awareness equity
understanding connect
create tolerance
empathy perspective
dialogue design agency
access visibility change
empower voice
trust communication

Designs for Different Futures

Student Design Challenge
Teacher Resource

Philadelphia
Museum of
Art

What would you design that supports and empowers people to bridge a divide?

Who

- Students in grades 4–12

What

- Design a game, a tool, a website, an experience, a system, or anything else that addresses the challenge question.

How

- Create a drawing of your idea, give it a title, and write a description of what it does and how it works.
- Submit your drawing and description on a 22" x 28" poster board.

When

- Posters are due by Friday, January 31, 2020.
- Student work will be displayed and celebrated at the museum on Sunday, March 8, 2020.

For more detailed information, skip to **Submission Details**.
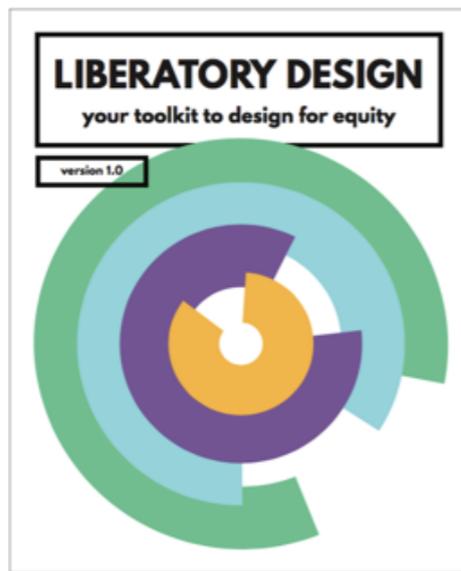**Use the accompanying Classroom Presentation to introduce the challenge to students.**
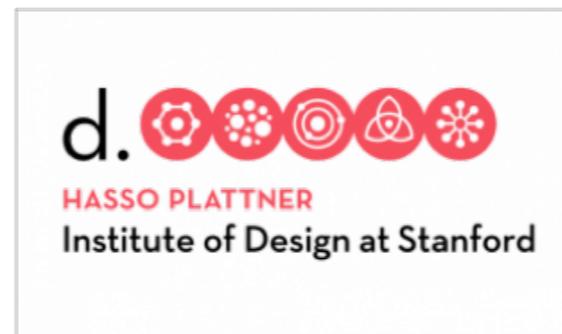
Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum
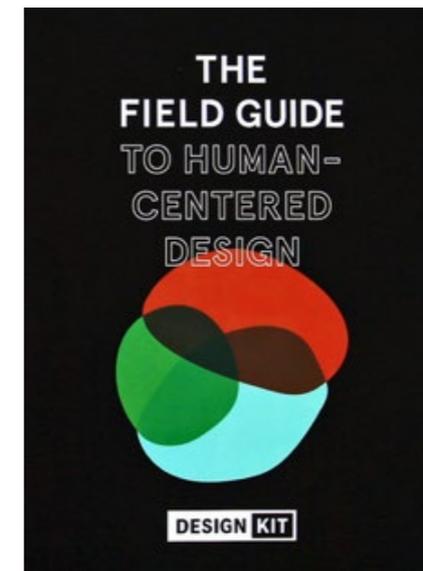Design Process One-Pager

Stanford University d. school
Design Thinking Bootleg Cards

Stanford University d. school and The National
Equity Project Liberatory Design Cards

Stanford University d. school
90-minute Redesign Projects for Students

The Field Guide to Human-
Centered Design by IDEO.org

Design means to plan or create something with a specific purpose in mind. The resources on this page will help you introduce students to the design process.

Bridge a divide can mean many things.
Use the concepts on this page to support students' thinking about what it means to them.

