Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary

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Elementary

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Answer Key:

For an Instructor’s Guide to this case study, please email your full name, title, and institutional affiliation to the IRIS Center at iris@vanderbilt.edu.
To Cite This Case Study Unit

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Licensure and Content Standards

This IRIS Case Study aligns with the following licensure and program standards and topic areas.

**Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)**
CAEP standards for the accreditation of educators are designed to improve the quality and effectiveness not only of new instructional practitioners but also the evidence-base used to assess those qualities in the classroom.

- Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

**Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)**
CEC standards encompass a wide range of ethics, standards, and practices created to help guide those who have taken on the crucial role of educating students with disabilities.

- Standard 2: Learning Environments

**Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC)**
InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards are designed to help teachers of all grade levels and content areas to prepare their students either for college or for employment following graduation.

- Standard 3: Learning Environments

**National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)**
NCATE standards are intended to serve as professional guidelines for educators. They also overview the “organizational structures, policies, and procedures” necessary to support them.

- Standard 1: Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions

**The Division for Early Childhood Recommended Practices (DEC)**
The DEC Recommended Practices are designed to help improve the learning outcomes of young children (birth through age five) who have or who are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities.

- Topic 3: Environment
Effective instruction is fostered in a supportive classroom environment. Teachers can create supportive environments in a number of ways. In addition to developing significant relationships with students, celebrating student’s cultural diversity, and creating a safe learning space, teachers can arrange their classrooms to promote student learning and interaction. Effective room arrangement refers to teachers arranging the physical elements of the classroom (e.g., seating, materials) to help establish a learning environment that facilitates student growth. Well-designed classroom environments:

- Decrease the likelihood of inappropriate student behavior
- Facilitate appropriate social interactions among students
- Provide structure and predictability
- Increase academic engagement
- Positively impact student performance

With an effective classroom arrangement, teachers can facilitate different instructional activities and support the varying needs of the students. Additionally, they can prevent disruptive behaviors and the loss of instructional time. Each classroom is unique and has different needs. For this reason, there is no one best way to design the classroom environment. However, teachers can design effective classroom arrangements using the practices described in this case study unit:

- Facilitating efficient traffic patterns
- Supporting frequent interaction and monitoring
- Maximizing teaching and engagement
- Minimizing distractions

These practices will be explored on the following IRIS STAR Sheets.

**Resources**

About the Strategy

Facilitating efficient traffic patterns involves arranging the physical aspects of the classroom (e.g., materials, equipment, other students) to ensure that teachers and students alike can move through the room and access materials without difficulty.

What the Research and Resources Say

- Eliminating physical barriers and providing ample walkways can facilitate students’ and teachers’ movement and prevent them from colliding with objects or each other or interrupting each other’s work (Jones & Jones, 2007).
- By intentionally designing and managing effective traffic patterns, teachers can increase classroom safety (Sprague, 2007).
- Effective traffic patterns and easy accessibility to storage, resources, and tools are important components of conducive learning environments (Evertson & Emmer, 2017).
- Flexible access to furniture, equipment, and supplies helps establish student independence in the learning environment (HEFCE, 2006).
- Students are more likely to use instructional materials that are easy to access (Gettinger & Fischer, 2015).

Strategies to Implement

- Arrange the classroom to promote a smooth traffic flow that avoids areas getting congested or going unsupervised.
- Assess the classroom for the presence or absence of the “bump factor.” Challenging behaviors (e.g., academic and social-emotional) are more likely to occur if students or teachers are routinely bumping into each other, others’ belongings, or tables and desks.
- Place frequently utilized supplies, equipment, and materials in easy-to-reach locations.
- Create walking space between and around classroom furniture and equipment and remove any unused or unnecessary furniture and equipment.
- Teach students procedures and routines for activities that require movement, including transitioning between activities, accessing materials and supplies, and practicing emergency drills and other safety procedures.
- Remove unused or unnecessary equipment and furniture from the classroom to facilitate efficient traffic patterns.
Keep In Mind

- A simple way to test the traffic patterns in the classroom is to walk through all the designated areas with the chairs placed as though students were seated in them.
- In the event of an emergency, blocked walkways can be problematic or even hazardous. For this reason, it is a good idea to make note of items that hinder efficient traffic patterns while practicing emergency drills.
- Some students, such as those who use wheelchairs and walkers, may benefit from additional space for movement (e.g., wider aisles) as well as storage for any special equipment.

