Harmonizing Spaces

Integrating Self-Determination and Choice for Well-Being in School Design

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New Directions symposium

ASSOCIATION FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS
Enhancing the Educational Experience

in Partnership with EDI Education Design International

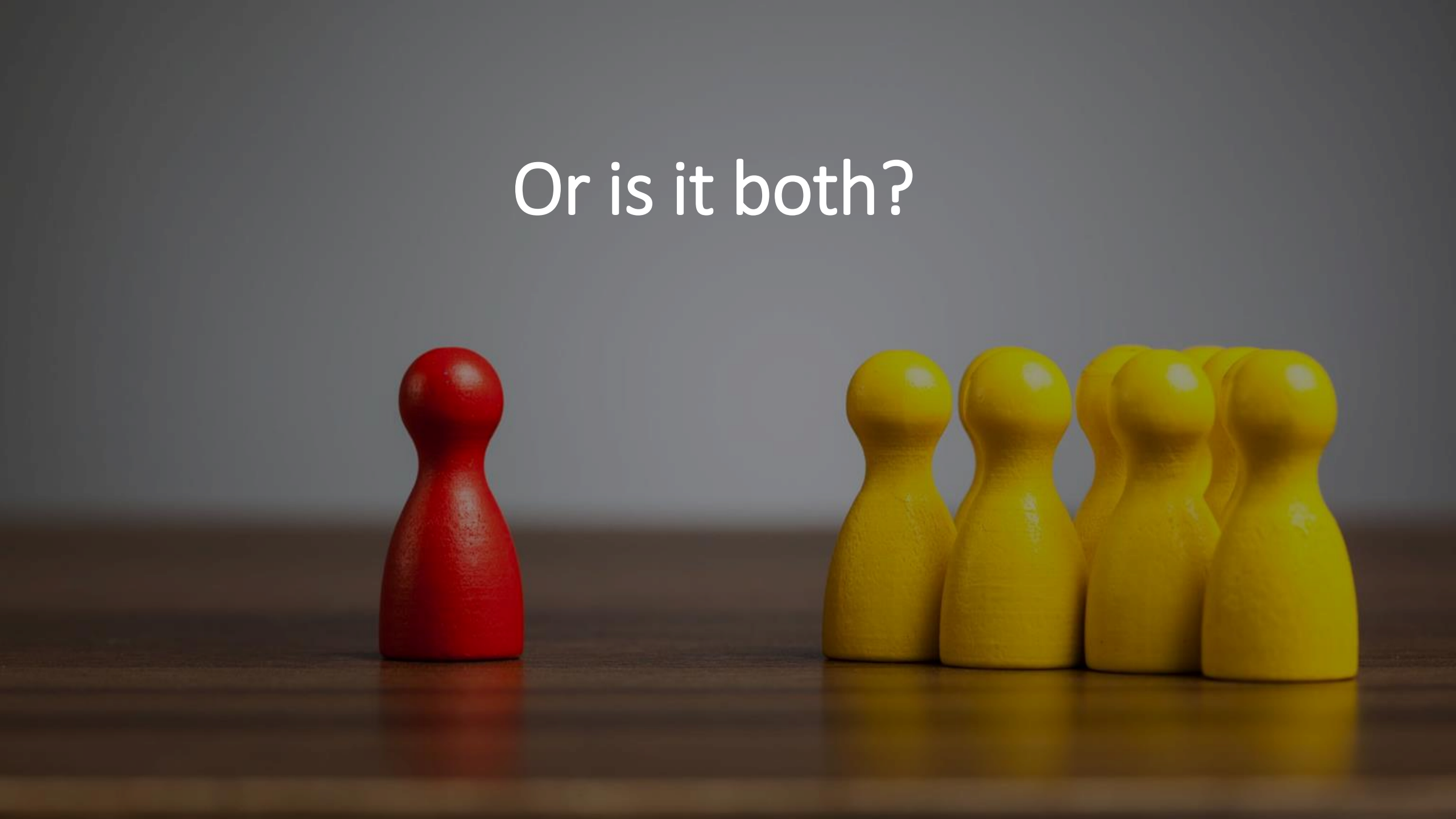
What are you grateful for this morning?

