into the 21st Century:

# LESSONS FROM FLORIDA'S MOST INNOVATIVE SCHOOL



**A student hunches over her iPad, busy solving a math problem. “I’m done,” she calls, hand in the air. With a few swipes, her solution is projected on three screens around the room, ready for feedback from her classmates. Her peers take a few moments to review her solution before moving to the screen. They compare notes, annotating the whiteboard with their thoughts.**

This level of collaboration was what the leaders of Tampa Preparatory Charter School were hoping for when they restructured their classroom spaces. They brought in flexible office furniture and installed interactive projectors into their middle school classrooms to create Active Learning Environments (ALE). Now 12

classrooms in this independent school, serving 650 students in grades 6–12 in downtown Tampa, are each outfitted with two Epson BrightLink Finger Touch interactive projectors. Students bring their own individualized iPads from class to class, BYOD style. And, in a common area, the “hub,” teachers lead students through discussions and projects that take learning literally outside classroom walls.

### Active Learning Environments

At the start of their school’s transformation, Tampa Prep leaders wanted the technology upgrade to increase critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity. By transforming the space, they changed how students and teachers interacted. Rows of desks were exchanged for mobile desks that are easily rearranged, creating more opportunities for group work. Microphones and speakers

made it easy to hear the teacher, regardless of where they stood, encouraging student engagement. Two Epson projectors in each room create multiple collaborative-presentation areas and allow students to work on presentations, podcasts, and videos in small groups. The traditional lecture is long gone; now teachers work with students in student-driven small groups.

### The 21st-Century Classroom

The goal for each ALE is not to teach students how to use technology but to build 21st-century skills through projects and learning that maximize the potential of each classroom tool. Students build communication skills while creating Terp Academy (<https://www.tampaprep.org/academics/innovative>) math podcasts. Sixth graders satisfy their curiosity by asking and answering questions about world biomes,

using a combination of presentations, online resources, and curriculum materials all projected on the walls. Students in Spanish class can “draw” on the walls by using their fingers to interact with Spanish lessons, learning vocabulary words and working through translations using lessons projected through the BrightLink projector with touch-based interactivity.

The innovation at Tampa Prep starts and ends with technology. Each ALE reflects the new way that we get information—as much from teachers and textbooks as from the Internet and global resources. In every discussion and lesson, students engage with and synthesize information and ideas. Ultimately, Tampa Prep leaders want their students to be ready for success in a changing world. The evidence is projected on the walls. ■



# A SCHOOL LEADER'S CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING INSPIRED CLASSROOMS

You want interactive classrooms where teachers plan lessons that engage students in learning that taps into their curiosity and builds knowledge, thinking, and problem-solving skills. Perhaps you've even visited classrooms that have that buzz when students are busy working together and teachers are seamlessly supporting them and managing technology at the same time. It looks so easy, but interactive classrooms come from meticulous planning.

**Use our checklist to think through how you can transform your own classrooms into hives of interactivity:**

## **Furniture:**

Even if you have standard desks and chairs, you can rethink how you use classroom space to support interactive learning. Think through how students and teachers will use the classroom. How often will they be changing groups? How will teachers move from one lesson to another? Then, when you know how you want the space to be used, think about, first, what furniture you need (or don't need) and, second, how to arrange it.

## **Wall space:**

There are four in each room—make the walls work for you. Clear them of posters and set up dry-erase space that can be used in conjunction with interactive projectors instead. By setting up two projectors and removing the front and back of the classroom, you'll inspire students to engage with content in a new way.

## **Create space:**

You can create more space for students to collaborate by clearing off a white table and positioning a projector to project onto it—great for projecting maps, grids, and other collaborative content.

## **Number of students (and devices):**

How many students and adults will be working with computers, tablets, or other devices at once? For example, installing the Epson Multi-PC Projector with built-in Moderator device management allows for 50 devices to connect and interact.

## **Device roundup:**

What devices are students bringing? To get full interactivity, you'll want to make sure that students can connect to projectors, like the BrightLink, that can host multiple devices.

## **Presentation:**

When projects involve a presentation, consider how classroom space supports sharing. Do students need space to print and arrange portfolios? Do they need space to create podcasts?

## **Budget:**

Consider the cost of installing and maintaining the technology; buying a more expensive setup may work out over time if the system is energy efficient and has a longer lamp life.

## **Accessibility:**

What do students who have special needs or considerations need to fully benefit from the interactive classroom? Providing flexible seating arrangements and ample wall space for large-scale projections can create a classroom that brings all students together.

## **Teacher development:**

Interactive classrooms may be new for some staff. Take time to train them on the new technology and build PD into the school year so that interactive learning becomes part of your school culture.

## **Parent buy-in:**

Parents may also need help understanding how you're changing the classroom and why. Communicate with parents through a newsletter, video, email, or open house that showcases everything you've done to create interactive classrooms.

# 8 CREATIVE IDEAS FOR FUNDING CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

You know what you want and how it will help your teachers and students succeed. The only barrier: your budget. Often, it pays to get creative when it comes to funding tech projects. Take an idea or two from how members of the School Leaders Now community have raised funds for school projects.

## Crowdfunding

1. DonorsChoose.org ([www.donorschoose.org](http://www.donorschoose.org)) is very popular in the realm of education project financing. Post classroom-level projects that can be funded by multiple donors who come together to donate small amounts toward the total project.
2. Digital Wish (<http://www.digitalwish.com/dw/digitalwish/home>) is like DonorsChoose.org for technology. Use the platform to create a fundraiser to outfit an interactive classroom or upgrade the technology across your campus.
3. PledgeCents (<https://www.pledgecents.com/>) is a platform that helps schools raise money for projects, from school supplies to classroom furniture. Create a fundraiser, share it on your social media platforms, and use whatever money you raise toward the goal.

## Fundraising Apps

4. SimpleFund (<https://www.getsimplefund.com>) is an app that allows users to raise money for an organization by responding to online offers and completing activities.
5. Shoparoo (<https://www.shoparoo.com>) is an app people use to raise money for schools by submitting their shopping receipts. The app translates receipt purchases into points that go toward school fundraising.

## Traditional Fundraising

6. Community grants. Check out grants that are available in your state or community. For example, one School Leaders Now principal applies for community grants funded through the state lottery.



7. Company sponsorship. Local companies that are upgrading may donate “old” technology, which can be great for student use. Just make sure that any donations will fit in with the established network in your school or district.
8. Penny war. A penny war, when students bring in pennies and other coins to their classrooms to raise money for a school project, can raise money by creating friendly competition. Each penny counts as one positive point, but nickels, dimes, and quarters count against other classes as negative points. The class with the most points at the end of the war wins, and the money can be used toward the technology project.

Once you have your fundraising method of choice, here are three tips for getting the funding every time.

1. **Know the scale.** Before you write a grant or post a request, know exactly what you need. When you know the scale of the project, you’ll be able to match it with the correct funding platform. A classroom project is great for DonorsChoose.org; a whole-school upgrade may be better for a community grant.
2. **Promote your fundraiser.** Once you have your fundraiser set up through your platform of choice, share it. Post it on social media, ask local media to cover it, and talk it up when you’re at social events.
3. **Share your successes.** Send thank-you notes to donors, post a video on your school web site and social media, and invite donors to visit. People like to see where their donations go, and sharing the project may even earn you more donations later.

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