

Activity Focused Classrooms

(The combination of active lessons and standing desks)



Description: The creation of an indoor classroom (and teaching practices) that promote movement and learning. It will include the combination of **standing desks**, **active lessons**, and more **relaxed classroom design** (e.g., whiteboards on all walls, bean bags etc.)

Will this change affect a lot of students within a school?

- If put into place across a whole school, all students would get to have **all of their lessons** in these types of classrooms.
- It might only be possible to re-design a **small number of classrooms** initially- therefore it could be difficult to get ALL students having lessons in these classrooms (i.e., they may only be scheduled to be in that classroom once per week).

Will this change work equally for all students?

- It might be more difficult to engage with students with **disabilities** in activity focused classrooms (as they combine standing desks and active lessons).

Will people like this change?

- **Teachers** in our CASE advisory groups have been **very positive** about this approach.
- One school (in Cambridgeshire) has redesigned some classrooms to include whiteboards on all walls; bean bags and new furniture to encourage a more relaxed classroom vibe (which encourages more movement) and reported that this is very positive with both **teachers and students**.
- Given that this approach **combines standing desks** and **active lessons** – please also consider the information on these changes too.

How easy is it to make this change?

- It may be very difficult to design **all** classrooms the same (this will depend on space/existing classroom structure in each school). Therefore a selection may need to be made about which classrooms become 'activity focused, which may result in not all students being able to receive lessons in such a classroom.
- Introducing an activity focused classroom is shown to be easy to do in **primary school** settings but not (yet) in secondary school settings (i.e., to date, there are no studies in secondary schools).

- It is unknown if the **combination** of classroom designs changes (e.g., **standing desks** AND **active lessons**) would be easy to put into place for **teachers**.

Will it work?

- No studies have tried this approach in **secondary schools**.
- Evidence from **primary schools** suggests that classrooms that enable children to move around (through furniture/classroom setup and teaching practice changes) result in **50% more physical activity** over the course of the school day than traditional classrooms.
- No studies have assessed the impact of activity focused classrooms on **learning/academic focused outcomes**.
- Given that activity permissive classrooms combine **standing desks** and **active lessons**. Please also consider information on the effectiveness of these approaches individually too.

How much will it cost?

- This combines the **standing desk** only approach and the **active lessons** only approach, and would add new classroom features, such as new whiteboards on multiple walls (approx. **£30** per unit), and bean bags (approx. **£20** each).
- The costs of the standing desks are approximately **£300** per desk or **£9000 per class** (see **standing desks** costs). The costs of the active lessons, were approximately **£2000** for training (see **active lessons** costs).
- Assuming that this **will not involve a physical expansion** of the classroom space, but a re-arranging of the existing desk space, then this approach **adds little or nothing to the costs of the standing desks and the provision of active lessons**.