What is Wellbeing?

Health?

Happiness?

Or is it both?



Health

Mind, Body, and Spirit.

Happiness

Self-actualization (transcendence) & R**esilience**

Wellbeing = Health + Happiness

Apart from genetics, what does our state of wellbeing depend upon?

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT
Mind
SELF-ACTUALISATION & RESILIENCE
Spirit
Body
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Primary Environments for Children

- Home
- School
- Neighborhood

Children & Wellbeing

- **I am in control**
- **I can**
- I belong

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)
Ryan & Deci, 2000

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness

Experience of

Fosters

- Volition
- Motivation
- Engagement

- Enhanced Perfomance
- Persistence
- Creativity

Result in

1. AUTONOMY

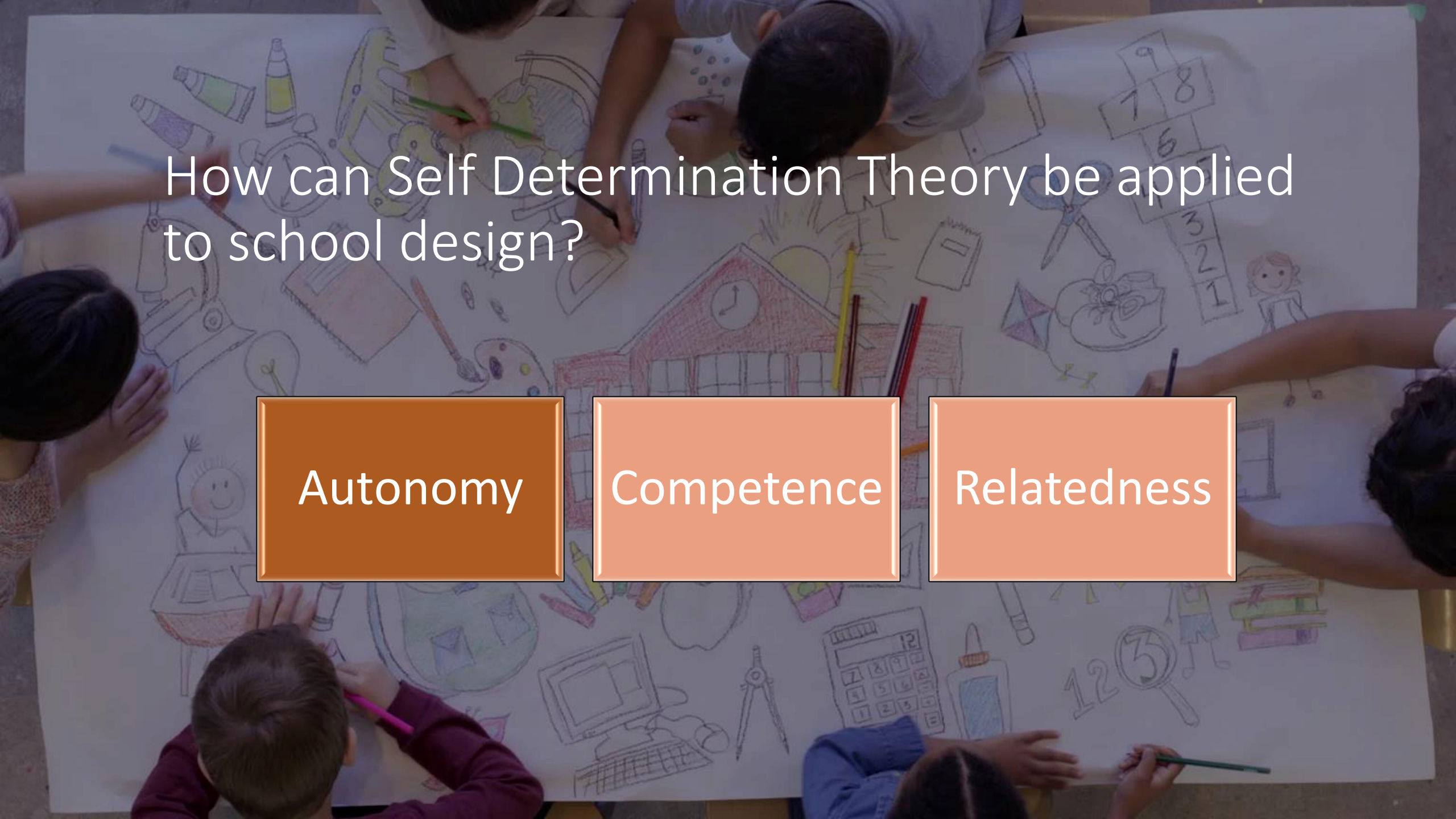
2. COMPETENCE

3. RELATEDNESS

REFLECTION

Think of your favorite learning space from your school days.

What made it special or effective for you?



How can Self Determination Theory be applied to school design?

- Autonomy
- Competence
- Relatedness

AUTONOMY

- ✗ Doesn’t mean independence or self-sufficiency.
- ✓ Need to perceive oneself as the source of one’s own behavior.
- ✓ The experience of choice

In educational settings, autonomy is closely associated with:

