

How are teachers arranging classrooms for social distancing?



NEW SCHOOL YEAR, NEW CONCERNS

Advice from a certified teacher

As the school year quickly approaches, school districts are in the midst of finalizing their plans for the year. Many schools are being asked to create different classroom arrangements for social distancing. In my local school district, they are looking at arrangements that allow 3 feet of space between students versus 6 feet of space between each student. These are strange times, and suddenly you may find yourself thinking: What are the best classroom arrangements for social distancing?



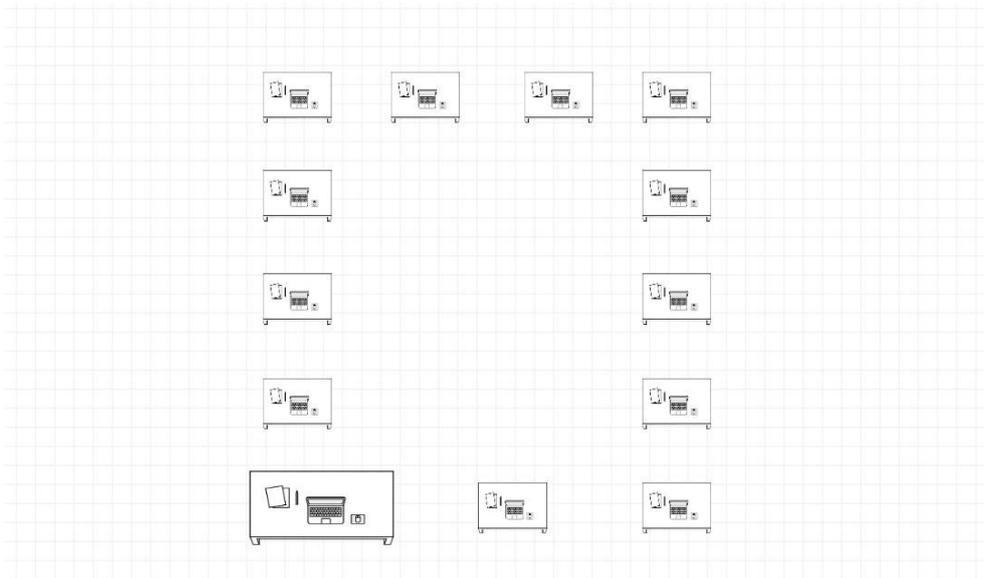
"Effective teaching
may be the hardest
job there is."
-William Glasser

Sample Social Distancing Classroom Set-ups

There are many different arrangements for classroom seating with social distancing in place. Classroom seating during social distancing may not be the same as you are used to in the past. Directional walking patterns are one consideration you may have not had to think about before. Directional walking patterns allow for the students to move about the classroom with the maximum amount of space between students.

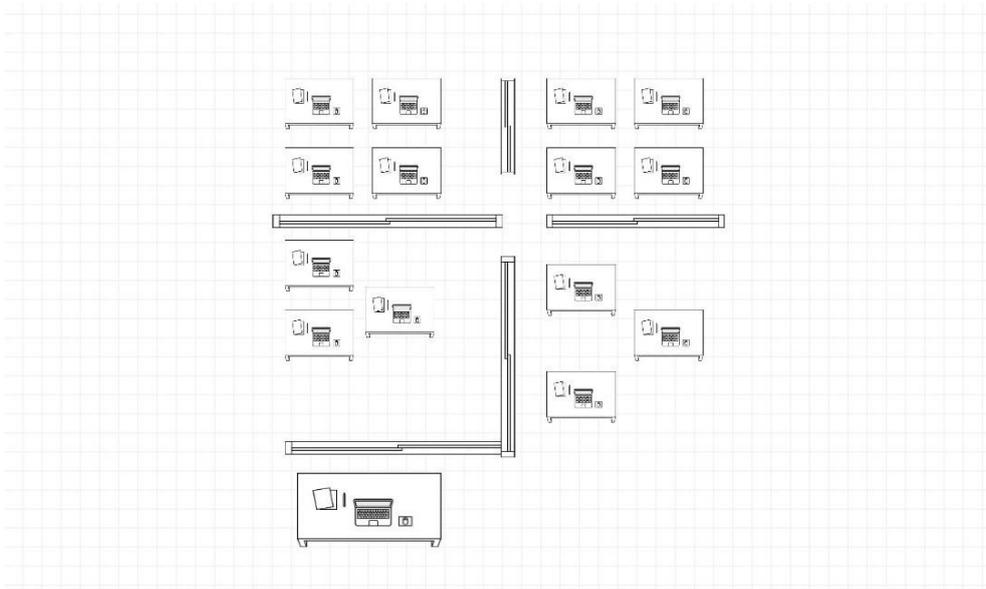
Social Distancing Models for Classroom Seating

Teaching in the Round/ Harkness Method:



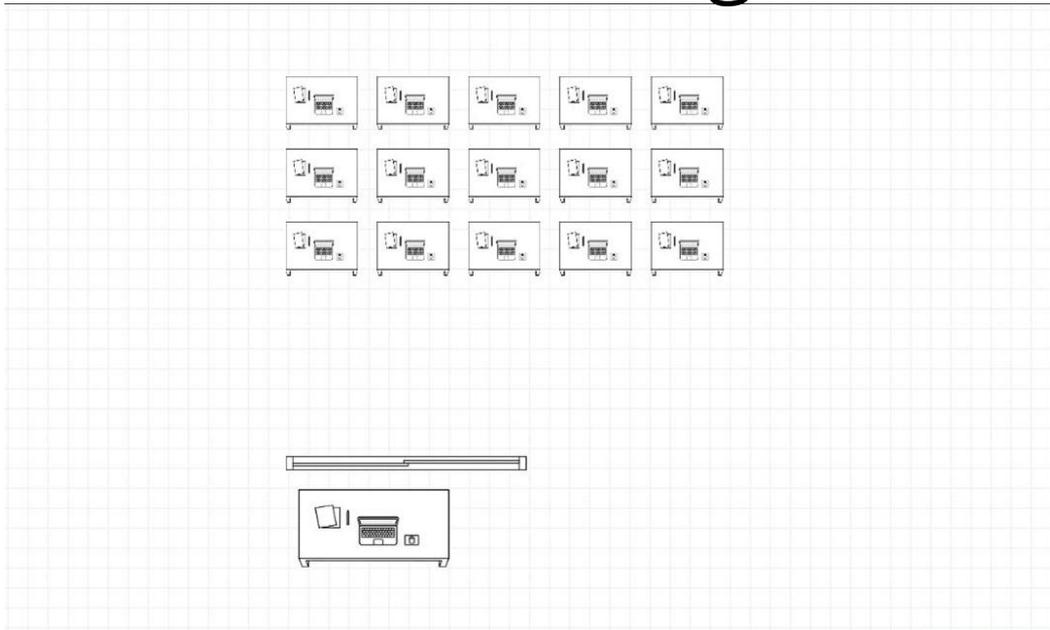
The first classroom arrangement to consider is teaching in the round. If your school has traditionally used the Harkness method, this is a good alternative to consider for the 2020-2021 school year. In this arrangement, desks (or tables) are set up around the outside of the room. This allows for the class to have open discussions, which are a key feature of the Harkness method. This arrangement works for up to 12 students, which is typical of a Harkness classroom.

Pods Arrangement:



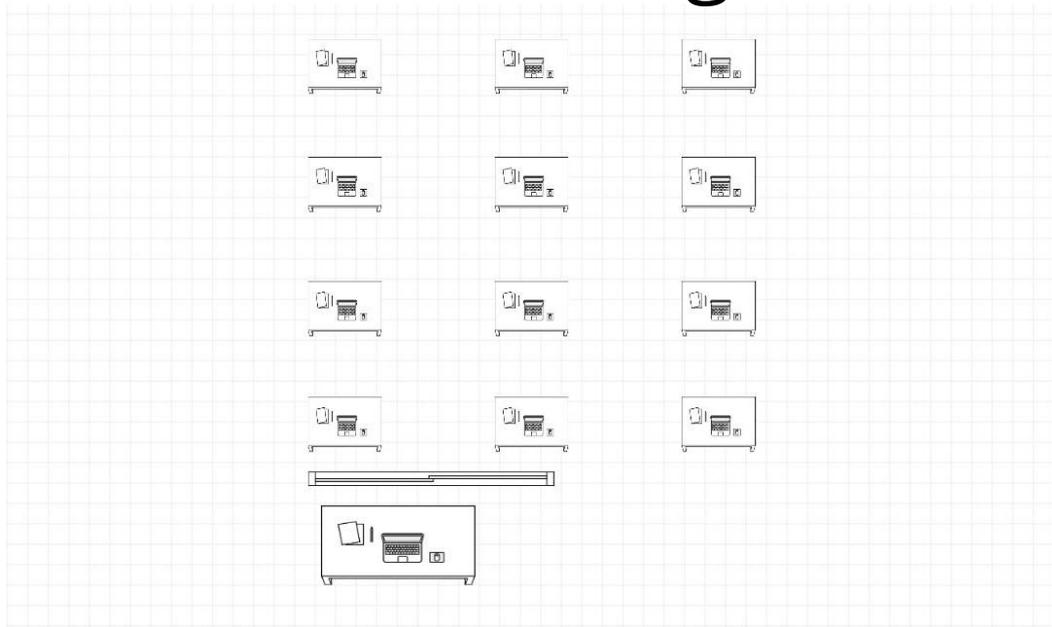
In a pods arrangement, children are divided into pods for the entire school day. Plexiglass dividers are set up between each of the pods and the teachers. This allows the students to work closely with two or three other children, while still maintaining three feet of distance between each other. The children will be able to see and hear their teacher through the Plexiglass. This arrangement works for up to 15 students, depending on classroom size.

Traditional Arrangement:



This is a more traditional classroom arrangement. In this set up, the teacher will teach behind Plexiglass for the school day. The teacher remains at the front of the class. Students are separated by three feet on each side and wear masks. Students are encouraged to stay facing forward the entire day. This arrangement works for up to 15 students, depending on classroom size.

Traditional Arrangement 2



In this arrangement, the teacher remains at the front of the class. The teacher teaches behind a sheet of Plexiglass. The 12 students are evenly spaced 6 feet apart throughout the classroom. Students are encouraged to stay forward facing the entire class.

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