Communication

- Facilitate positive communication, listening, and dialogue
- Empower and amplify the voices of those who have been silenced

Understanding

- Help individuals or groups better understand each other's perspectives
- Help people better understand a complex issue or problem

Proximity

- Facilitate positive relationships and trust between individuals and groups from different backgrounds

Visibility

- Increase the visibility of under-represented people
- Increase the visibility of an issue you care about

Designing for Empathy

Enni-Kukka Tuomala, a Finnish empathy designer and artist, is an example of someone whose work bridges divides. She has created a new methodology that redefines the role of empathy in the design process. She transforms empathy from an ingredient of design to the desired outcome. The role of the designer becomes not only to empathize with the user of a design but to generate empathy through design. Her collection of empathy tools, games, methods, and experiences encourages people to listen, reflect, and understand each others' perspectives and emotions. She has used design to help people on opposing sides of an issue visualize the "negative space" between them and transform it into a positive space of dialogue. Designers like Tuomala believe that redesigning the way we interact and communicate can decrease polarization, increase understanding, and build stronger, more equitable communities where all voices are heard.

Tuomala has worked with groups ranging from community grassroots organizers in London, to passersby on the streets of New York and Tokyo, to politicians across parties of the Finnish national government. You can see examples of her work at **www.ennikukka.com** and read an article about her design philosophy and methodology **here**.

The *Empatia Ele* Example

Empatia Ele (EM-pa-tee-ah el-eh, Finnish for "empathy gesture") is a collection of empathy tools for politics designed to address the empathy deficit at the heart of power: the government. Enni-Kukka Tuomala developed *Empatia Ele* in collaboration with six members of the Finnish Parliament from five different parties. The tools are interventions that encourage different perspectives and create new forms of communication through color and play. Their goal is to disrupt the norms of polarized debate, opening space for collaboration across party lines, values, and agendas.

The collection consists of two types of tools: **Perspective-Taking Tools** and **Communication Tools**. They are designed for use during cross-party committee meetings of the Finnish Parliament, when politicians present their ideas, debate possibilities, and make decisions together. Often, the politicians have very different viewpoints, opinions, and goals.

As you read about the empathy tools on the following pages, and **watch Tuomala's video** about *Empatia Ele*, think about these prompts for student discussion.

- What are some examples of times when you share ideas and make decisions with others?
- What is challenging about those times?
- How might perspective-taking tools or communication tools be helpful?
- How would you adapt the tools to use in or outside of school?

The Importance of Color and Play

Why are the politicians playing with balloons?

Your students might wonder what the purpose of colorful balloons is when working with serious people in a serious environment. Enni-Kukka Tuomala uses these simple toys that evoke childhood memories and emotions to release tension and encourage the sense of playfulness and experimentation that is essential to the design process.

The bright colors of the empathy tools are also an intentional part of their design. Tuomala observed that the color palette in the culture of Finnish politics is very subdued and understated. She chose bold, neon colors for the empathy tools as a challenge to the established cultural norms.

Both the balloons and the colorful tools are disruptive: they encourage users to step out of their habits of thinking and doing to try different points of view and ways of interacting.

The Role-Playing Carousel Game

Problem

"We need to step outside our familiar roles more and really listen to each other."
—Member of the Finnish Parliament, 2018

Most politicians are wedded to their own values and agendas. They struggle not only to listen to each other's perspectives, but also to understand them. Many say they feel imprisoned by the roles they have to play. There are few opportunities to break familiar patterns and consider new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.

Solution

Free politicians from their usual roles through role-play. The Role-Playing Carousel Game includes six roles (the child, the optimist, the pessimist, the expert, the future generation, and the listener) that are assigned randomly by spinning the carousel. For the duration of a specific conversation, instead of representing themselves, the committee members play the roles they have been assigned. The game is intended for open and exploratory discussions when the Parliamentary committee first engages with a new topic.

Questions

- What roles do you play in your life?

- How might stepping into another role help you understand a different perspective?

- What are the challenges and limitations of trying to play a role different from your own?

The Colorful Communicators

Problem

"I don't know if we have much quality dialogue. We proclaim our point of view but we don't really listen to each other."
—*Member of the Finnish Parliament, 2018*

The current system for conversation in Finnish Parliamentary committees is formal: a member raises their hand to ask to speak, after which their name gets added to a waiting list. It may take up to an hour for them to get their turn, which often means the point they wanted to raise is no longer relevant. There is little or no space for sharing ideas, expressing emotions, or admitting confusion, so the system discourages active listening. Members often pay more attention to their mobile devices than to each other.

