

How To Use The Cards

Deck of Spaces™: K-12 Second Edition

7 ways to play with the UDL Deck of Spaces™



Welcome!

How To Use The Cards

So, you've purchased the Deck of Spaces™ and you're wondering, "How do I use these cards?!"

The Deck of Spaces was designed to be open-ended. It provides thought-starters to help educators and other stakeholders to think like designers. The Deck can provide shared language for a team of professionals from many backgrounds to establish and work from common ground.

There's no right or wrong way to use the cards; be creative with them. If you create a cool new way to use them, let us know! We'll add it to this collection, acknowledge your contribution, and help you share your idea.

Enjoy!

deck of spaces™
the idea deck for creating spaces
aligned with **Universal Design for Learning**

S.1 Student Experiences

Celebrate student diversity with diverse classroom design

Diversity in the design of our physical space is a wonderful way to support diversity of people within the student population.

This variability of designs not only supports the different ways students learn—it simultaneously affirms the different lived experiences they bring into the classroom based on diverse family and cultural heritage.

Welcome these variances and let your spaces be as equally varied.

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Space: The Third Teacher

Loris Malaguzzi was the founder of the Reggio Emilia education model. Loris understood that space is the third teacher in a child's learning – third behind the student's adult teacher and their classmates.

The author team of this deck firmly agrees. The Deck of Spaces™ will be your guide to describe many ways this is true. We have also linked to the UDL framework, which you can learn more about through our companion Reference Guide at www.DeckOfSpaces.com.



Space Design Tied to UDL

The Deck of Spaces™ features a companion **Reference Guide** – a handy online document that describes the connection of each idea card to corresponding checkpoints in the UDL framework.

Just scan the QR code on the right, go to [DeckOfSpaces.com](https://www.deckofspaces.com), and scroll down to the bottom of the page for the Reference Guide link. There are two Reference Guides – one for the **K-12 Second Edition**, and one for the **Higher Education Edition**.



www.deckofspaces.com

S.22 Pitch space

Pitch space

Create a place to share original ideas with authentic audiences, including business partners from the community.

Flexible small presentation spaces can facilitate more comfortable multilingual meetings, including virtually hosting a sign interpreter.

Live captioning and remote engagement can offer multimodal engagement options for more inclusive presentations and meetings.

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1.2 Offer alternatives for auditory information

4.1 Vary the methods for response and navigation

- Provide alternatives in the requirements for rate, timing, speed, and range of motor action required to interact with instructional materials, physical manipulatives, and technologies
- Provide alternatives for physically interacting with materials by hand, voice, single switch, joystick, keyboard, or adapted keyboard

5.1 Use multiple media for communication

- Compose in multiple media such as text, speech, drawing, illustration, comics, storyboards, design, film, music, dance/movement, visual art, sculpture or video
- Solve problems using a variety of strategies

6.2 Support planning and strategy development

- Embed prompts to "show and explain your work" (e.g., portfolio review, art critiques)

6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

- Provide differentiated models of self-assessment strategies (e.g., role-playing, video reviews, peer feedback)

7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity

- Design activities so that learning outcomes are authentic, communicate to real audiences, and reflect a purpose that is clear to the participants
- Provide tasks that allow for active participation, exploration and experimentation
- Include activities that foster the use of imagination to solve novel and relevant problems, or make sense of complex ideas in creative ways

7.3 Minimize threats and distractions

- Vary the social demands required for learning or performance, the perceived level of support and protection and the requirements for public display and evaluation.

8.1 Heighten salience of goals and objectives

- Prompt or require learners to explicitly formulate or restate goal
- Engage learners in assessment discussions of what constitutes excellence and generate relevant examples that connect to their cultural background and interests

8.2 Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge

- Provide alternatives in the permissible tools and scaffolds
- Vary the degrees of freedom for acceptable performance
- Emphasize process, effort, improvement in meeting standards as alternatives to external evaluation and competition

Supporting DEIB via Space Design

In the Deck of Spaces™: K-12 Second Edition, the author team intentionally put words and reflection to our priority areas of vulnerability and marginalization. We needed these specific reference points to consider the many ways space design can impact a student's sense of belonging in their classroom, their school, and their world.