For Your Information

Efficient traffic patterns allow teachers to more easily incorporate purposeful movement during instruction (e.g., physical games, hands-on tasks, role plays). This type of movement has many benefits, such as helping students to:

- Contend with anxiety (especially those who live in poverty and experience chronic stress)
- Process information
- Maintain engagement
- Increase their positive attitudes and motivation
- Reduce off-task behavior
- Improve academic achievement

Resources


Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary
Supporting Frequent Interaction

About the Strategy

**Supporting frequent interaction** involves arranging the physical aspects of the classroom (e.g., materials, equipment, desks) to ensure that the teacher can move throughout the classroom to more efficiently access, engage with, and monitor student learning and behavior.

What the Research and Resources Say

- Teacher interaction with students is correlated to student seating location (Good & Brophy, 2008; Evertson & Emmer, 2017; Rogers, 2011; Weinstein & Romano, 2014).
- When teacher-to-student interactions increase, positive adult-student relationships develop and the occurrence of problem behaviors decreases. (Colvin, Sugai, Good & Lee, 1997; Simonson & Myers 2015)
- Frequent teacher movement encourages students to remain on-task and offers the teacher insight into student discussions, work, and progress (Weinstein & Romano, 2014).
- When the teacher was in close proximity, the rate and probability of student engagement following an adult directive increased (Conroy, Asmus, Ladwig, Sellers, & Valcante, 2004).
- Effective monitoring and supervision require that the teacher move frequently throughout the classroom and maintain constant lines of sight to each student (Evertson & Emmer, 2017).

Strategies to Implement

- Circulate among students as they work (e.g., independently, in small groups) to assess and address each student’s academic and behavioral needs.
- Frequently move throughout the room when providing instruction to monitor student engagement and performance.
- Move throughout the classroom with purpose so as not to distract students unnecessarily.
- Create a clear line of sight to students to easily monitor them from any location.
- Consciously place bookcases, file cabinets, and other pieces of equipment so as not to block accessibility to students. Check for blind spots by standing in different locations in the room.

Keep In Mind

- By continuously moving throughout the classroom, the teacher can maintain proximity to all students, thereby heightening students’ attention to tasks and expected behaviors.
- Frequent movement among the students allows the teacher to offer immediate learning assistance to students and to provide frequent encouragement and timely feedback, all of which increases student engagement.
- Some students will benefit from more frequent teacher interaction and monitoring.
Resources


Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary
Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format

About the Strategy

Matching room arrangement with instructional format involves promoting student academic and social-emotional learning by arranging the classroom to facilitate the lesson and supporting activities.

What the Research and Resources Say

• Seating arrangements should match the instructional format (e.g., whole-group, small-group) because these arrangements establish both academic and social expectations (Chance, 2015; Evertson & Emmer, 2017; Gremmen, van den Berg, Segers, & Cillessen, 2016; Weinstein & Romano, 2014; Wong & Wong, 2009).
• Flexible room arrangement supports the use of a variety of instructional formats (e.g., whole-group, small-group, individual), which keep students actively engaged (Wong & Wong, 2009; Yoder, 2014).
• Grouped seating arrangements can increase student social interaction, while seating in rows can increase on-task behavior and the amount of independent work that students complete (Gremmen, van den Berg, Segers, & Cillessen, 2016; Wong & Wong, 2009).
• Room arrangements that support collaborative activities can improve social interactions among peer learners, which in turn can help improve student academic performance (HEFCE, 2006).

Strategies to Implement

• For each lesson, select an instructional format and then choose a room arrangement that best supports it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Arrangement</th>
<th>Room Arrangement</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td>Independent work (e.g., tests,</td>
<td>Seats are arranged in rows or paired rows (see</td>
<td>• Allows student to focus on the teacher</td>
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<td>lectures)</td>
<td>examples A and B on next page)</td>
<td>• Increases positive behaviors (e.g., raising hand for assistance)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Promotes on-task behavior during independent work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group work (e.g., learning centers</td>
<td>Seats are arranged in clusters (see examples C and D</td>
<td>• Facilitates interactions among group members</td>
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<td>, small-group discussions)</td>
<td>on next page)</td>
<td>• Allows students to attend to instruction or independent work</td>
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<th>Instructional Arrangement</th>
<th>Room Arrangement</th>
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| Demonstrations or discussions| Seats are arranged in a U-shape or multiple U’s of five or six students (see examples E and F on next page) | • Allows all students to have direct eye contact with the teacher and their peers  
• Promotes greater communication among the group |

