

Task #6: Design

Initial Draft of the Makeover.

Task #6 is a continuation of the previous task (#5: Visiting a Site).

6.1 The Meeting

In the previous task you observed and analyzed places in school that would benefit from a makeover. Did you reach an agreement on the choice of place? Did you observe and spend time there to come up with answers to the questionnaire in Task #5? Did you discover something new? What are the existing qualities of the space that needs to be transformed? It is important to pay respect to the existing environment. Architects never create anything in an empty spot: there is always something already there, even when it initially seems to lack anything worth mentioning. Try to listen to the story of the space!

6.2 Background Study

Before diving into the task, it is worth putting some effort into broadening your horizons. There is an enormous amount of school buildings in the world that have been rebuilt or remodelled. Why have they decided to do it in the way they have? On what kinds of new ideas or trends are they based? In what ways are the remodelled spaces better than the old ones?

6.2.1 Study Different School Spaces Around the World

The task comes with PDF slides presenting 15 case studies of school buildings and 15 case studies of school interiors (Dream Schoolhouse Competition 2014). The slides are accompanied by text that helps to understand the images and suggests topics to discuss. It is encouraged to have a collective discussion. Students can also look at the slides independently, but in this case the explanatory texts are shorter.

6.2.2 School Space That Promotes Daily Physical Activity

Today, one of the main and most important reasons for the transformation of schools is to enable more physically active daily life. Learning and teaching have changed, there are many and varied educational activities, and the school space required for them can't be monotonous. In a world where more and more people are using a computer every day, it is increasingly important to have an environment that nudges or invites us to change the posture of the body slumped behind the table - to stretch, bend, walk, jog, throw, pounce, soar, jump, and perform many more movements for which the body was created. Among Estonian

students, very few (less than 20%) move/exercise enough – which should be done moderately or intensely for at least an hour every day. Exercise is not only important for physical well-being, researchers confirm that physical activity also develops skills important to learning (attention, memory, and information processing in the brain), and that it promotes peace during the class and better interpersonal relationships – a healthy (and smart) mind in a healthy body! Thus, our everyday environment plays an important role in building healthy daily habits. It is worth recalling once more that physical movement is not limited to sports and facilities like stadiums or gyms. Next to traditional sports, the school should also promote creative, improvised, and diverse movement throughout the daily activities.

Read more about movement in the document entitled "The Schoolhouse Invites You To Move!", the PDF version of which is included with the task and available from the link below. The document contains short informative texts and plenty of images depicting examples of exciting architectural solutions.

(3) The Schoolhouse Invites You To Move (PDF)

If getting acquainted with all the materials seems too time-consuming, try to see at least half of it or flick through the short version of the same material (slides included with the task)

6.2.3 Find a Muse

Choose one object (or a couple, if you can't decide) from the examples of school spaces included with the task that you find inspiring. It is also encouraged to search for more examples from the internet to find something that was not included with the materials to the task. Try to articulate why this particular example caught your eye and why this space is designed the way it is.

6.2.4 Design(s)

Now that you are familiar with a number of designs for schools, sketch the initial ideas of the design for your chosen place on paper. A big challenge in the beginning of the process is to break out of the confines of your imagination. Since we have been surrounded by certain kinds of spaces all our lives, the first attempts to design something new might be fixed in the already existing, neat and clear reality (the common area or chill-out corner contains a sofa, coffee table, and a houseplant – sounds familiar?) What if we try to shake off these dictionary images? What were the spaces and forms that you saw for inspiration? What kinds of activities do they host? What kind of fantasy spaces and forms come to your mind? Try to sketch these thoughts. If necessary, add a few keywords for explanation.

For the deadline of Task #6, present the inspiring example of a school space (passage 6.2.3) and sketches of your idea to redesign a space in school. Sketches don't have to be clean and elaborate drawings; instead, it is encouraged to put your raw thoughts onto paper without polishing them too much.

A Few More Notes

1. Initial sketches don't have to be realistic and practical (for example, don't throw out ideas that seem too expensive). The aim is to focus on concepts (what kinds of activities and atmosphere should this place hold, and what kind of shape or space helps to achieve it).
2. Try to focus on the aspects of the space that motivate people to move actively. Sofas and video games may be enticing, but aren't these just cliches for having a good time? What are other ways of enjoying your free time? How can form and space lead to fun and healthy pastime activities? See some of the examples again, if needed.

May your thoughts fly!