The card deck is far from comprehensive in addressing these topics, but it foregrounds some ideas about how space may inadvertently create barriers to students' belonging.

1. Dis/Ability

- Physical ability variance
- Cognitive ability variance
- Neurological variance
- Sensory ability variances

2. Trauma Informed Practices

- Physical safety
- Psychological safety

3. Social, Emotional & Behavioral Development

- Interpersonal awareness
- Emotional regulation
- Open-mindedness

4. Ethnic and Racial Identity

- BIPOC racism
- Indigenous erasure
- Colonial oppression

5. Gender & Sexuality

- Gender identity & expression
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

6. Other identity representations

- Linguistic identities
- Religion identities
- Nationality identities
- Socio-economic background

Organization of The Deck

The Deck of Spaces™: K-12 Second Edition is divided into four categories:

1. **Student Experiences**
2. **Educator Experiences**
3. **Paradigms & School Culture**
4. **Vignettes**

There are fifty-four (54) space design idea cards and eight (8) vignette cards.



1

Vignette-Based Problem Solving Activity

This is a starter activity to get familiar with the Deck of Spaces™. **Best if** you're participating with people you don't work with day-to-day.

Participants:

Work alone to familiarize yourself with different ways space can be a mechanism to reduce learning barriers.

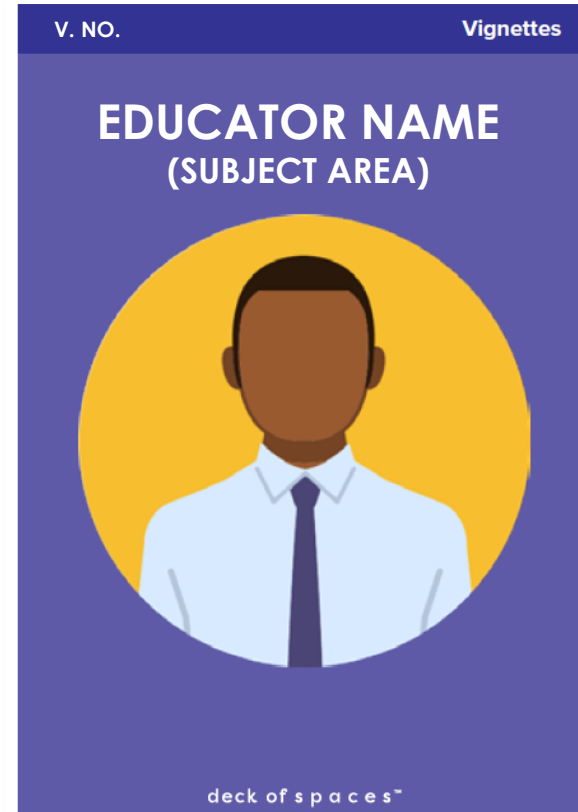
OR

Work in groups of 2-3 to begin conversations that expand ideation beyond the immediate ideas in the cards.

Vignette design credit: Sue Hardin, UDL Implementation Consultant, UDL-IRN @ CAST

Vignette-Based Problem-Solving Activity

1. **Work alone or in groups of 2-3.**
2. **Select a purple vignette card** to establish your UDL challenge. These all describe different educator challenges.
3. **Review all the idea cards** – spread them out if you like. Look at the images as well as the text.
4. **Select and set aside your preferred cards** – begin identifying cards that might help your educator solve their learning challenge.
5. **Prioritize your top 8 cards** from all your preferred cards. Discuss why you're culling down the choices – this conversation is the most valuable part of the activity.
6. **Reflect & discuss** – how might these situations and opportunities apply in your classroom or school? How might you expand on your favorite idea cards to better tailor them to the needs of *your* learners?



Vignette

Mr. Bello teaches in an elementary STEAM classroom. He encourages his students to think like a scientist, which his district's standards promote. He wants to do more hands-on problem-solving and engage authentic audiences, such as community experts.

How might he design a learning environment to engage in hands-on activities with community experts in his classroom?

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Example Card - Pick Any Vignette

2

Classic Ideation

Activity

Think about your own classroom, school, or district and use the cards to draw out ideas about how you can reduce learning barriers for specific students or conditions in your school. **Best if** you are working with a team from the same school/organization who have a specific challenge in mind.