- Involve students in designing effective arrangements for different instructional formats to increase their engagement in academic learning and to build ownership of the classroom.
- Teach students to rearrange the classroom for specific instructional formats when provided a verbal or visual cue. Successful student rearrangement requires practice.
- Provide a clear line of sight from wherever the students are seated to wherever instruction is being provided (e.g., smart board, overhead projector screen, demonstration table).
Possible Room Arrangements

**Independent Work / Tests / Beginning of the Year / Lecture**

**Group Work / Stations**

**Demonstration / Discussion**
Keep In Mind

- Different instructional formats may require different room arrangements.
- Continual rearrangement of the classroom can be disruptive. Teachers should plan their room arrangement to fit the majority of the day’s instruction and find ways to adjust this arrangement to meet other lesson purposes only when necessary.
- When designing seating arrangements to support different instructional formats, teachers should make sure there is enough room to move freely about the classroom and to monitor student engagement.
- Students who have their back to an instructional area can more easily avoid engaging with the lesson than those who are facing the area.
- U-shape classroom arrangements are most effective with classes of 20 or fewer students. For larger classes, teachers may want to create multiple smaller “U’s” of five or six students.

Resources


Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary
Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events

About the Strategy

**Minimizing distractions and disruptive events** involves arranging the physical aspects of the classroom (e.g., materials, equipment, students’ desks) to reduce distractions and the occurrence of challenging behaviors that might interfere with a student’s learning.

What the Research and Resources Say

- Effective teachers proactively prevent distractions and disruptive events by purposefully organizing the materials and space in their classrooms (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011).
- By minimizing distractions, teachers can increase students’ sense of psychological safety in a classroom. This is particularly important for students experiencing stressful situations or events (e.g., poverty, homelessness, abuse) (Weinstein & Romano, 2014).
- Teachers identified crowded rooms as settings that foster challenging behaviors (McGill, Teer, Rye, and Hughes, 2005). On the other hand, when children have more space, the quality of interpersonal interactions with peers and teachers is improved regardless of room design (Maxwell, 2003).

Strategies to Implement

- Identify potential distractions in the classroom, which might include items (e.g., windows, doors, aquariums), equipment (e.g., computers), noise (e.g., pencil sharpener), and individuals.
- Sit at each location in the classroom to experience potential distractions that students might encounter.
- Relocate items, equipment, or individuals as needed to minimize distractions.
  - Arrange high-traffic areas (e.g., pencil sharpener, trash can) to avoid congestion and to minimize distraction caused by their use.
  - Arrange classroom elements (e.g., desks, carpeted areas) to avoid crowding.
  - Provide work areas that are quiet and distraction-free.
- Position the desks of students with challenging behaviors (e.g., academic and social-emotional) near areas with limited distractions and greater access to work materials and teacher support.

Keep In Mind

- Individual students find different items, equipment, noise, and individuals distracting.
- Although some items cannot be relocated, the teacher can minimize their disruptive effects through other means. For example, a distracting computer monitor might be turned to a different angle or blocked by a temporary partition (e.g., a trifold display).
- Well-thought-out room arrangement can help reduce student distractions when incompatible activities (e.g., silent reading and small-group instruction) are taking place at the same time.
Resources


Background

Student: Liam  
Age: 8.3  
Grade: 3rd

Scenario

Liam is a 3rd grader who has autism spectrum disorder (ASD). During independent work time, he is easily distracted by noise and movement and often does not finish his work or completes it haphazardly. Liam also struggles with taking social cues from peers and often violates others’ personal space. One accommodation in Liam’s IEP is that he be seated near the dry erase board where the independent work directions are written. However, after sketching the classroom arrangement (below), his teacher begins to suspect that Liam’s off-task behavior may be a result of his seating location (starred). His teacher has decided to rearrange the classroom so that Liam will achieve the following goals within six weeks:

- Increase the amount of time on-task during independent work  
- Increase the number of assignments completed

Possible Strategies

- Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns  
- Supporting Frequent Interaction  
- Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format  
- Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events
Assignment

1. Read the STAR Sheets on the possible strategies listed above.
2. Identify four issues (one related to each strategy) related to room arrangement that might contribute to Liam being distracted and not completing his independent work.
Background

