

MODULE 3 • IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Classroom Wall Redesign

Implementation Plan

Reimagining the classroom walls, one section at a time. A read-through, teacher-facing guide that moves you from reflection into action: how to redesign one wall or display area so it becomes intentional, inquiry-based, student-centred, and truly connected to the life of the classroom.

AGE GROUP	DURATION	FOCUS
Early Years to Upper Primary	Embed across a unit of inquiry	The walls as a living document

1 Read	2 Observe	3 Listen	4 Try	5 CM Tips
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CENTRAL IDEA

Reimagined as blank canvases awaiting the contributions of young minds, classroom walls make thinking visible, honour student voice, and tell a story where every child is a co-author.

"Let the walls of your classroom tell a story, one where every child is a co-author."

— J. Da Silva

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE

Use the **Stop, Pause, Reflect** approach. Begin with one wall or display board, not the whole room. This is not about creating a void; it is about inviting children to fill the space with their ideas, questions and artworks, and letting authenticity take precedence over perfection.

01 • WHY THIS MATTERS

Walls that make thinking visible

The theory and intended outcomes that underpin this plan

THE RATIONALE

According to Loris Malaguzzi, the environment acts as the 'third teacher', and well-designed classrooms significantly impact students' academic progress (Barrett et al., 2015). Ron Ritchhart's work on Making Thinking Visible reminds us that learning is maximised when thinking is visible, articulated and deliberately reflected upon (Ritchhart, Church & Morrison, 2011). Walls should echo the students' work, their thought processes and their creativity, displayed at a child's eye level, not a teacher's example aimed at impressing observers.

AUTHENTICITY OVER PERFECTION

Each individual contribution is of equal value and should always be represented in its original form, in the children's own words and mark-making. Beautiful displays have their place, but they should never come at the expense of genuine thinking. A display that is perfectly polished yet tells the teacher's story rather than the students' has missed its true purpose.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Walls that make student thinking visible: questions, drafts and mark-making in the children's own hands.
- Displays at children's eye level that they can read, revisit and add to.
- Original student work shown authentically, with no adult red pen or rewriting.
- Every child seeing their identity, language and culture reflected in the space.
- Walls that grow as living documents across the inquiry.
- Visual, non-verbal supports that help children navigate routines independently.

Drawing on: Malaguzzi (1993) • Barrett et al. (2015) • Ritchhart, Church & Morrison (2011) • Hattie (2009) • Piaget (1954).

02 · THE TEACHING SEQUENCE

Read, Observe, Listen

Build understanding before you restyle a single board

1 · READ: BUILD THE UNDERSTANDING

- Question the intent behind every item: does it enrich learning, or is it there out of habit?
- Displays should echo students' work, thinking and creativity, at their eye level.
- Making Thinking Visible: learning is maximised when thinking is articulated and reflected upon.
- Document the authentic learning journey; use the walls as an interactive reflection tool.

2 · OBSERVE: NOTICE THE INTENTION

Slow looking before interpretation. Notice:

- Whose voices are represented: the students', or an adult's interpretation of them?
- Whether work is at a child's eye level, accessible and engaging.
- Whether each contribution is shown in its original form, free of adult mark-making.
- Whether the wall invites interaction, or has become background decoration.

3 · LISTEN: WALLS THAT TELL A STORY

- Let the walls tell a story where every child is a co-author.
- Real-time documentation values the process of learning as much as the end result.
- Do not prioritise aesthetics over authentic student voice.
- Model care in how you present thinking, so children learn to value their own work.

TEACHER MOVE FOR THIS STAGE

Before changing anything, sit comfortably and catalogue objectively every item currently on your walls. Take a before-photograph. For each item ask: does this show student thinking, questions, identity and process, or only finished work? Is it supporting inquiry, or has it become decoration?

03 • TRY: THE REDESIGN SEQUENCE

Reimagine one wall, from purpose to presentation

This week's challenge: begin with one area and make thinking visible

- 1 **Choose one wall or display area.** Select one area to focus on first. Avoid trying to redesign the whole classroom at once.
- 2 **Observe what the wall currently communicates.** What does it say about learning? Does it show thinking, questions, identity and process, or only finished work? Is it supporting inquiry, or has it become background decoration?
- 3 **Decide the purpose of the wall.** Give the space a clear job before you fill it. Choose a purpose from the options alongside, and let it guide every decision that follows.
- 4 **Make student thinking visible.** Add real questions, drawings, post-it notes, photographs, speech bubbles and thinking routines. Include children's authentic handwriting and mark-making, and avoid over-polishing until the child's voice disappears.
- 5 **Create order without removing authenticity.** Use clear titles, frames, labels, spacing, borders or consistent backing colours. Keep the wall calm, readable and purposeful, presenting children's thinking with care while keeping it honest and alive.