- **Motivation**
- **Learning outcomes**
- **Well-being**

Environmental Orderliness & Legibility

Personal Spaces & Accessibility

Respect for scale & development needs

Flexible Learning Spaces

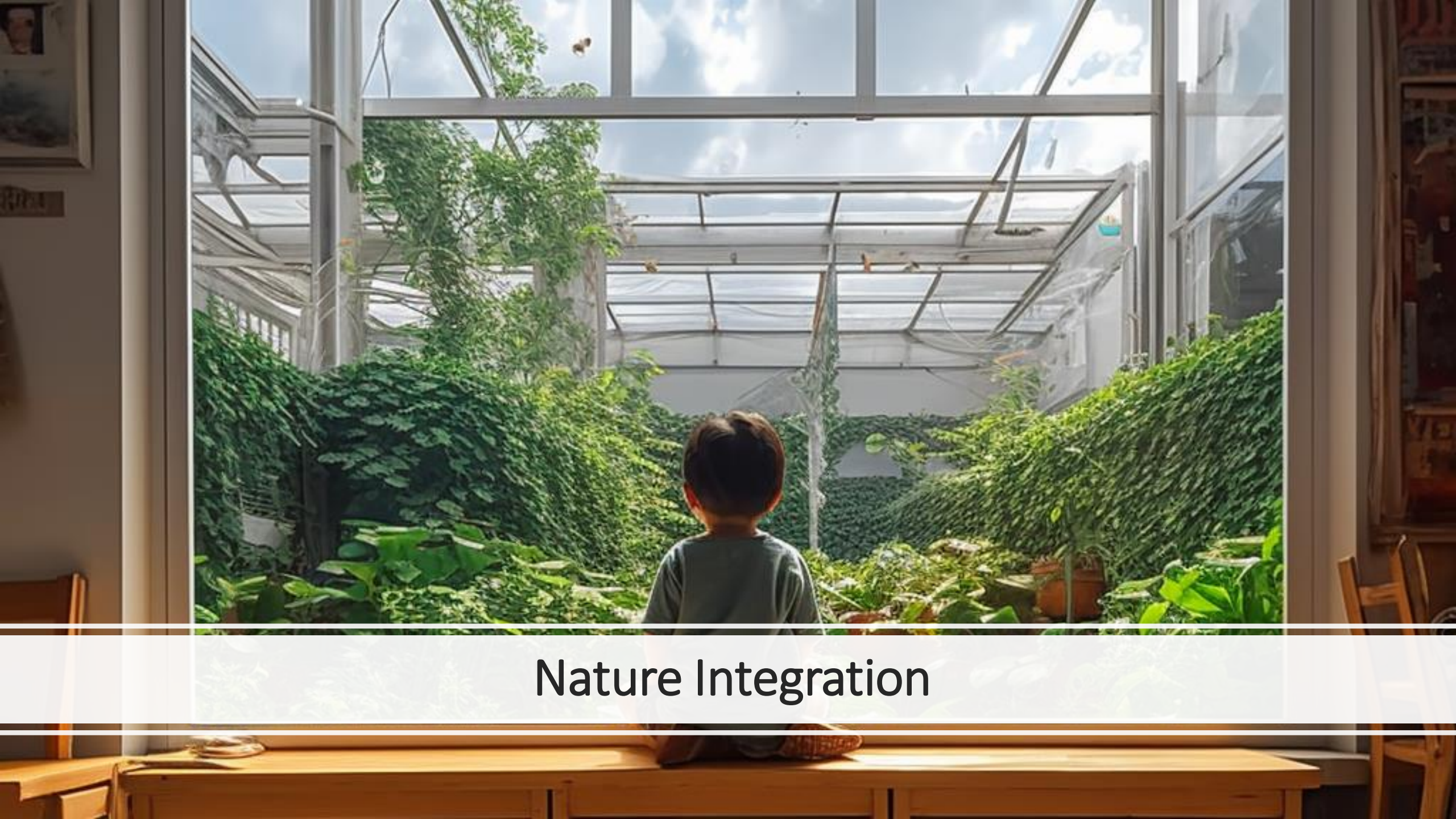
COMPETENCE

