



large active learning classrooms ideabook



02 Designing for Large Active Learning Classrooms

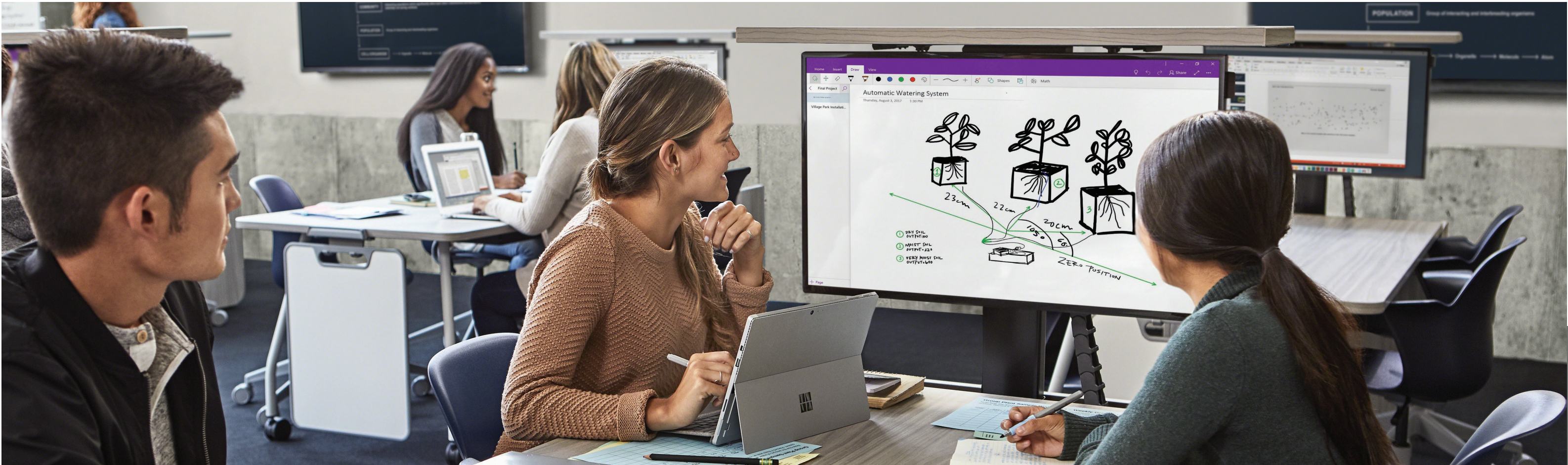
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Active learning encourages students to take a hands-on approach in the classroom, developing useful problem-solving skills for everyday life.

Designing for Large Active Learning Classrooms

While attempting to optimize the learning environment, education leaders are recognizing that traditional lecture halls, while efficient, might not always support highly effective learning. The long-term relevancy of traditional lecture halls has also come into question, with various models, including MOOCs and flipped classrooms, leveraging technology for lecture capture. While these models accommodate large classes, it's possible they don't effectively engage students in active learning. In an effort to better understand the support needed to address this tension, Steelcase Education conducted research around the design of large active learning classrooms. Through a mixed-methods research approach, Steelcase Education developed design principles for instructors and institutions to learn from as they implement large active learning classrooms as a solution.

Steelcase's research also showed that, while large active learning classrooms are one solution to increase effective learning, there are many other models to consider—including flipped classrooms, math emporium classrooms and lab/project rooms with online lectures. These models are some of the solutions that balance teaching with space and technology, and should be considered as schools address learning effectiveness and efficiency in their campus plans.

Design Principles

From social engagement to content interaction to instructor support, consider the following design principles when designing a large active classroom.

01

Prepare The Mindset

- Begin with a pilot classroom; select an underutilized classroom space
- Create transparency into large active learning classrooms through large windows or a storefront
- Provide an observation zone where other faculty can observe the Large Active Learning Classroom (LAC) in use

02

Design For Social Engagement

- Limit the size of the tables to groups of four to six students, and provide swivel seating
- Consider adding lounge furniture within the classroom to create informal environments
- Support shoulder-to-shoulder postures at the table among the learners and the instructor/teaching assistant
- Support breakouts/asides

03

Design For Participation

- Create clear sight lines for the instructor to monitor the room
- Provide ways for students to signal professors visually, using lights or signs
- If microphones are necessary, make them approachable

04

Design For Feedback

- Provide analog tools, such as whiteboards, for students to show their work
- Provide digital tools, like apps or clickers, to allow students to show their knowledge
- Provide backup tools in case the technology fails