Participants:

Work in groups of 2-3 people.

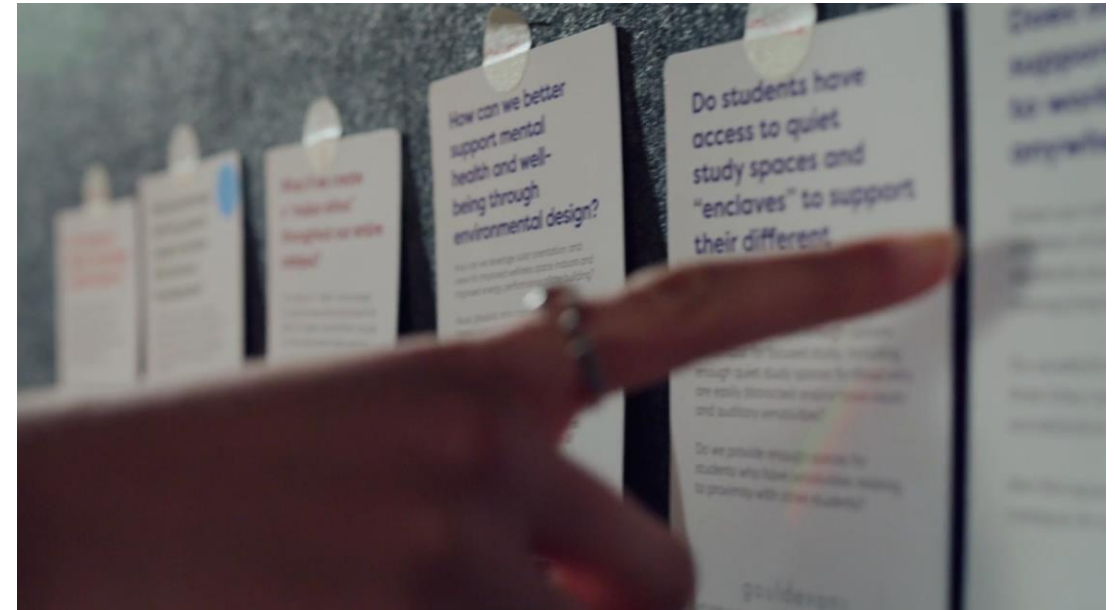
Classic Ideation Activity

1. **Work in groups of 2-3.** You can organize your groups based on department or grade level to get more specific in your solutions.
2. **Review all the cards** thinking about how each of them might have an application in your school. Spread them out if you like.
3. **Select and set aside your preferred cards** - make piles that cluster common ideas and sort out the most compelling ideas.
4. **Prioritize your top 8 cards.** Discuss why you're culling down the choices - this conversation is the most valuable part of the activity.
5. **Reflect & discuss** - how might these ideas apply to your students' most pressing learning barriers? How might you expand on your favorite idea cards to better tailor them to the needs of your learners? And to the needs of your faculty and staff?



Classic Ideation Activity

New habits take 60-70 days to become established. It can be a good idea to take your top-ranked cards and hang them up in your classroom. You can also group them to manage the number of new practices. Reference them daily to remind yourself of your goals.



Adaptability / Multi-use

E.7 Educator Experiences

Make space within space

Creating smaller, temporary spaces can be a tool for responding to emotional vulnerability and sensory sensitivities, placing small instructional groupings in intimate and protected settings.

- Use mobile storage units, markerboards and furniture to subdivide space.
- Rugs, other furniture elements, color and lighting can further define space.

This approach can also improve school-wide space utilization by breaking larger classrooms down to right-sized units for small classes, discussion groups or meeting spaces.

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Connection to the Environment

E.10 Student Experiences

Tie learning to natural systems

Building environmental literacy—awareness of how natural systems must maintain a balance—helps students connect to world issues such as environmental justice, the climate crisis, and global economic issues. It helps create meaning and relevance in their learning.

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P.13 Pedagogies & School Culture

Use natural materials and patterns

Biophilic design inspires a sense of ease and well-being—spaces can embody nature using natural materials, as well as natural shapes and forms.