- ✓ The need to master optimal challenges.
- ✓ The need to feel confident and capable in one’s abilities.

In the context of education, the drive for competence manifests as:

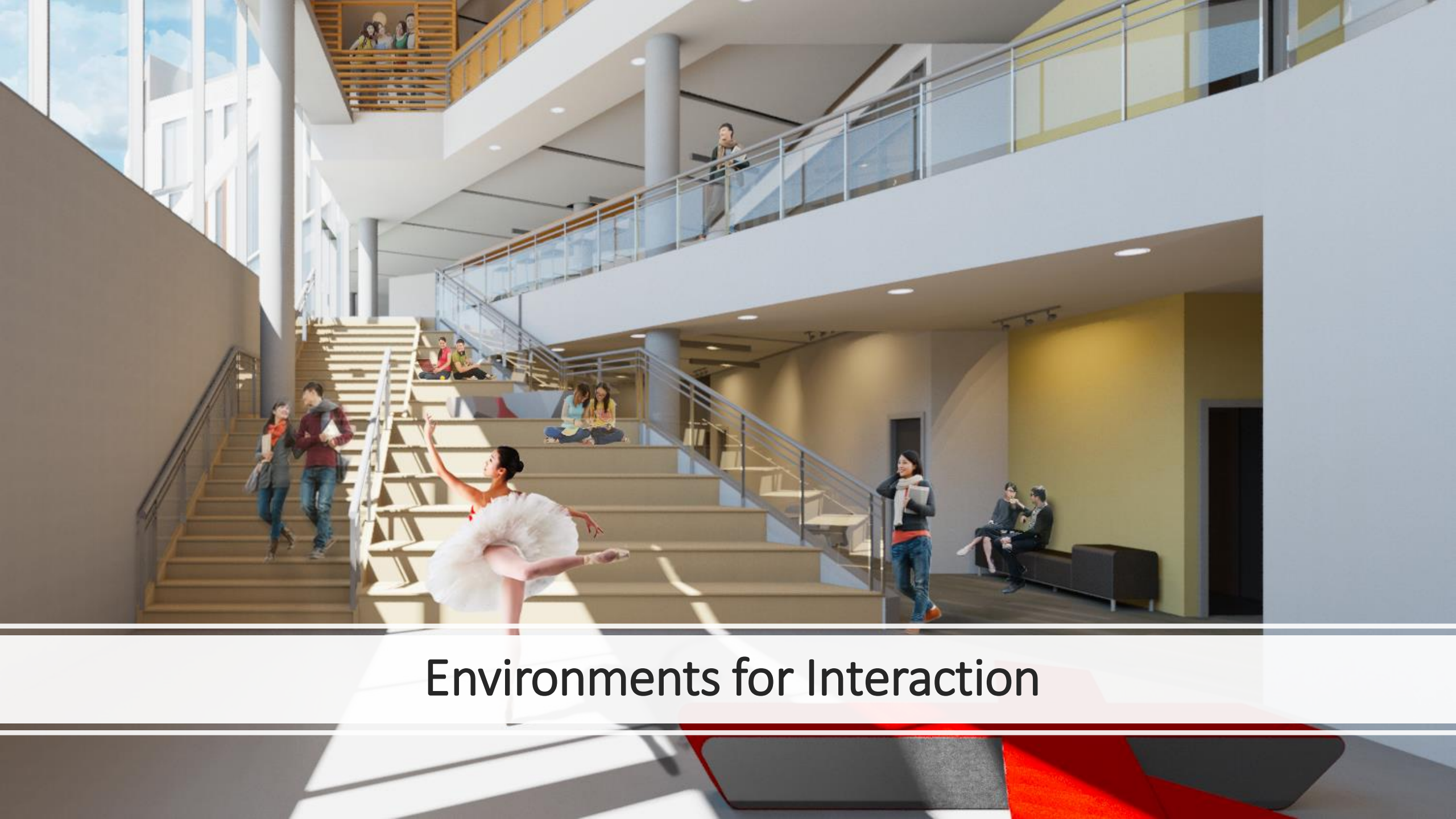
- ✓ **Engagement**
- ✓ **Persistence**
- ✓ **Quality of learning**