05

Design For Flexibility

- Provide movable furniture
- Provide easily accessible power that doesn't inhibit the flexibility of the furniture
- Where applicable, use storable furniture

06

Design For Noise

- Include acoustic panels and carpet to diminish noise levels
- Consider microphones for the instructor and for each group

07

Design For Group Identification

- Assist with wayfinding, and streamline transitions between activities by creating a system to identify specific tables and zones within the classroom

08

Design For Teaching Staff

- Plan for a team of teaching assistants proportional to the size of the class
- Provide seating for teaching assistants or designate a teaching assistant zone

09

Support Learning Before And After Class

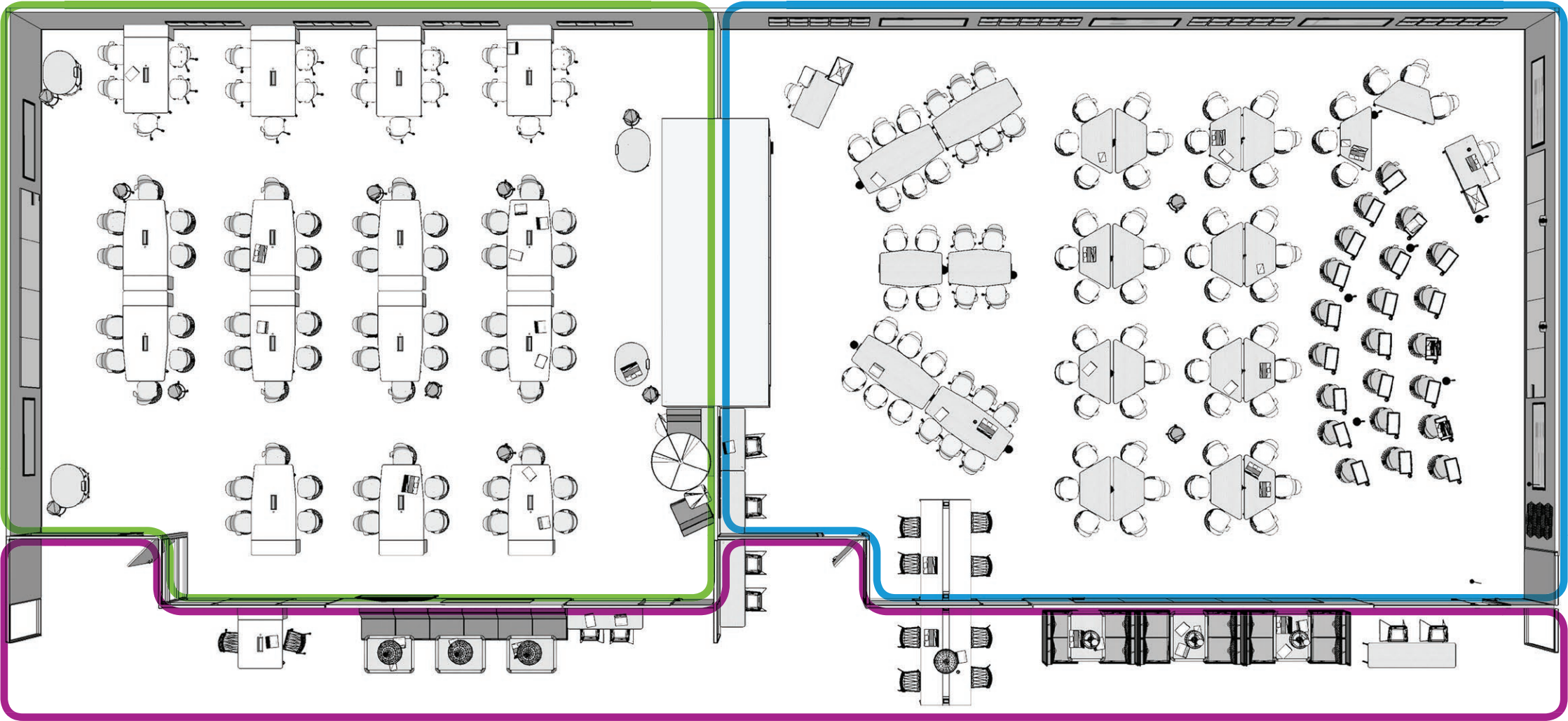
- Facilitate and expedite the entering and exiting of the space
- Activate the space immediately outside the class to support social interactions and allow for productive waiting
- Consider the use of digital signage just outside to prepare students prior to class

Different Spaces for Multiple Modes of Learning

Today's media-rich yet hands-on classroom experience requires spaces that support movement, technology and multiple modes of learning in Flexible, Technology-Enabled and In-Between spaces. The following design considerations can be used to inform plans for large active classrooms.

