

THE LESSON ROOM | BY PETE GAMBER

# Extreme Lesson Room Makeover

Everyone focuses on the way to merchandise product on the showfloor. We explore what lighting and signage to use and talk about “curb appeal.” But what about lesson rooms? How do they look and smell? What’s the waiting area like? Do your lesson rooms “merchandise” the quality of your lesson program? Or do you explain away a funky lesson room with talk of great teaching.

I’m not recommending a sterile, cold, musical detention room, but it shouldn’t look like an alley or the remains of a Grateful Dead jam session. Take the time and clean up.

## WHAT’S IN THEM

The best way to start is to make sure the rooms have the right stuff in them. Get rid of anything non-lesson. It’s amazing what I’ve seen in lesson rooms around the country. Take out any couches, microwaves, weed-whackers, etc. If a teacher rides a bike to work, don’t store it in the lesson room.

Get rid of broken stuff, too. If it’s used for a lesson, and it’s busted, get a new one. Broken chairs, bent music stands, broken cymbals, broken blah blah blah—throw it out! Broken stuff makes your lesson program look broken.

And don’t use the lesson rooms as stock rooms. Stacks of boxes or packing peanuts, again, take away from what’s supposed to be happening in there, and it looks unprofessional.



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## START OVER

Once the equipment is in order, it’s time to do a deep cleaning. Paint the walls, clean the carpets (as determined by the number of coffee stains), and replace old fixtures and vents. When everything looks like new, it’s now top priority to keep it like that. The best way to keep clean

lesson rooms is to make cleaning part of a daily maintenance routine.

Put small waste baskets (with plastic liners) in each room, and empty them everyday. Encourage teachers to throw any trash in these. And in case they don’t, the rooms should be vacuumed nightly. While you’re at it, dust light fixtures and lesson gear, replace old bulbs, wipe the crud around the door handle and clean that funk from around the air vent.

Control any nasty smells. Don’t let teachers eat whole meals in the rooms—one Deluxe Veggie Salad could stink up the room like onion for days. And, of course, no smoking. Leave the lesson room doors open at night to air everything out. Mildly scented air fresheners can also work wonders.

Do the same with the public restroom, as well. If a waiting mother goes

in there, and it resembles what she might find at a gas station, that won’t send a very good message.

## ACCESSORIZE

Once cleaning is out of the way, take control of the walls. Hang posters that match the vibe you want, and make sure they’re not from 1983. Avoid beer posters, sex-appeal-guitar posters, “Legalize Hemp” signs or anything else that could diminish your program’s message or offend parents.

In halls and waiting areas, put up photos of your last student event; photos and descriptions of student achievements; and signs for upcoming student recitals, clinics and teacher performances. Even photos and bios of your teachers can be effective.

Trust me, once the cleaning is done, this is the fun part—have fun with colors, accessories and themes.

If this sounds like too much to consider all at one time, take a photo of your rooms, inside and out. Hang the photos up and circle what you see that you don’t like. It’s amazing what you’ll want to work on, and it’s amazing how much bad funk you can rid of—setting up some great funk from your students. **MI**

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