Restorative Spaces



Nature Integration

Spaces for Collaboration



Environments for Interaction

RELATEDNESS

- ✓ The need to be connected to, and experience caring for others.
- ✓ It’s about feeling understood, valued
- ✓ Having a sense of belonging to a community.

In educational terms, relatedness has implications for:

- **Classroom dynamics**
- **Engagement**
- **Mental health**

Small Learning Communities

Sensory Design

Social Spaces

Nature Connectedness

The Experience of Choice……

"freedom to choose what, where, how, and with whom"

Choice Architecture in Educational Environments

NUDGING towards better health, community spirit & environmental stewardship!

Decisions are influenced by how choices are presented

Choice Architecture acknowledges the innate human **need for control**.

1. **Mental And Emotional Well-Being**
2. **Social Growth And Interaction**
3. **Physical Health Facilitation**
4. **Environment And Sustainability**

Presenting choices for :

QUIET ZONES

This??

Or this??

Therapeutic Spaces

KANSAS
EMPORIA STATE
FRIENDS UNIVERSITY
SOUTHWESTERN
SAINTS
BUTLER
BETHANY
BAKER
NEWMAN
FRIENDS
COFFEYVILLE
310A
310B

This?

This?

Or this??

1. Mental And Emotional Well-Being
2. Social Growth And Interaction
3. Physical Health Facilitation
4. Environment And Sustainability

Collaborative Spaces

Cultural Hubs

This?

Or This?

1. Mental And Emotional Well-Being
2. Social Growth And Interaction
3. Physical Health Facilitation
4. Environment And Sustainability

Active Design

Nutritional Awareness

1. **Mental And Emotional Well-Being**
2. **Social Growth And Interaction**
3. **Physical Health Facilitation**
4. **Environment And Sustainability**

Eco-awareness Zones

Resource Management

"Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else.”