Student: Harper
Age: 7.1
Grade: 1st

Scenario

Harper has been diagnosed with a syndrome that is characterized by fragile bones. For Harper, simple jostling or bumps can result in broken bones. She walks with leg braces and uses a walker. She missed much of her first-grade year because of her condition and is therefore repeating first grade. Harper is protectively seated beside the teacher’s desk, separate from the other students. At this location, Harper has a place to put her walker for easy access. Her academic work demonstrates that she is making adequate progress; however, her social skills are less developed than that of her peers. With this information in mind, the teacher has decided to reassign Harper’s seating location to help her achieve the following goals within nine weeks:

- Increase her positive interactions with peers
- Increase her safe movement to and from the group table for small-group reading instruction and into and out of the classroom

Possible Strategies

- Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns
- Supporting Frequent Interaction
- Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format
- Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events

Assignment

1. Read the STAR Sheets on the possible strategies listed above.
2. Using these strategies, explain why each of the seating locations indicated on the diagram below (A, B, and C) is either suitable or not suitable for helping Harper to meet her goals.
CASE STUDY

Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary
Level B • Case 1

Background
Student: Marcus
Age: 7.5
Grade: 2nd

Scenario
Marcus is a 2nd-grader with ADHD. Whether tapping his pencil, adjusting his seat, sharpening his pencil, “shooting baskets” with his trash, or walking through the room, Marcus seems to be in constant motion. During independent work, he is often off-task. This is particularly the case when his teacher is working with a small group at the group table. The teacher interrupts the small group on a regular basis to try to refocus Marcus on his independent work. After speaking with a colleague, the teacher recognizes that she may not be planning enough physical activity during the instructional day to address Marcus’s needs. She also created a diagram of the classroom (below) and recognized that there are several distractions that might lead to Marcus’s off-task behavior. The teacher is planning to enhance her lesson plans with physical activities and to rearrange the classroom or relocate Marcus’s seating position (indicated below with a red star) to help him meet the following goal in four weeks:

• Increase the amount of time on-task during independent work

Possible Strategies
• Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns
• Supporting Frequent Interaction
• Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format
• Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events
Assignment

1. Read the STAR Sheets on the possible strategies listed above.
2. Referencing the classroom sketch above, list two potential sources of distraction for Marcus.
3. Discuss two changes you would make to the classroom arrangement to help Marcus meet his goal? Explain your rationale.
CASE STUDY
Effective Room Arrangement: Elementary
Level B • Case 2

Background

Students: Oliver  Aliyah  Abigail  Paulo
Ages: 9.2  9.7  9.5  10.4
Grade: 4th  4th  4th  4th

Scenario

Following their mathematics class with the special education teacher, Oliver, Aliyah, Abigail, and Paulo rejoin their general education class for social studies. The special education teacher has suggested that the social studies teacher place these fourth graders at seating locations separate from one another, so as to allow them to have more opportunities to interact with their peers. To help facilitate their seating assignments, the special education teacher offered the following information:

Oliver
- Needs to be near the dry erase board to see written material or near the demonstration table to see demonstrations
- Is easily distracted by other students
- Likes to volunteer to help the teacher

Aliyah
- Is shy
- Is easily distracted, especially by computers
- Does a good job of pretending to be on-task when she does not understand how to do something or isn’t interested

Abigail
- Is talkative
- Will try to monopolize the teacher’s attention
- Is a strong reader

Paulo
- Loves science
- Gets along well with other students
- Works well in groups
- Needs to be provided tactile experiences
- Requires a wheelchair for mobility

Possible Strategies
- Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns
- Supporting Frequent Interaction
- Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format
- Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events
Assignment

1. Read the STAR Sheets on the possible strategies listed above.
2. Assign each of the four students one of the lettered seats in the classroom sketch below.
3. Explain why you selected these specific seating locations and indicate which strategies you used to make your decisions.
Background

Student: Ava
Age: 10.8
Grade: 5th

Scenario

Ava is a fifth grader who has recently increased the amount of time she spends in her general education classroom to two hours. During this block of time, the class works for 45 minutes on math, one hour on social studies or science (alternating each week), and 15 minutes on independent reading. Mathematics instruction typically involves working with a partner. Social studies and science instruction vary in format from paired to small-group to whole-group based on the unit of study. Independent reading is conducted with students seated at their individual desks. Although she has made progress this semester and is reading at the second-grade level, Ava remains a reluctant reader and is often distracted. Ava’s teachers anticipate that her strengths will help her be successful in the general education classroom.