For additional planning ideas, please visit [Steelcase.com/planningideas](https://steelcase.com/planningideas).

- Technology-Enabled Classroom
- Flexible Classroom
- In-Between



Technology-Enabled Classroom

Technology is an integral part of students' lives and because of that, a vital tool in large active learning classrooms. Thoughtful integration is key when designing tech-enabled spaces that support the learning process and don't create barriers for students or instructors.

Student Capacity

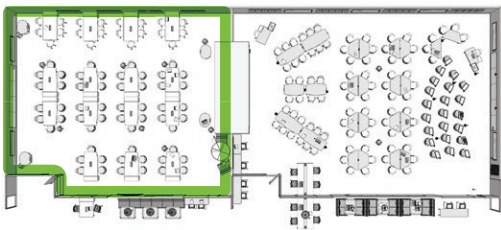
75

Room Size

46' x 50' = 2,300 ft²

Square Feet per Student

31 ft²



- 01

Enable technology to equally represent remote learners and instructors as though they were another face at the table.
- 02

Provide teaching assistants with tall tables in the corners of the classroom, so they can see and be seen.
- 03

Provide clear sight lines to digital and analog content from every seat in the classroom, while making technology easily accessible for the students.
- 04

Lounge settings can be added in small niches and corners, providing alternate places to focus or collaborate.

- FEATURED PRODUCT

Verb™ Active Media Table

Verb™ Whiteboards

Campfire® Half Lounge

Campfire® Big Table

Campfire® Slim Table

Campfire® Skate Table
- Node™

Brody Footrest

ScapeSeries Table

Verge™ Stool

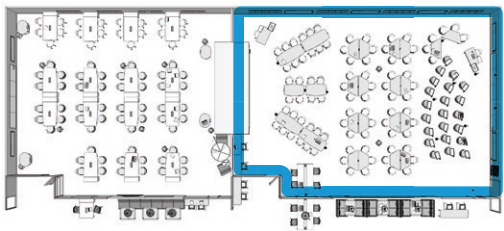
Flexible Classroom

In flexible large active classrooms, students have the freedom to transition between learning modes, move around the space and share content in a variety of ways. With high volumes of activity, it's important these spaces are carefully designed to support the learning of 60+ students, even in an ever-changing environment.

Student Capacity
112

Room Size
46' x 60' = 2,760 ft²

Square Feet per Student
25 ft²



01 Provide varied furniture and seating options that subdivide the classroom and prevent a sea of chairs, while also allowing students to choose a seat based on personal preference.

02 Provide swivel seating that encourages visual connection to the instructor and physical movement, and allows for quick modal switching.

03 Movable power access at each table ensures flexibility for students and instructors.

04 Maximize the space by utilizing perimeter whiteboards for collaborative idea generation.

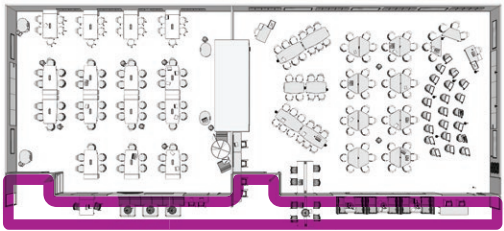
FEATURED PRODUCT

Node™
Verb™
Verb™ Whiteboards
Thread Power Distribution System
Campfire® Big Table

Move™
Scoop by Turnstone
V.I.A.
a³ CeramicSteel Flow

In-Between

Learning happens before students walk into the classroom. Front porch and in-between spaces serve as study and gathering places before and after class, so it's important they're designed with learning in mind.



- 01

Provide open views to the classroom with glass, but control visual privacy as needed with varied opacity.
- 02

Create a more porous classroom by pushing content onto hallway monitors.
- 03

Provide digital and analog tools for students to connect to before and after class, to encourage collaboration.
- 04

Niches with comfortable furniture provide students with places to study along the circulation path.

FEATURED PRODUCT	
Verb™ Standing Height Table	Scoop by Turnstone
Verb™ Whiteboards	Move™
Campfire® Big Lounge	V.I.A.
Campfire® Big Table	
Lagunitas™ Lounge by Coalesse	



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