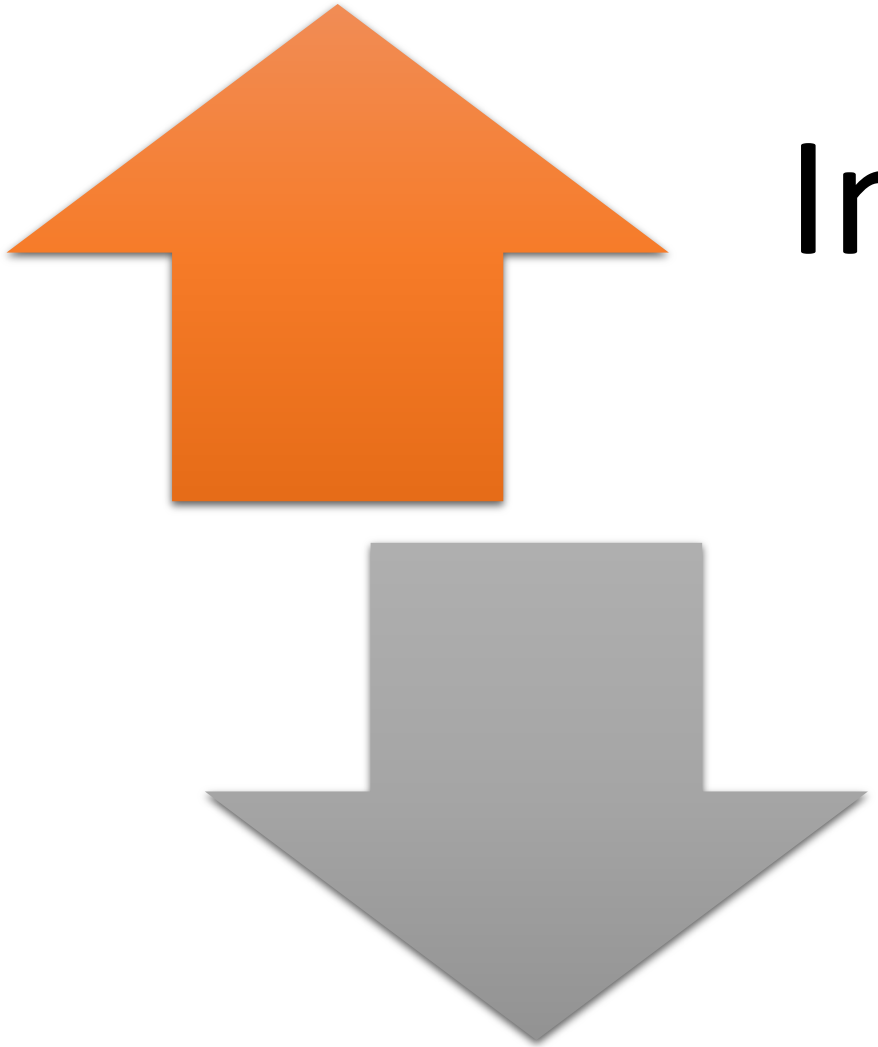
Leonardo da Vinci

Basic Psychological Needs & Sustainable Development

Autonomy

Current curricula and media, focused on worsening planetary health, create a sense of helplessness, undermining children's belief in their power to effect change.

"Things are not in control"