- Daylight provides an immediate and direct natural connection.
- Indoor and outdoor plants increase connection to nature and improve air quality.
- Using sustainable and safe materials improves the health of the physical environment.

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Creating Community

E.4 Student Experiences

Allow students to "make space"

Encouraging students to create their own space allows them to connect their classroom identities as part of learning community.

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E.11 Student Experiences

Playgrounds as outdoor learning spaces

Outdoor learning is an excellent opportunity to promote social-emotional development.

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E.6 Pedagogies & School Culture

Create a "maker ethos" throughout the school

The act of making provides students to experiment, explore, experiment, and design.

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E.12 Student Experiences

Inclusive mindset in design

Traditional classroom design reflects a narrow range of ideas and values that exclude many learners in historically marginalized groups.

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P.11 Pedagogies & School Culture

School as a community resource

Your school should be the parent and home of your students' learning community.

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3

Amplify Key Initiatives

Activity

Focus your discussions with the Deck on specific organizational programs or initiatives. **Best if** your school has clearly defined priorities (ex: growing STEM-based learning, problem-based learning, equity & inclusion, etc.).

Participants:

Teams of 2 people.

Note: this activity works great with teachers or students.

Amplify Key Initiatives Activity

1. **Create curated challenge questions** that relate to the initiatives at your school. (Examples at right)
2. **Distribute one challenge question to each team.** More than one team can have the same challenge question.
3. **Each team reviews the idea cards** in the deck – think about how each of them might have an application to the challenge question. Spread them out and group them if you like.
4. **Select 3-6 idea cards from the deck** that resonate to help amplify efforts with the relevant school initiative. Conversation among team members about the inherent benefits of each card is the most important part of the activity.
5. **Expand your thinking beyond the idea cards** – how else could the design strategies on these cards be tailored to your school?
6. **Share out** with other participants in the work session.

Experiential Learning:

How could our school become a national model for experiential learning, creating authentic hands-on learning experiences and meaningful engagement with community partners?

Real World Learning:

How can our school campus be a stronger catalyst for real world learning experiences? How could real world learning extend beyond Career Exploration courses?

Inquiry-Based Learning:

What strategies could we deploy to enrich our initiatives for inquiry-based learning?

Rhetoric & Liberal Arts Education:

How could our school become a living model for a powerful Liberal Arts high school experience? How could it help ALL students become skilled in critical thinking, logic, and discourse?

UDL Reverse Engineering Problem Solving

This activity begins by identifying specific strategies within the UDL framework. **Best if** your group has some level of experience with UDL already.

Participants:

Work alone to familiarize yourself with different ways each of the UDL guidelines can be connected to space design.

OR

Work in groups of 2-3 to explore different space design ideas to tackle specific UDL strategies.

UDL Reverse Engineering

1. **Identify a barrier** – let’s say you have a learner who’s struggling with distractions in the classroom. You don’t want to remove them from the classroom, so what are your other options?
2. **Go to the online Reference Guide** for the Deck of Spaces™. (See QR code on next page.)
3. **Run the Find command** (ctrl + F) within the pdf document. Type in “distractions” or “7.3” for the UDL checkpoint.
4. **The results will identify all relevant cards** – each card that offers a design strategy for “minimizing threats and distractions” will turn up as a result of this search.
5. **Pull the found cards from the deck** and spread them out on the table. What are 2-3 of the card ideas that would be achievable in your classroom and effective for your learner? Try them out!



