

Back in My Day - A Look Inside the Modern Classroom

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There is so much changing in today's classroom that it is sometimes difficult to keep up. "Back in My Day" we had rows of desks and we sat there all day listening to the teacher. Today's classroom is much different. Many changes happened with the introduction of technology into the classroom and others with the implementation of Common Core and 21st Century Learning. Students today are required to think differently, learn differently and collaborate with others. This has caused us to adapt the products and furniture that we offer, so you can provide educators with the resources needed to support this way of thinking/learning.

Below are a few of the 21st Century Learning skills and habits that students are encountering in today's classroom.

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspaces
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression

Many of the above skills and habits required today do not fit well into the classroom setting of "Back in My Day." This image is what most of us think of when we envision a traditional classroom. There is definitely still a place for student desks and chair desk combos, and this option is still very popular

within many schools and districts. However, it is important that we understand the diverse range of classrooms and be prepared to offer a solution. Let's take a look at what you might encounter during your visit with educators today.

Collaborative Classroom

Collaborative Learning: An umbrella term for a variety of approaches in education that involve joint intellectual effort by students or students and teachers. Groups of students work together, searching for understanding, meaning or solutions or in creating a product. This approach is closely related to cooperative learning, but is considered to be more radical because of its reliance on a student's voice and input. Collaborative learning activities can include collaborative writing, group projects, and other activities.

Makerspace Classroom

You may encounter some very popular terms today while meeting with educators. It started with the STEM movement of learning (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math.) Not long after that educators added an "A" for Art to create STEAM. The "A" encouraged students to incorporate art into their engineering and technology projects. Soon after these were introduced into education, another term started to gain momentum and that was Makerspace. This style of classroom combined STEM and STEAM to allow a space for thinking, problem solving, collaboration, which are all 21st century habits. The newest related buzzword is Design Thinking. Design Thinking is essentially a way of looking at needs,

problems, and solutions by putting people and values first. It is "human centered" and based primarily on empathy. The first role of the Designer is to observe, ask questions, understand the user's needs, values, and the "make." Design thinking is about "how" we think, before addressing content or skills.

I'm sure many of you are already thinking "this is great information, but how does it help me increase sales in the education category?" Understanding some of these buzzwords will help you to have informed conversations with educators regarding the resources and furniture needed to create these spaces.

Many schools are repurposing their classrooms today or designing new classrooms to fit this style of learning. My daughter's elementary school recently held a fundraiser to raise the money needed to purchase new furniture and resources for a STEAM Lab/Makerspace room.

Now is a great time to be having these conversations with educators. SPR offers a wide range of resources and furniture to fit the needs of today's educator and classroom.

As always, the S.P. Richards Education Team is here to support you in your efforts to grow sales in the education market and to become a trusted partner to educators. Please reach out to us and let us know how we can help!

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