

Teaching in Active Learning Rooms with Fixed Swivel Seats



Peabody 3050 and **Peabody 2080** are equipped with fixed swivel seating and designed to facilitate transitions between lecture, small group activities, and full class discussion. These seats swivel 360 degrees, promoting student eye contact and student interaction. The fixed seats also afford instructors with dedicated aisle space that makes it easy to move throughout the classroom and interact with students.

Faculty members who have taught in rooms with fixed swivel seats report that moving between different class activities is virtually seamless, and that students seem to be more engaged during class discussions. Students who have taken courses in these classrooms say they appreciate being able to look directly at students and not having to get up when they form groups. More information on the University's evaluation of this design is available at: <http://cfe.unc.edu/swivel-seats-with-dedicated-aisle-space/>

Guidelines for Success

Lesson planning

In classrooms designed for interaction, students will expect opportunities to discuss course concepts with their peers. The instructional methods you decide to use and frequency of use will be informed by your course and lesson goals. [Center for Faculty Excellence](#) staff are available to discuss ideas for adopting and implementing active learning techniques for your course that take advantage of active learning classroom features. For more information on best practices, workshops, videos, consultations, and other resources that you can use to make the most of these classrooms, visit the [Flexible Learning Spaces Initiative website](#).

Mobility

You will likely 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 out of the aisle space. Book bags can be hung on the back of each seat or placed beneath seats.

If your course enrollment is less than the number of seats in the classroom, students may spread out.

- Consider asking students to sit in designated sections of the classroom (in specific quadrants, or as close to the center of the room as possible, etc.).
- Be familiar with the placement of electrical outlets in the classroom; it may inform your seating policy, as some students will likely need access to power. 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 face different directions in ways that minimize the temptation to violate the Honor Code.

These seats may return automatically to a front-facing position. Students should be warned about leaving drinks and other personal items on the desktop when they get out of the seat for any reason.

Whiteboards

Your classroom may also feature additional whiteboards. Shared writing surfaces provide students with opportunities to visualize their understanding and to learn from one another. They can be used to facilitate a variety of easy-to-implement active learning techniques.

- Maintain access to the walls by encouraging students to plug laptops into power towers instead of wall outlets where available.
- Establish a routine of having students erase their work at the end of class.
- At the end of the week, consider using the provided cleanser to wipe down the boards (or ask your students to do so).
- Contact the ITS Classroom Hotline if you notice that there are no working dry erase markers or if the boards are dirty or broken.

Adjusting to the classroom

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. Making your expectations clear on day one and taking the time to enforce them the first week will help make class norms stick.

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

Questions about instructional techniques that this classroom may support?

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Questions about classroom technology?

If you have any problems or questions regarding the technology in the classroom, please pick up the **red phone** that connects you immediately with someone at ITS Classroom Hotline. You can also request an individual consultation at any time by submitting a request at hotline.unc.edu.