Solution

Support listening and interaction with a new system of non-verbal communication through color. The six Colorful Communicators create a new non-verbal common language, encouraging engagement during speeches and discussion by simply holding up a color. This not only supports members looking up from their screens to listen and engage but can also improve understanding by enabling speakers to read the room and react in real time. Each of the six Communicators stands for a different response, such as: "I have an idea," "I don't understand," "I have a question," "I'm with you – keep going," "I'm not sure about this, but I'm willing to listen," and "I feel moved."

Questions

- What are some situations in and outside of school when non-verbal communicators would be helpful?

- Can you think of examples of non-verbal communication you already use?

- What responses would you include in a set of Colorful Communicators?

The Scale of Emotion

Problem

"We don't learn to understand why others think the way they do."
 —*Member of the Finnish Parliament, 2018*

Most of political dialogue and decision-making operates on a binary scale. It is only possible to vote yes, no, or to abstain from voting altogether. This binary approach doesn't allow for nuance and creates little or no room for changing one's point of view. Despite hearing experts, engaging in discussion, and diving into research, committee members can feel reluctant to allow new ideas to sink in and affect the way they think and feel. There is also a lack of openness about the scale and firmness of opinions, making it difficult to create compromise.

Solution

Bring transparency and openness to discussion through reflecting on issues in real time. The Scale of Emotion enables committee members to openly share where they stand on topics throughout the discussion. The scale moves from a smiley face to a frowny face, encouraging members to keep adjusting their personal scales in relation to their changing feelings about an issue. This creates a more open culture that values awareness both of one's own feelings and the feelings of others. A culture in which movement on the scale is not only possible, but is encouraged, is a culture in which minds can change.

Questions

- What are some emotions that fall between negative and positive?

- Can you think of a situation when you might want to show your emotion in real time without saying it out loud?

- How might knowing the feelings of others help change your opinion or belief?

Age Gain Now Empathy System

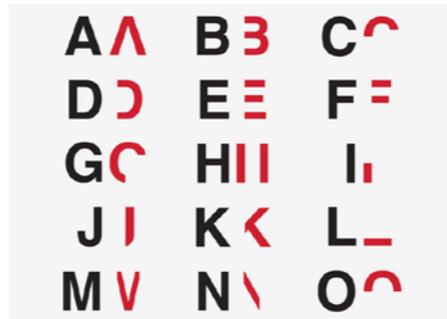An Empathy Bridge for Autism

An Immigrant Alphabet

Bridge the Divide
Debate and Dialogue Platform

Broad Street Ministry
Radical Hospitality

Dyslexia Typeface

End Mass Incarceration Dinner Series

Freethink "Crossing the Divide"
Video Series

The American Dream Game

"Invisible" Disability Photo Series

"Tell Tall Tales" Implicit Bias Game

The People's Paper Co-op

These are some suggestions for exploring other examples of people and projects working to bridge divides.

Submission Details

- The Student Design Challenge is open to all students in grades 4 through 12.

- Student work must be submitted on a 22" x 28" poster board and must include both a visual representation of the design and a written explanation.

- Poster boards may be oriented either vertically or horizontally.

- Each submission may be by an individual student or a group of students.

- Please include the following information on the back of each poster board:

  Name, or names, of students
  Grade level
  School
  Contact name and email address of teacher

- Submissions may be dropped off at the Visitor Services Desk inside the North Entrance of the museum (on Kelly Drive) during regular museum hours from Tuesday, January 7, 2020 to Friday, January 31, 2020.

- Submissions may also be mailed to:

  Suzannah Niepold
  Education Department
  Philadelphia Museum of Art
  PO Box 7646, Philadelphia PA 19101-7646

- Contact **resourcecenter@philamuseum.org** with questions or for more information.

- All participating students will be invited to see their work displayed and celebrated in the *Designs for Different Futures* exhibition on Sunday, March 8, 2020.

Standards Alignment

Common Core Academic State Standards

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1**
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4**
- **CCSS.MATH.PRACTICE.MP1**

National Visual Arts Standards

- Creating: conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work
- Producing: realizing and presenting artistic ideas and work

Next Generation Science Standards

- Crosscutting Concepts: Systems and system models
- Scientific Practices: Asking questions and defining problems; Constructing explanations and designing solutions

C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards

- Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action