

The ABC'S of Designing Places for Learning & Wellbeing



Agency: How are places designed to enable empowerment and engagement? How do spaces, objects and materials offer freedom and choice? In what ways are places designed to curtail passivity, apathy, helplessness, or disengagement?

Reachable & Open	<input type="checkbox"/> Materials, areas, and objects are easily findable, accessible and/or available. <input type="checkbox"/> Areas are open and free of visual and physical obstacles. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple pathways and possibilities for movement.
Movable & Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/> Elements are reconfigurable and/or rearrangeable. <input type="checkbox"/> Objects and/or materials are portable and not fixed. <input type="checkbox"/> Objects, materials, and/or spaces have multiple uses.
Varied & Adjustable	<input type="checkbox"/> Diverse range of types of spaces, materials, objects. <input type="checkbox"/> Various forms, shapes, colors, textures and/or stimuli. <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces, objects, and/or materials allow for adaptation and personal tailoring.



Belonging: How are places designed to develop connections to self, others and one's surroundings? How do places create opportunities for connecting across differences? In what ways do well-designed places avoid isolation, loneliness, or exclusion?

Visible & Connected	<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple interior perspectives and/or easy ways to see others. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple exterior views and/or easy ways to see the surrounding natural environment. <input type="checkbox"/> Objects, materials, and/or elements connect to personal interests and values.
Expressive & Invitational	<input type="checkbox"/> Offers culturally meaningful symbols, forms, colors, sounds, materials, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Has images, symbols or other elements that invite a range of people and identities <input type="checkbox"/> Elements offer ways for people to express ideas, values, and/or self.
Communal & Compact	<input type="checkbox"/> Offers ample small and large gathering spaces for eating, celebrating, socializing, relaxing, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces and elements provide spontaneous and serendipitous connecting across social boundaries. <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces, objects, and materials with different purposes are adjacent or close by.



Curiosity: How are places designed to spark surprise, wonder, awe, and amazement? How do they support noticing, inquiry, and exploration? In what ways do they diminish feelings of boredom, mindlessness, indifference, and disregard?

Contrasting & Unexpected	<input type="checkbox"/> Spaces, objects, and/or materials are surprising, novel and/or unexpected. <input type="checkbox"/> Elements are juxtaposed or incongruous, highlighting differences and inviting investigation. <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces, objects, and materials are ambiguous, unclear, unfinished, and/or open-ended.
Multi-sensorial	<input type="checkbox"/> Offers rich range of stimuli, including visual, auditory, tactile, taste, olfactory, proprioceptive, vestibular and/or chronoceptive sensations. <input type="checkbox"/> Stimuli are not uniform and can be experienced at different levels and in different ways.
Attentional & Provocative	<input type="checkbox"/> Spatial attention is directed through lighting, openings or other elements. <input type="checkbox"/> Tools, objects, and/or materials support focus, noticing, and exploration. <input type="checkbox"/> Has signs, written prompts, or auditory messages that provoke questions, reflection and/or discussion.



Satisfaction: How are places designed to support restorative affective states such as contentment, delight, joy, and amusement? How do places create a sense of competency and pride? How do places enable learners to comfortably work through and resolve negative states, such as sadness, fear and overwhelm?

Comfortable & Calming	<input type="checkbox"/> Offers aesthetically soothing stimuli, such as serene colors, pleasant sounds, cozy lighting, soft textures, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Uses curved pathways, seating and other forms that invite slowing down, relaxing and/or contemplation. <input type="checkbox"/> Spaces and elements are simple and intuitive, offering familiarity and harmony for easy use.
Progressive & Storied	<input type="checkbox"/> Elements track achievements, positive changes or improvements over time. <input type="checkbox"/> Contains pleasing nostalgic objects, symbols or other elements from experiences or memories. <input type="checkbox"/> Elements situate the present in a larger historical narrative.
Natural & Safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses nature and natural elements such as fresh air, natural light, green spaces, water, flora, fauna, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Employs biophilic elements drawn and inspired from the natural world. <input type="checkbox"/> Offers refuge, protection and/or shelter from discomfort, harm, and/or disruption.