



A Guide to Using Active Learning Rooms

This guide is designed to help you move beyond simply 'using' the technology to 'thinking with' it. By considering the room's capabilities in advance, you can design engaging and effective sessions that take full advantage of the facilities.

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Part 1: Pre-Session Planning – What to Think About in Advance

1. Know Your Objectives and Your Learners

- What do I want my students to do? Go beyond “I want them to understand...” and think about concrete actions: “I want them to collaborate on a presentation,” or “I want them to solve a problem together.”
- What is the size of the class? Are you expecting to fill the room, or will you have space for people to move around? This will influence your choice of activities and how you arrange the flexible furniture.
- How long is the timetabled class? This will impact what and how many activities you can use with students, remember to factor in set-up and explanation, students moving into groups, starting the activity and students presenting, feeding back or de-briefing on what they have done (depending on the activity).
- You can use the module and session planner templates to help prepare in advance.

2. Leverage the Multi-Screen Environment

The classroom is a multi-display environment, not a single-display room.

- Front Screens: Use the two main displays for content that needs to be seen by everyone. You can compare and contrast two different sources side-by-side or show a key video on one screen while having discussion questions on the other.
- Collaborative Screens: Use the six smaller screens as collaboration hubs for small-group work. Students can wirelessly collaborate on tasks using a screen as a focal point and share their work for discussion and peer review without having to move their devices.



3. Embrace the Flexible Furniture

The moveable tables, chairs, and the quiet corner are tools for flexible learning.

- Group Dynamics: Plan how you'll arrange the furniture for your session. Will you have small clusters for group work or a large horseshoe?
- Furniture suggestions: Online resources from [Utrecht University](#) and [ClearTouch](#) (amongst others) are available with suggested layouts to try.
- The Quiet Corner: Use this secluded space for one-on-one sessions, tutor feedback, focussed reading or independent work, or for a designated group to work on a specific task.

Part 2: Session and Activity Ideas - What Works Best in This Room?

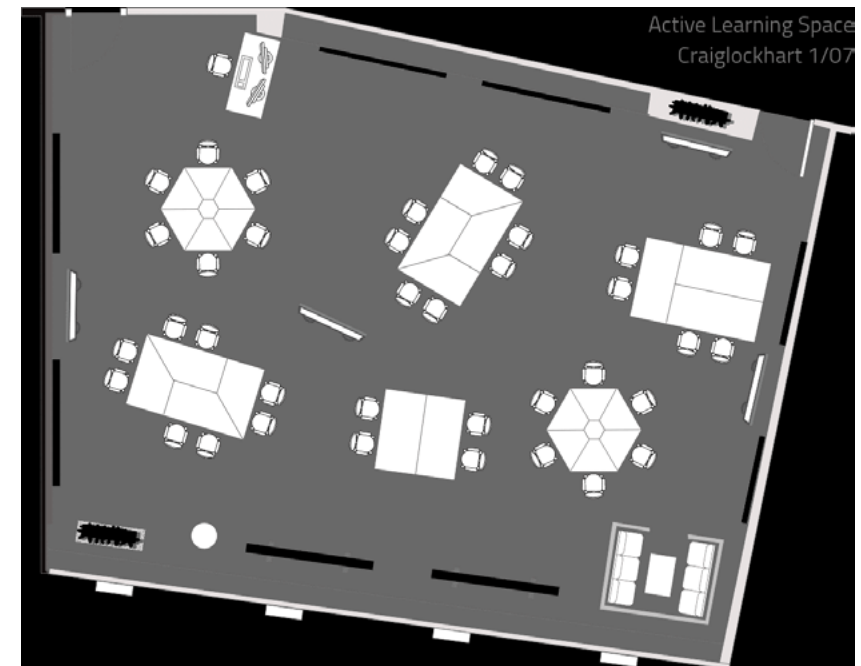
Here are some examples of sessions and activities that are particularly well-suited to this unique multi-screen, flexible environment.

1. The "Think-Pair-Share" on a Grand Scale

- Present a complex problem on the front screens. Students work individually, then move into groups near a collaborative screen.
- Each group wirelessly shares their solution onto their local screen. You can then "throw" one or more of these group screens to the main front screens to kick off a whole-class discussion.
- This part of the online [Active Learning Guide includes guidance videos for both students and staff, to support working with the front and collaborative screens.](#)

2. The Virtual Gallery Walk

- Students work in groups to create a presentation or a visual artifact on their own devices.
- Each group wirelessly shares their work to their peripheral screen. Students then "walk" around the room, viewing the different displays from the other groups. The flexible furniture makes this easy.
- The room easily allows for non-screen elements too, including whiteboards, LEGO, flipcharts and more.



Part 2: Session and Activity Ideas - continued

3. The Multi-Source Research Session

- Use the two main screens to simultaneously display different source materials (e.g., an academic paper and a live news feed).
- Students work in small groups to synthesize information from the front screens with their own research. Each group can wirelessly display their findings on their local screen.

4. Student-led Seminars

- Students take a portion of the seminar to lead the class through a task, or introduce a topic. They engage their peers in relevant activities, co-creating outputs, digital artifacts and shared learning experiences.
- This requires appropriate planning and prior engagement from students. It could be built into the overall structure and ethos of a module.

5. Guest Speakers

- Use the dual screen approach (see number 3 above) to bring in a live or pre-recorded guest speaker.
- With a second screen available, the class can contribute to a Padlet (or similar) during the session to identify discussion points and questions for the speaker.

6. Polling, Padlets and Collaborative Tools

- Make use of additional digital tools in your classes, such as Padlet boards, polling, shared documents and other forms of collaboration.
- With the collaborative screens available to your students, encourage, guide and support their use of different tools.
- This could include an element of flipped classroom work, with students having researched a topic or read a paper in advance, then using the available tools to discuss, analyse and share the materials.
- This [short paper \(PDF link: Garnham & Betts, 2018\) suggests some methods and benefits of a Padlet based approach.](#)

Part 3: Reflect, Share, and Develop – Becoming a Pedagogical Innovator

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This active learning classroom is a dynamic space that will get better with your feedback and creativity. Here's how you can play a part in its development.

1. Reflecting on Your Practice

After each session, take a few minutes to reflect. Ask yourself:

- What worked well?
- What was challenging?
- What would I do differently next time?

2. Sharing Your Experiences and Ideas

Your colleagues can learn a lot from your experiences.

- Showcasing Success: Create a brief summary of a successful session you ran and share it with your department.
- Sharing Practice: Invite colleagues to observe your teaching or share your session plans and reflections with them or what worked well, what students did and said and what you would do differently.
- Creating a Repository: Suggest setting up a shared online space where all users of the room can post their session plans, successful activities, or tips.
- Problem-Solving: If you encountered a challenge, share it with colleagues. Someone else may have a solution.

Part 3: Reflect, Share, and Develop – continued

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3. Playing a Part in Development

Your feedback is crucial for making the room and its future iterations even better.

- Formal Feedback Channels: Use official channels to report any technical issues or suggest improvements.
- Joining a Working Group: Volunteer to be part of a user group for the classroom. This gives you a direct voice in future decisions about the room's hardware, software, and furniture.
- Proposing New Activities: If you have an innovative idea that the room could support, share it with the development team. Your creativity could lead to a new feature being added.