WHAT IS THE WALL FOR?

Entry Point

Knowledge Harvest

I Wonder

Research

Reflection

Student Identity

Classroom Management & visual cue

REMEMBER

A well-designed display should enhance student thinking, never replace it. Order and authenticity are partners, not opposites: present the children's ideas with care while keeping their voice fully intact.

03 • TRY: THE REDESIGN SEQUENCE

Identity, ownership and a living document

Keep the wall growing with the children long after it goes up

- 6 **Include children's identity and voice.** Reflect home languages, family cultures, student photographs, countries, interests, questions and contributions, so every child can see they belong in the space.
- 7 **Use the wall as a living document.** Add to it during the inquiry and revisit it with the children. Move questions, add answers, document change and show how thinking develops over time.
- 8 **Build collective ownership.** Teach children how to care for the wall. Discuss what should stay, what should move and what needs to be added, and let children help maintain the area.
- 9 **Reflect and document the transformation.** Take a before photograph, photographs during the redesign, and an after photograph. Add short teacher reflection notes about what changed and how children responded.

DOCUMENT THE CHANGE

- **Before:** photograph the wall and note what it communicates now.
- **During:** capture the children creating collective pieces of work.
- **After:** photograph the finished wall as a shared agreement.
- **Reflect:** how did children respond, and what will you change next?

A GENTLE CAUTION

When you photograph collaboration, keep faces out of focus so the images can be used as assessment evidence in any portfolio. Never change the words of the children or elaborate on their thinking when presenting it.

03 • TRY: THE REDESIGN SEQUENCE • FOCUS POINT 10

Include multilingualism & non-verbal displays

Consider how your walls support all learners, including multilingual learners and children who may not yet have the language to express what they need

HOME LANGUAGES

Add home languages where meaningful, so every child sees their language and culture valued.

- Welcome displays and reflection areas.
- Classroom agreements and labels.
- Student voice walls.

VISUAL SUPPORTS

Offer multiple ways to communicate that do not rely on spoken English.

- Pictograms and photographs.
- Symbols and gestures.
- Non-verbal communication cards.

ROUTINES WITHOUT WORDS

Create displays that help children understand routines without repeated verbal instructions.

- Tidy-up photo prompts.
- "Return me to my spot" photographs.
- "Work in progress, please do not tidy" signs.

PRACTICAL EXAMPLES TO DISPLAY

Emotional check-in boards • "Let us talk" pictogram keyrings • visual reminders for how shared areas should be cared for • help and request cards • a "now and next" board to signal what comes next in the day.

NOT DECORATIVE EXTRAS

These displays are practical tools, not decoration. They support independence, inclusion, self-regulation and collective responsibility, so every child has equitable opportunities to communicate, contribute and belong.

05 • ONE-WALL REDESIGN PLANNER

Quick reference for your planning

Tear-off summary. Photograph the process and revisit the wall with the children before redesigning another area.

THE NINE MOVES, AT A GLANCE

- **Choose:** one wall or display area, not the whole room.
- **Observe:** what does it communicate now?
- **Decide:** give the wall a clear purpose.
- **Make visible:** real questions, drawings and mark-making.
- **Order:** titles, frames and calm, without losing authenticity.
- **Identity:** languages, cultures, photographs and voice.
- **Living document:** add, move and revisit across the inquiry.
- **Ownership:** teach children to care for the wall together.
- **Document:** before, during, after, plus reflection notes.

PLAN THE REDESIGN

SELECTED WALL / AREA *display board, corner, entry point*

WHAT IT COMMUNICATES NOW *thinking, identity, process, or only product?*

CHOSEN PURPOSE *I Wonder, Research, Reflection, Identity...*

KEEP / MOVE / ADD

Before

What does the wall communicate now?

.....
.....

During

What thinking did the children add and move?

.....
.....

After the inquiry

How did children respond, and what grew over time?

.....
.....

Let the walls tell the children's story.

Every question, sketch, photograph and reflection an honest representation of their voice.