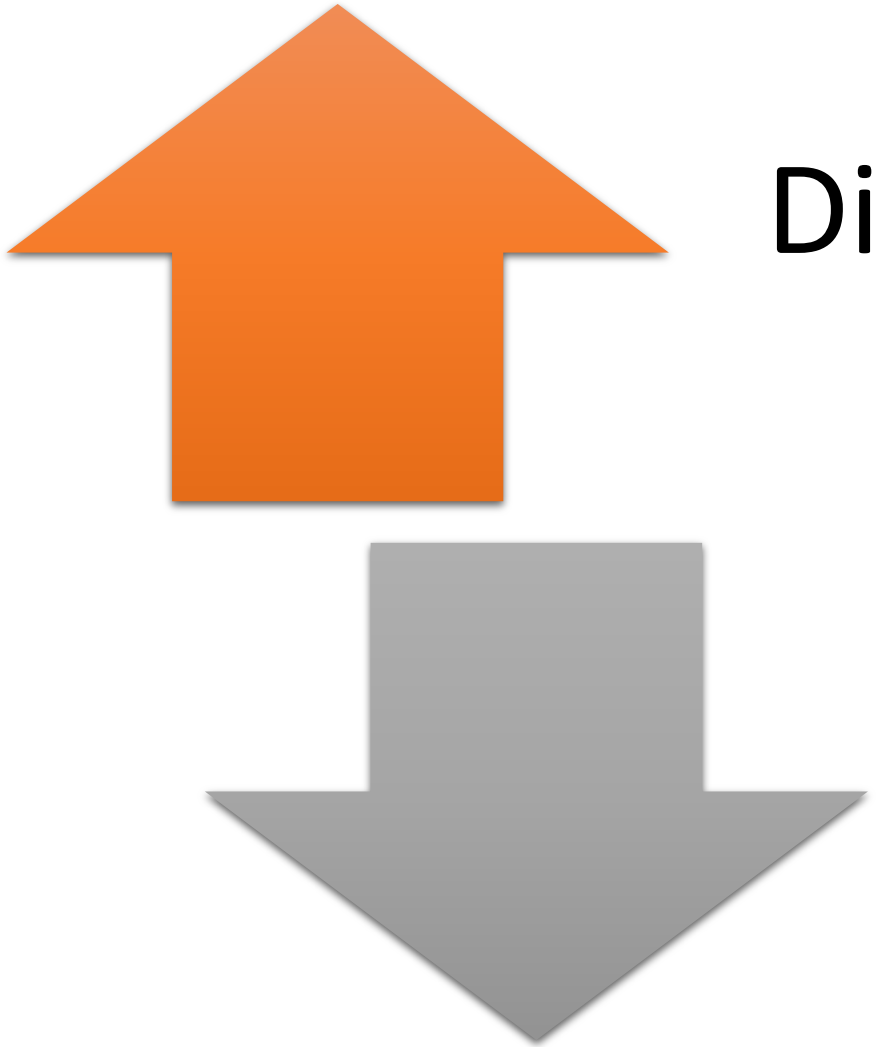
Insecurity

Impact

Competence

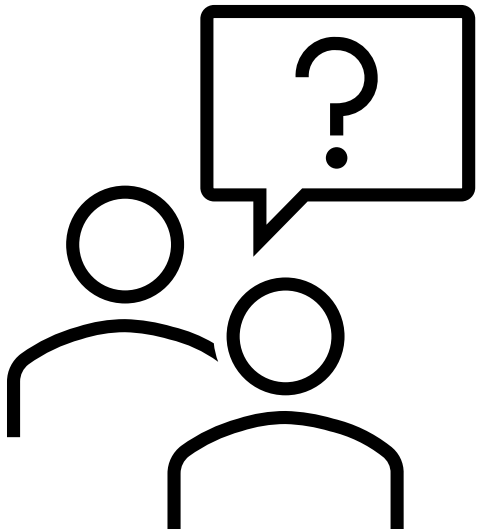
The emphasis on global crises without providing actionable and achievable solutions leads to a diminished sense of competence in addressing environmental issues.

