

Teaching in 1374 Genome Sciences Building

This is one of several classrooms outfitted with a new generation of tablet-arm seats. The casters on these chairs make it easier to re-configure furniture in the classroom. The tablet surfaces can be adjusted by students to accommodate individual preferences (e.g., all seats accommodate both right- and left-handed students).

Faculty members who have taught in classrooms outfitted with this furniture report that it encourages student eye contact and interaction and reduces the time it takes to move between lecture, small group activities, and full class discussion. Students who have used the furniture say it is easier for them to move into groups and to look at other students during discussion. More information on the University's use of and evaluation of these seats is available at: <http://cfe.unc.edu/tablet-chairs-on-casters/>

The Center for Faculty Excellence is always available to discuss ideas for active learning techniques for your course that can help you make the most of this furniture.

Guidelines for Success

You may want to interact directly with students when they are working in small groups. Keeping classroom floor space clear will help you navigate tight spaces.

- Have students keep book bags and personal items off the floor. Book bags and personal items can be stored in the compartment beneath the seat.
- If you ask students to form small groups, have them pull their seats as close together as socially comfortable.

If your course enrollment/attendance is less than the number of seats in the classroom, unused seats can become an impediment. Tablet seats on casters are easy to move but cannot be stacked.

- Consider consolidating seating arrangements by asking students to sit in certain parts of the room.
- Consider isolating unused seats in one section of each of the learning zones (e.g. ask students to first occupy seats near the front of the room).
- Keep in mind that the location of power outlets will inform some students' decisions about where to sit. Access to power is typically on a first come, first served basis.

During exams, consider using the flexibility of the seats to your advantage by having students arrange seats in outward-facing clusters or some other configuration that minimizes the temptation to violate the Honor Code.

Walking into a classroom where the furniture is not laid out in neat rows can be a little unsettling initially. We suggest that you look at this aspect of the learning zones as evidence that active learning is taking place in this classroom! Most students and instructors adapt pretty quickly.

On the first day of class, introduce students to the classroom and how it will support your learning goals for the course. If appropriate, encourage student buy-in by letting them help you craft the policies that will govern use of the classroom.

We welcome your own suggestions for teaching in this classroom as you gain experience.

Questions?

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