

Activity Permissive Classrooms

(The combination of Active Lessons and Stand-Biased Desks)



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

Reach

- If implemented across a school, all students would be exposed to these types of classrooms within a school.
- It might only be feasible to have these in a **small number of classrooms** initially; therefore it could be more difficult to get ALL students exposed to a new 'activity permissive' classroom.

Equality

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

Acceptability

- Our CASE advisory group teachers were very positive about this approach. One school (in Cambridgeshire) has already redesigned some classrooms to include whiteboards, bean bags, and new furniture to encourage a more relaxed classroom atmosphere (which inherently encourages more movement). This was reported to be **positively received by both teachers and students**.
- Given that this approach combines **stand-biased desks** and **active lessons** – please also consider the information on 'acceptability' for these interventions.

Feasibility

- It may be very difficult to design **all** classrooms the same (this will depend on space/existing classroom structure in each school), and a selection may need to be made (which classrooms become 'activity permissive') which may result in not all students being able to receive lessons in such a class room.
- Introducing an activity permissive classroom is shown to be feasible 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., **stand-biased desks** AND **active lessons**) would be feasible for **teachers and students**.

Effectiveness

- There is no evidence regarding the effectiveness (on physical activity or educational outcomes) of introducing activity permissive classrooms 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 more physical activity during the school day than traditional classrooms. In one study, students accumulated 50% more physical activity over the course of the school day.
- No studies have assessed the impact of activity permissive classrooms on **learning/academic focussed outcomes**.
- Given that activity permissive classrooms combine **stand-biased desks** and **active lessons**. Please also consider information on the effectiveness of these approaches individually too.

Cost

- This intervention combines the **stand-biased desk** only intervention and the **active lessons** only intervention, and would add new classroom features, such as new whiteboards on multiple walls, and bean bags.
 - The costs of the standing desks are approximately **£300** per desk or **£9000 per class** (see **stand-biased desks** costs). The costs of the active lessons, were approximately **£2000** for training (excluding ongoing professional development; see **active lessons** costs).
- For the new classroom features: whiteboards vary in price, but we can estimate **£30** per unit. Decent quality bean bags are available for a cost of around **£25**.
- Assuming that this intervention **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**.