“ I am not capable”



Disempowerment

Impact



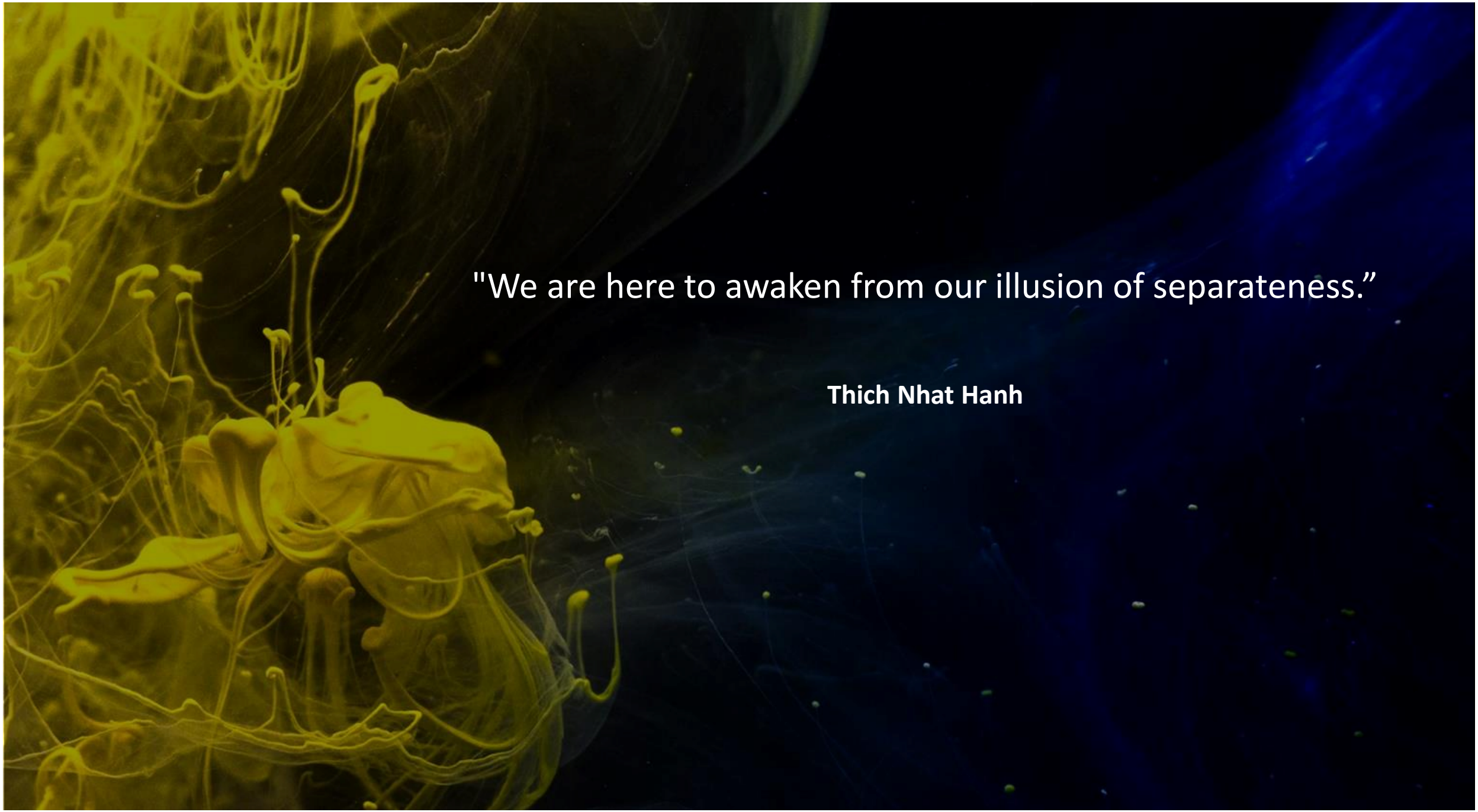
Relatedness

Disconnect from community and nature. Reduced empathy and concern for environmental preservation.

“I don’t belong”

Alienation

Impact


"We are here to awaken from our illusion of separateness."
Thich Nhat Hanh

Questions??

"Our task is to educate their whole being, so they can face this future. By the way – we may not see this future, but they will. And our job is to help them make something of it."

- - **Sir Ken Robinson- -**

Dive Deeper with our book
"A NEW LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL DESIGN"

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