Classroom Environment

My classroom will be "home away from home" for students and myself. It needs to be both attractive and functional. In designing my 3rd grade classroom environment, I need to consider appropriateness, the type of classroom activities I will be implementing, and my particular style. Each of these should be carefully considered with both individual students' needs and my instructional goals in mind.

Desks

The way desks are arranged can greatly impact the learning that is happening in the classroom. If I am wanting to do some projects or collaboration work within the classroom - I may choose to put the students into groups of four or five for a week or two. I then may want to change it back to rows. Desk arrangement should be changed often in my opinion to keep students working in different groups and with different people.

Library

A place for students to go and read and relax when they have finished their work is important. I really focused on the library area and gave a nice corner area for the library along with a couch and beanbag chair. I think that reading time and giving students a place to read models a respect for that time to my students. If I respect that time enough - perhaps they will grow to respect it as well.

I would however, have a regulated system for the library and rules as to how many students at a time and when students can use it. There would be days of the week assigned to students when it is their day to sit in the library. If a student just wants to "visit" the library to borrow a book, they have 2 minutes. There will be a timer by the assigned days on the entrance of the library. The student will be expected to follow all guidelines of the library - or lose privileges for the day.

Library Guidelines

This is a Quiet area. No talking please - it disrupts our readers!

Only sitting in the library on designated day and **ALL** work complete.

If borrowing a book - set the timer! 2 minutes

HAPPY READING!

Teacher's Desk

My desk was placed at the side of the room where I can easily see everyone and I am still close enough to the learning "community". I want to give the impression that I am a part of their environment - rather than being pushed into a corner in the back of the room segregated away from the rest of the class. This set up also allows for me to keep my "discipline problem" students very close to me as well as the front of the class if I need.

Student Table

In every classroom that I have been in, a large table in the classroom is always incredibly important. This table can be used to help with differentiating instruction, art projects, make-up work and group work. The class I am in now uses our table every minute of the class day. We use it when a group of students needs extra guidance during a math lesson. It is a very easy meeting place where a teacher can facilitate their learning between just a few students. We also allow the few high leveled readers in the class to meet at the table during reading to do their work together (they are working on a separate book) and we always use it for students who need to make up tests or work.

Computers

Although computers are making their way into the classroom - I only have 4 in the class I am interning at now, so I only put 4 in this classroom. I think computers and technology can be a great learning tool if properly executed in the classroom.

I would love to use the computers on a daily basis. At the beginning of each week I would find some kid friendly sites that correlate with what we will be learning about that week and save them on the desk top. Those websites that I chose will be the only websites the students will be able to visit for that week.

I would have very similar guidelines in the computer area as to those in the library. Students will be designated days they can use the computers when all work is completed and signed by myself (signing their work allows me to check for understanding so they are not just rushing to hand something in).

Rules for the Computer Lab

This is a Quiet area. No talking please.

Only sitting in the lab on designated day and **ALL** work complete.

Only using the websites chosen for you on the desktop.

Happy Learning!

Storage and Shelving

Proper storage and shelving is a very important part of an organized, efficient classroom. It is my belief that you cannot have enough of either. However, classroom space usually does not allow much room for storage. Being creative with the space you have becomes very challenging.

In the class I am in now, we have little to no bookshelves and storage. We are in a very small portable with 26 students. We actually have to plan lessons and projects around book sets and materials that are kept in a closet all the way across the school grounds. This does become a daunting task, but by keeping the materials we don't always use in another area of the school, keeps our small classroom from feeling cluttered and overwhelming.

In my dream classroom however, bookshelves would line the walls and they would be filled with book sets, dictionaries, research materials and so on. The books would be easy to access for myself and students. A classroom should in all reality be a place where all resources are available to students who want to learn.