UDL Reverse Engineering



← Access the Reference Guide

S.22 Pitch Space

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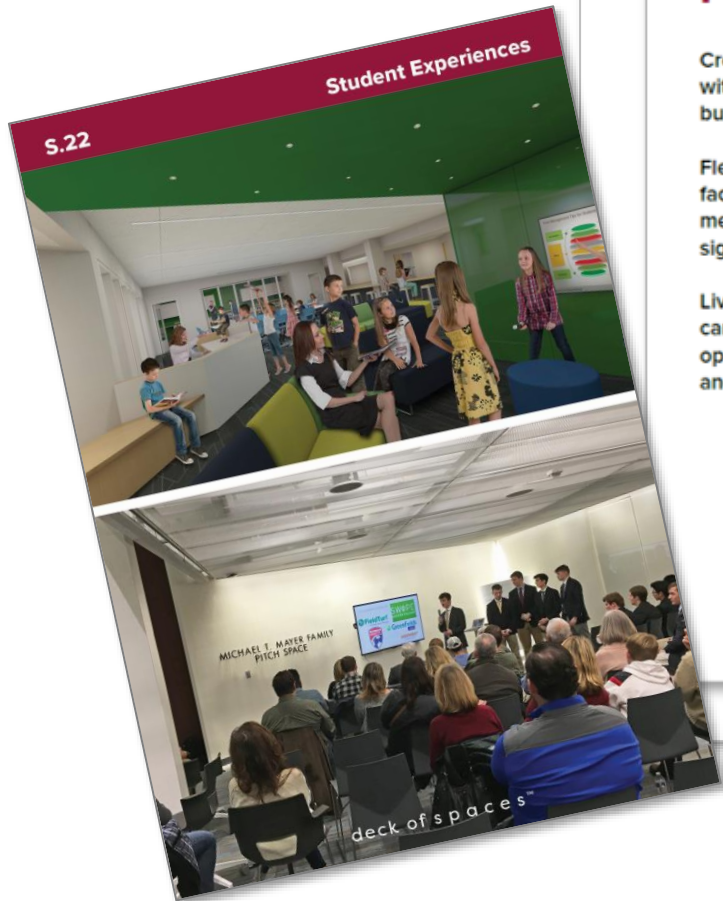
- Vary the social demands required for learning or performance, the perceived level of support and protection and the requirements for public display and evaluation.

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Typical page in the Reference Guide

5

Hack Your Dream Space Activity

Take inspiration from some of the many resourceful teachers who have taken it upon themselves to hack their space with what they have! **Best if** you are looking for approaches to improve your space in low or no cost ways.

Participants:

Work alone to focus on opportunities to hack your individual classroom space.

OR

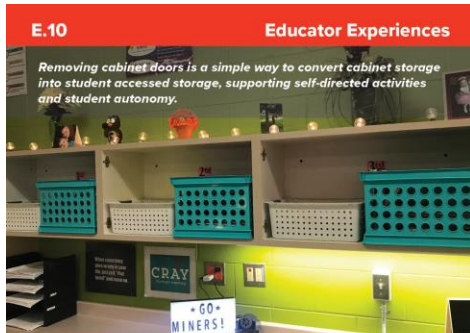
Work in groups of 2+ to explore options for shared or communal spaces throughout the school.

Activity inspiration: Tanya Leon, 7th Grade LA Teacher
Organization: Fraser Public Schools

Hack Your Dream Space

1. Identify the learning barriers you'd like to mitigate and identify the experiences you'd like to create in your space.
2. Need some prompting? Go to the Reverse Engineering Activity first. (See page 14.)
3. Think about ways you (or your facilities personnel) can modify your space to support your learners.

Check out some of these cards to get your ideas started.