Areas of Strength

- Participates well in group activities
- Has a strong interest in science and social studies
- Follows oral directions well

Assignment

1. Review all of the STAR Sheets.
2. Complete the room arrangement below to meet the class’s instructional needs and to better support Ava by sketching the furniture shown in the key to include:
   a. 22 student desks, including one designated with a star for Ava
   b. teacher desk
   c. group table
   d. trash can
3. Explain your rationale for both the sketched classroom arrangement and Ava’s seating location. Identify which strategy(ies) you used to make your decisions.
The cases provided with this set offer opportunities for your students to explore many of the issues associated with arranging a classroom. The Case Study set is designed to suit your class’s needs. You can adapt or supplement the activities as seems appropriate. A number of assignment supplements to this set are offered at the conclusion of this Instructor’s Guide.

Level A, Case 1

Responses to Question 2 should include at least one arrangement issue from each of the four strategy categories. Following are possible arrangement issues for each strategy.

**Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns**

- a. There may not be enough walkway space between Liam’s desk and the dry erase board, which may cause others to bump into him or his desk.
- b. Liam is seated in a high-traffic area. Students may need to walk by his desk as they move to the small-group table, trash can, and computer.

**Supporting Frequent Interaction**

- a. Liam’s teacher does not have a clear line of sight to him. This might prevent her from effectively monitoring his academic and social behaviors and interacting with him as necessary.
- b. Liam’s desk is not in close proximity to his teacher, which may prohibit frequent interaction.

**Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format**

- a. Although clustered seating facilitates interactions among group members, this arrangement may interfere with Liam completing his independent work as he is easily distracted by noise and movement and often does not finish his work or completes it haphazardly. Additionally, other students in the group may find it difficult to complete their work as Liam struggles with taking social cues from peers and often violates others’ personal space.
- b. Although one accommodation in Liam’s IEP is that he be seated near the dry erase board where the independent work directions are written, Liam has limited access to most content on the board unless he turns around in his seat.

**Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events**

- a. Liam is seated at a desk near the small-group table, the computer, the trash can, and the window. These may all be distractions for him.
- b. Liam is seated so that students walk past him to go to the computer, the trash can, and the small-group table. This may also be problematic due to Liam’s issues with distractibility.
- c. Liam is physically located near a number of students. Not only is he in a cluster with
three other students but there are also four students behind him. His proximity to other students could serve as a distraction.

Optional Discussion Topic: Preferential seating indicated in a student’s IEP

Level A, Case 2

Responses to Question 2 should include a discussion of each seating as either suitable or not suitable for Harper to meet her goals. Accept reasonable responses. Following are sample responses.

Seating location A:

Though seating location A does involve Harper in a group, it places her at the greatest distance from the reading group table and the classroom door. She would have to negotiate her way across the entire classroom to move to either. Her peers would be moving into and out of the desks on both sides of her, increasing the likelihood that one of them might bump into Harper. In addition, she would have no place to put her walker for easy access. Both her access and her movements are limited at this location. Therefore, this is not a suitable seating location for Harper.

Seating location B:

Seating location B involves Harper in a group but places her in the midst of the classroom. From this location, Harper would have to negotiate her way around other students and furniture to move to the reading group table or to the door. Though she is somewhat protected from bumping other students by being at the front of the room, she will have to travel around peers and furniture to get there. Harper might not have a place to put her walker for easy access. Because her access and her movement are limited at this location, this is not a suitable seating location for Harper.

Seating location C:

Seating location C involves Harper in a group. Additionally, she could easily travel to and from this seating location to the reading group table or the door. Harper’s walker could be stored for easy access beside her desk. Therefore, this is a suitable seating location for Harper.

Optional Discussion Topic: After this assignment, you may wish to discuss class-wide procedures. Procedures for moving in and out of the classroom and for moving to and from the reading group table would need to be in place to protect Harper and to make transitions efficient. For example, Harper might be the first or last person to move to the reading group table. She might have an assigned seat at that table. Procedures for walking carefully to line up at the door would also need to be in place.

Level B, Case 1

Responses to Question 2 should include two potential sources of distraction. Accept all reasonable responses. Answers may include the following.

