

# SPACE DESIGN

## DESIGNING SPACES IS FUN & DANGEROUS.

Designing a space is the act of leveraging an environment to control behavior. Your goal is to support the behaviors you want and diminish those you don't. The FUN comes from trying and tweaking any number of variables to yield different results—this can include triggering new & unexpected behaviors! The DANGER lies in this simple fact: behavior change is directly linked to personal emotions, expectations, and egos. Following a human-centered approach toward design—gaining empathy, prototyping solutions, testing new iterations—is an excellent way to get started and avoid pitfalls of overdesigning early. Get started by understanding the interplay between ARTIFACT and INTENT.

## ARTIFACT VS. INTENT

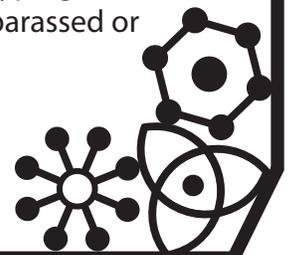
Artifacts are things & embodiments we experience—we see them and get excited! They are often nouns: buildings, music, lights, tables, etc. These artifacts can make us feel and behave in particular ways. Examples: a jumping castle is exciting and fun; sitting around a campfire makes me feel nostalgic. Artifacts can also be positions & arrangements and elements of ambience. The arrangement of chairs for a particular activity can be an artifact. Likewise, the temperature or brightness of a room can be an artifact.

Intents are the motivations behind curated activities. Sometimes intents are secrets... and other times they are OBVIOUS. Intents can be broad or specific and they are often supported by artifacts. Example: my parents intend for me to appreciate music and facilitate that intent by paying for guitar lessons. Alternately: I play the guitar to look cool in front of my friends. NOTE: the connection between intent and artifact is not always clear!

Designing almost always begins with either fitting an artifact to an intended result or supporting an intent through interactions with artifacts. Hint: support your starting point by further considering the ATTITUDES and ACTIONS of the culture your designing for.

## ATTITUDES & ACTIONS

Attitudes are the dispositions intrinsic to your culture—perhaps your “core values”. Actions are the activities common, and perhaps unique, to your culture. Understanding these will help in tailoring your designs. Example: among a culture of hands-on builders, having Lego blocks around as an artifact might support the intent of rough and ready prototyping. This might also be a way of encouraging visual thinking among people who are embarrassed or reluctant to share their through drawing.



# SPACE DESIGN

## ACTIVITY 1: BE A DETECTIVE

Go someplace new to you and before you enter, put on your detective hat.

1) Walk inside (or outside) and list 10 artifacts that you observe (e.g., fancy chandelier, elevator music, smell of bread baking, pinball machine). Spend at least 10 minutes on this part.

2) Next, identify an intent you perceive behind each artifact. Write those down.

\*\* BONUS round: identify success or failure behind each perceived intent (e.g., does the pinball machine make the place for fun or is it too noisy making the experience stressful?)

3) Pick 3 artifacts and redesign the implementation.

4) Identify 1 intent and 1 artifact that would work for your culture. (e.g., the concept of Japanese folding screens between tables at a restaurant might work great for separating student teams in a classroom.)

## ACTIVITY 2: THE 5-POINT REDESIGN CHECKLIST

This 5-point list applies to redesigning your next meeting or redesigning your next classroom. With each point you'll need to consider both artifact & intent and attitudes & actions:

1) Movement—people move around, so consider how you will facilitate this with either physical dimensions and furniture or duration of the event.

2) Posture—the way people are sitting or standing makes a big difference. Should they be sitting low and relaxed facing a speaker or standing up facing each other in a circle.

3) Delight & surprise—what can you do to punctuate your design. It might be providing candy... what about a lottery ticket midway through a meeting?

4) Ambience—play with color... on the wall... on the floor; open the windows; have music playing when people walk in; turn off the lights or turn on more lights. (HINT: ambience is always a low-hanging fruit)

5) Surface—make your surfaces count. For sharing surfaces, consider using only vertical surfaces and getting rid of tables for a change. Try Post-its on a hallway wall or use dry erase boards. Try tall tables instead of low, long conference tables as a way of engaging people.

## WHEN IN DOUBT, REMEMBER THIS: DESIGNING SPACE IS A PICNIC.

Designing space is the act of being a good host. You set the tone of an event, an interaction, and a culture through the steps you take in implementation. It is critical that you understand and respect your culture. When you HOST a picnic, the intent of the event carries the day and you craftily do what you can to support it. Little things can make a big difference, while countless other details become less relevant to the fun. instinctively make do with what you can carry or what is available. Get a few things dead-on and the event will take care of itself—artifacts and intents come together for a good time.