Hack Your Space



Student Check-in Zone

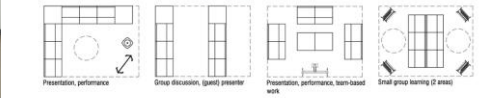


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Students Make Space



Power Dynamics



Space Within Space

Empathy Mapping Activity

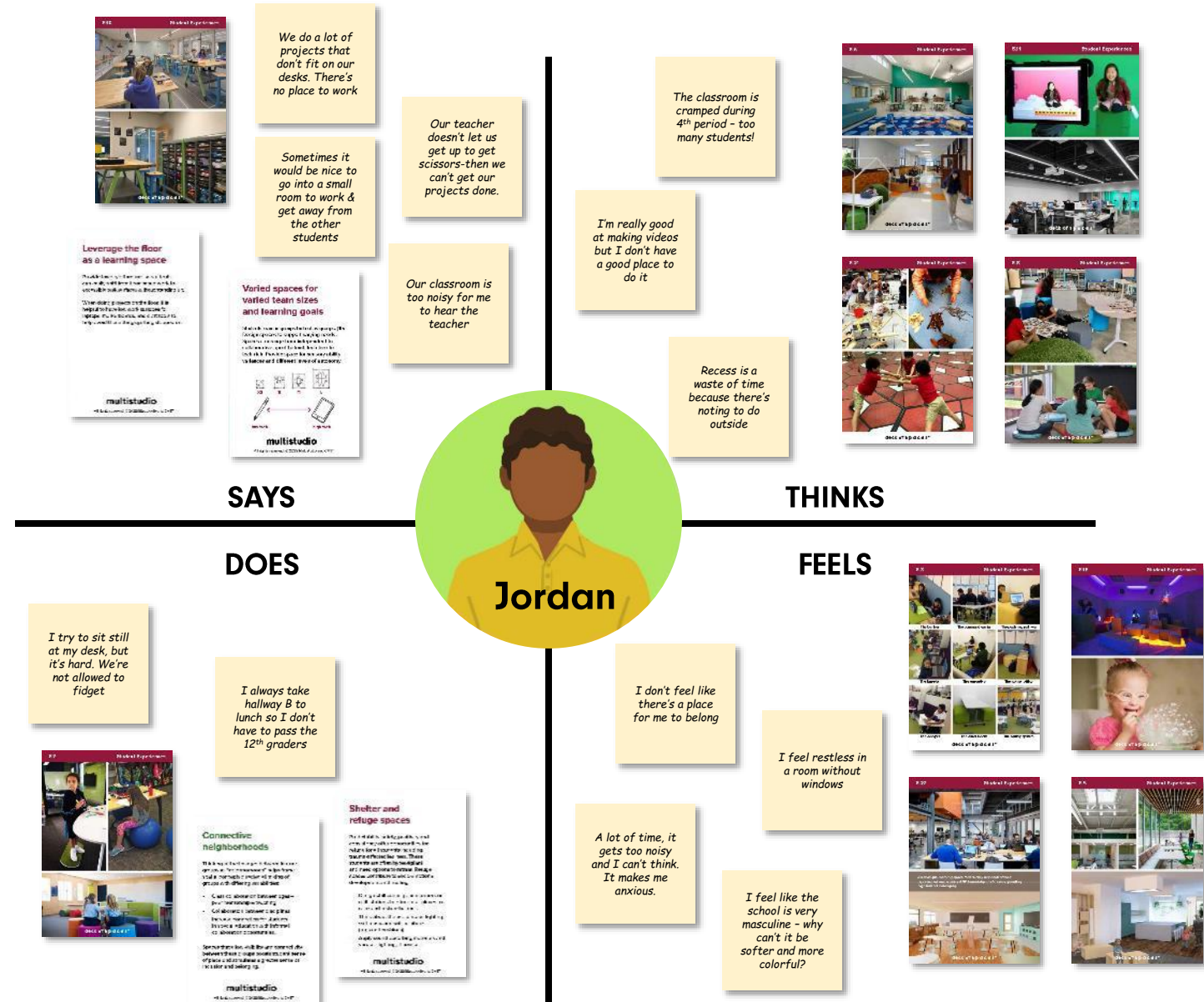
An **empathy map** is a collaborative visualization process used to articulate what we know about a particular type of user and to better advocate on their behalf. Visualizing user attitudes and behaviors helps design participants align on a deep understanding of end users. The mapping process can also reveal holes in existing user data.

Use the cards to help spark discussions and imagine aspects about the school design that could better address needs. Have students and teachers map a typical day and think about the areas of their school they're in at various points throughout the day. Where do they experience barriers and frustrations, as well as joy and excitement about what they're doing? Have them think not only about their own experiences but think about other students. Do their peers need access to a food pantry, or clothing? Do they need physical access provisions? Do they feel ostracized about their social identities? Take the ideas and discussion beyond the classroom.

Empathy Map

(Example)

One method of collecting and sorting responses is an empathy matrix. Label each of four quadrants: "SAYS", "THINKS", "DOES", "FEELS." Use the Deck of Spaces™ cards and post-it notes to prompt discussion and populate each quadrant.



Schools Against Inhumanity Game

Borrowing an approach from well-known games like Apples to Apples™ and Cards Against Humanity™, this game encourages impassioned debate over which idea card would be the most effective in addressing specific challenges to making inclusive and accessible schools. **Best if** you are seeking an engaging, game-based format for discussion.