☐ Small-group table — It is located in the middle of the classroom and in Marcus’ direct line of sight.
Trash can — It is located directly in front of his assigned seat.

Other students — Marcus’ desk adjoins that of another student on his right. Additionally, there is a student to his left.

Responses to Question 3 should include a discussion of two changes the teacher could make to the classroom arrangement to help Marcus meet his goal. Accept all reasonable responses. Following are sample responses for each of the issues identified above.

- Small-group table — Move the group table to the rear center of the classroom.
- Move the trash can to the rear left corner of the classroom.
- Other students — Evenly distribute the desks in sets of two in front of the table.

By restructuring the classroom design and minimizing distractions, Marcus will no longer be sitting in a high traffic area and will therefore have fewer distractions. This will likely increase his time on-task. Alternately, an acceptable response would be to move Marcus to a different seating position away from the identified distractors.

Optional Discussion Topic: You may wish to have an additional discussion concerning the timing and pacing of lessons, particularly those with a small group, to meet Marcus’ and other students’ need for movement. In addition, you may want to discuss specific examples of instructional activities with movement that may be effective for Marcus within the newly designed arrangements.

Level B, Case 2

Responses to this assignment will vary but should include a designated seat for each of the four students. The designated seats should place the four students at desks separated from one another. The explanation accompanying this seating arrangement should include a rationale for assigning the specific seating location for each student and the strategies(s) used to make this decision. Following is a sample response.

- **Oliver (Desk E):** Oliver’s seat is near the dry erase board and the teacher’s desk. Only one student is seated next to him. This will reduce the possibility of peer distractions. The strategy used to make this decision is **Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events**

- **Aliyah (Desk C):** This seat is far enough from the computer that it will not be distracting for Aliyah (**Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events**). Additionally, grouped seating arrangements can increase student social interaction, while seating in rows can increase on-task behavior and the amount of independent work that students complete. In this location, she is surrounded by peers, which will support social interaction as well as provide peer support when she does not understand a task (**Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format**). Finally, this seating location is located near the teacher’s desk, allowing for frequent teacher interaction, which may encourage Aliyah to remain on-task (**Supporting Frequent Interaction**).

- **Abigail (Desk T):** By moving Abigail to desk T, Abigail is now far enough away from the...
teacher’s desk and the group table so that she cannot monopolize the teacher’s attention and disrupt classroom instruction (Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events). At the same time, the teacher still has a direct line of sight to Abigail from her desk so that she can monitor Abigail (Supporting Frequent Interaction).

☐ Paulo (Desk P): This seat allows Paulo to easily maneuver his wheelchair from his desk to the group table and the door (Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns).

Level C, Case 1

Responses to this assignment should include a completed classroom arrangement sketch (using the provided skeleton classroom) with

☐ 22 student desks, including one designated with a star
☐ 1 teacher desk
☐ group table
☐ 1 trash can

Responses to question 3 should include the following information:

☐ A rationale for the sketched classroom arrangement (e.g., how the arrangement matches the instructional format, how the floor plan minimizes distractions and facilitates efficient traffic patterns)

☐ A rationale for Ava’s seating location (e.g., how Ava’s seating assignment minimizes distractions, how Ava’s seating location supports frequent interaction)

☐ The strategy(s) you used to make your decisions

Following is a sample response.

Student desks are arranged in sets of two so that students can conveniently work with partners. The rows are close enough together so that students can turn their chairs to form small groups of four (Matching Room Arrangement with Instructional Format). All student desks are facing toward the front of the classroom and away from windows and the door. (Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events). There is sufficient space between rows to allow for movement and a clear path to all high traffic areas in the classroom. (Facilitating Efficient Traffic Patterns)

Ava’s assigned seat is in the front of the class facing the board with one peer seated directly to her left. This will minimize possible distractions in the classroom, such as peers walking to the trash can or events in the hallway or outside the window. Her desk is arranged so that she is not near the trash can, teacher’s desk, or group table, which could also be possible distractions. (Minimizing Distractions and Disruptive Events). This seating location allows the teacher to have frequent interaction with Ava and to monitor her progress during class instruction. (Supporting Frequent Interaction)

Optional Discussion Topic: You may also wish to discuss the identification of instructional strategies that will support Ava across the various formats of instruction (paired, small-group, individual) as well as strategies that might support her during independent silent-reading time.