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Re-Imagining Classroom Tables

1. Which of the following describes the majority of tables in a typical early childhood classroom?
   A. Unique and novel
   B. Made from interesting materials
   C. Rectangular shaped and constructed with light-colored wood
   D. None of the above

2. Research suggests that human brains have a tendency to do which of the following?
   A. Tune out familiar objects, spaces, and experiences
   B. Pay attention to the ordinary and mundane
   C. Be more receptive to the new and novel
   D. None of the above

3. What does providing benches in the early childhood classroom promote?
   A. Individualization
   B. Collaboration
   C. Safe space
   D. Attention

4. According to the presenter, compared to long, rectangular shaped tables, circular and oval tables promote which of these?
   A. Working alone
   B. Good posture
   C. Focus
   D. Conversations

5. Why do construction platforms promote long-term attention and story evolving?
   A. The materials are picked up and stored away at the end of the day or time together
   B. Children are able to work on their structures, walk away, and come back at any time to resume their work
   C. Materials are limited so pick up is convenient and easy for everyone
   D. None of the above
6. What is the distinguishing difference between space and place?
   A. Emotional connections
   B. Space is inside and place is outside
   C. The number of windows and doors to the outside
   D. How many people are involved

7. Which of the following is an example of "place"?
   A. Walls
   B. Positive memories
   C. Minimal importance
   D. Windows

8. Which of the following is an example of using tables for place making?
   A. Setting the home living table with placemats and child-made clay bowls
   B. Hanging a child-made mobile made from found natural materials
   C. Draping a culturally influenced tablecloth over a typical classroom table
   D. All of the above

9. Which term means man-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live, work, and play?
   A. Non-built environment
   B. Neighborhood
   C. Built environment
   D. Office park

10. Which of the following are examples of environments that are NOT built?
    A. Cliff edge, forest glen, deer path through the forest, river bank, caves, coral reefs
    B. Child care center, classrooms, schools, libraries, museums
    C. Cars, buses, trains, airplanes
    D. Restaurants, office buildings, shopping malls, airports
RE-IMAGINING CLASSROOM TABLES
TABLES AS INVITATIONS
Sandra Duncan, EdD
LEARNING OUTCOMES

- After this course, participants will be able to develop and conduct a table inventory to determine the current status of the classroom.
- After this course, participants will be able to explain at least one idea for using circular classroom tables as people-locations.
- After this course, participants will be able to list at least two strategies for using classroom tables as constructing-places.
- After this course, participants will be able to describe the difference between space and place and the connection to children’s learning.
- After this course, participants will be able to define the term “built environment” and give examples of built-non-built environments.

CHILDHOOD TABLE MEMORIES

Special Childhood Memory?
TABLE THOUGHTS
YOUR MEMORIES OF TABLES

CLASSROOM TABLES
A Common Place Element
1. The majority of tables in the classroom are rectangular shaped.

2. The majority of the tables in the classroom are the same size.

3. The majority of classroom tables are the same color or made from similar material or wood.

4. The majority of classroom tables were purchased from an early childhood catalog.

5. The majority of classroom tables are the same shape.

6. The majority of classroom tables are surrounded by traditional child-type chairs.

A space equipped solely with wooden furniture can appear bland and undistinguished.

Anita Rue Olds (2001)
The brain is considerably more receptive to new and novel ideas.

Silva (2006)
Socializing  Constructing  Place-Making

3 INVITATIONS

INVITATION OF SOCIALIZING
INVITATION OF SOCIALIZING
Oval or circle tables promote conversations

INVITATION OF CONSTRUCTING
CLASSROOM TABLES
Construction Platform
CLASSROOM TABLES
Clay Construction

INVITATION OF PLACE-MAKING
### SPACE AND PLACE

*An Uncommon Place Element*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPACE</th>
<th>PLACE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walls</td>
<td>Emotional Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doors</td>
<td>Significant Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>Personal Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ceiling</td>
<td>Connection to Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little Social Interaction</td>
<td>Sharing &amp; Making Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Emotional Connection</td>
<td>Positive Memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal Importance</td>
<td>Experiencing Deeply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLACE is a piece of the environment that has been claimed by feelings. We are homesick for places.

And, the catalyst that converts any physical location into a PLACE is the process of experiencing deeply.

Alan Gussow
Artist & Naturalist

PLACE AT ITS BEST
INVITATION OF PLACE-MAKING
CLASSROOM TABLES
An Uncommon Place Element
CLASSROOM TABLES
An Uncommon Place Element
CLASSROOM TABLES
An Uncommon Place Element

FINAL THOUGHT
Why does this matter?
Built environments are man-made structures, features, and facilities viewed collectively as an environment in which people live, work, and play.
1 in 4 Americans spend entire day without going outside

Average of 30.6 Hours/Week Non-Parental Care
SPACE EMPOWERS

Bachelard (1944)
The Poetics of Space
How we personally experience places

SPACE INFLUENCES

Goldthorpe (2017)
Welcome to Your World: How the Built Environment Shapes Our Lives
Space influences our behavior
SPACE SPEAKS

Greemman, 2017
Caring Spaces, Learning Places
Space speaks to our emotions

Even for the commonplace classroom table
REFERENCES


- Duncan, S., Martin, J., & Kreth, R. (2016). Rethinking the Classroom Landscape: Creating Environments that Connect Young Children, Families, and Communities. Lewisville, NC: Gryphon House.