Participants:

Play in groups of at least 4 players. Best with 6+.

Game design credit: Sue Hardin, UDL Implementation Consultant, UDL-IRN @ CAST; Michael Ralph, Multistudio

Note: this design is NOT affiliated with either trademarked game referenced above.

Schools Against Inhumanity

1. **Prep the Deck** - remove the Vignette cards, Resource cards, and Category Heading cards.
2. **6 Cards dealt to each player** (text face down).
3. **Pick a Challenger** - this player sets their cards aside and will select the winning card from the other players.
4. **Challenger reads a Challenge Prompt** (see pages 22-31)
5. **Players select their best match** - each player chooses a card that best responds to the challenge prompt and plays it text-down on the table.
6. **Challenger collects & mixes up the played cards.**
7. **Challenger reads the idea cards aloud** and spreads them out on the table as they read each one.
8. **Challenger chooses one card** they think best addresses the challenge prompt and explains why. Have lots of discussion! This is the most valuable aspect of the game.
9. **The player whose card is selected wins that prompt.**
10. **Each player draws 1 new card** from the deck to maintain a hand of 6 cards.
11. **The role of Challenger rotates.** Round two begins.



A Note of Reflection

This game format can be a fun exercise that evokes lively participation. However, it is essential to remain cognizant of the topics in the prompts and the harm they continue to cause to real people in our schools.

None of the authors of the Deck of Spaces™, nor this guide, intend to trivialize any of these issues. The goal of the game is to provide a structure for naming specific challenges in the pursuit of dismantling mechanisms of marginalization in schools.

Please play responsibly.

1. Dis/Ability

- Physical ability variance
- Cognitive ability variance
- Neurological variance
- Sensory ability variances

2. Trauma Informed Practices

- Physical safety
- Psychological safety

3. Social, Emotional & Behavioral Development

- Interpersonal awareness
- Emotional regulation
- Open-mindedness

4. Ethnic and Racial Identity

- BIPOC racism
- Indigenous erasure
- Colonial oppression

5. Gender & Sexuality

- Gender identity & expression
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

6. Other identity representations

- Linguistic identities
- Religion identities
- Nationality identities
- Socio-economic background



Prompt *create your own prompts based on your own scenarios*



How can we rethink school spaces to better support increasing numbers of **students affected by poverty** ?

Many districts are seeing changing student demographics. What aspects of your facilities could do a better job to help these students feel like they belong? To help them feel safe? To ensure their learning needs are met?



How can we reconsider facility design to provide more equity and inclusion of ***under-represented students*** ?

Is conformity being driven by space design? Are all students recognized and honored by the space design? Are there opportunities to welcome students into the school as their whole, authentic selves?



How can we consider space design to support *the mental health and wellness of students and teachers* ?

What type of space could help users find a place to retreat when needed? Reduce stress? Improve emotional safety? Promote a sense of student agency?



How can we consider
space design to support
gender non-binary
students ?

Do *all* students feel welcome,
accommodated, and safe?



How can we think about space creatively to support teaching through **project-based learning**?

What kind of space design barriers are teachers running into with new practices? Where is students' authentic learning being impeded due to facility misalignment?



How can we design classroom spaces to better support **students on the spectrum** ?

How might spaces be over-stimulating for students? How might the spaces create opportunities for self-regulation and emotional safety? What can we do to remove or reduce sensory “triggers” in the spaces?



How can we design spaces to honor and support **students from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds** ?

Is cultural expression being erased or minimized for certain identity groups based on space design? Do the spaces include things that conflict with certain cultural norms?



How can we consider space design to support **the healthy and safe transition of 5th grade students to middle school?**

Consider the socio-emotional wellness of 5th grade students and their families.

Think about students' physical differences.

Think about differences in maturity level.

Think about differences in cognitive level.



How can we think about space to **support real world learning experiences, especially in the CTE programs?**

What kind of space design barriers are teachers running into with new practices? Where is authentic learning being impeded due to facility misalignment?

The background is a vibrant, abstract composition of various shades of pink and red. It features large, overlapping, organic shapes that resemble stylized leaves or petals, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors range from light, dusty pinks to deep, rich magentas and reds.

Learn more:

www.DeckOfSpaces.com