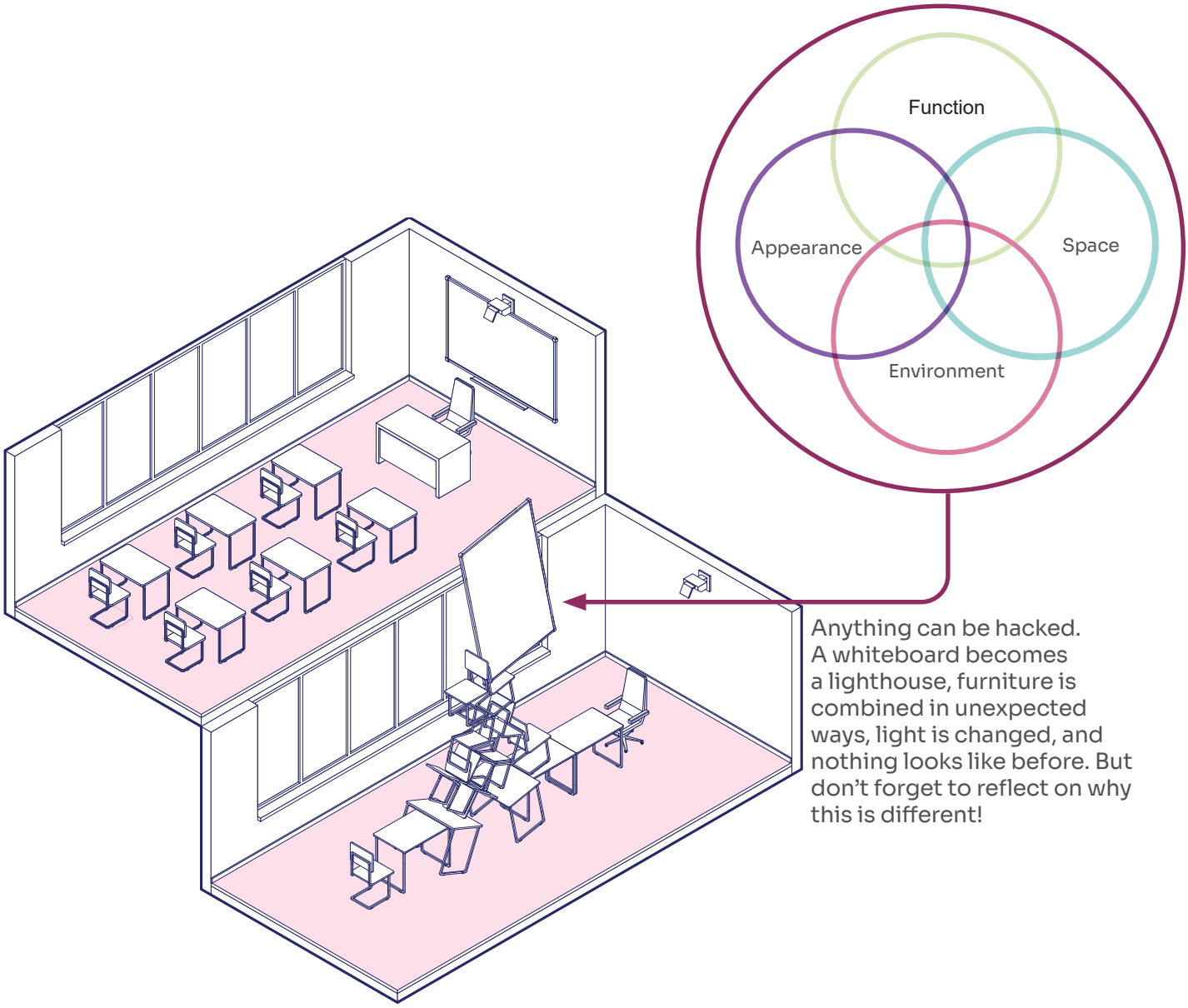
# Hack the Space




Anything can be hacked. A whiteboard becomes a lighthouse, furniture is combined in unexpected ways, light is changed, and nothing looks like before. But don't forget to reflect on why this is different!

**"Cambio ergo cogito": I change therefore I know. In this experiment, we can either 'hack' a familiar into an unfamiliar space or 'creatively adopt' (with some mild spatial violence) an unsuitable space to our needs. The only rule is: don't use anything as originally intended – and of course – go wild!**

# Hack the Space

**Why?**
Space affects and, to some degree, determines how we move and interact with each other. Understanding this complex relationship helps us cut through the complexity that underlies the world around us and empowers us at the same time.

Hacking, i.e. the conscious act of changing and rearranging a space's intended use, helps us decode the complexity of the world. Reclaiming the physical environment and the humanisation of many spaces are among the many reasons space has been hacked in the past and present.

Using something in the "wrong" way implies that we deconstruct what the "right" way is.
And let's set the record straight: there is no right or wrong way – everything can be changed in whatever way needed and imagined.

**How?**
The principle is straightforward: change everything around you as idiosyncratically as you want and have fun. But that is easier said than done. Before making changes, it is essential to understand why things are the way they are: change requires a solid grasp of the existing world.

Understand, change, and reflect on your actions. This trichord is the engine behind this experiment.

"Hacking the space" often involves challenging norms, as spaces are frozen social structures. It takes courage to step outside learned behaviours. When we tested this experiment, the initial half-hour was often marked by awkwardness as the facilitator encouraged participants to act beyond their usual spatial and social constraints. But jumping you must! It can be challenging, but it is worthwhile and full of anarchic joy!

**Left: Scene from "The Educators" (2004)**
In this film, a group of young revolutionists intrude into wealthy people's houses. Instead of stealing anything of value, they rearrange all furniture into grotesque sculptures. This radical spatial reconfiguration, crossing so many social boundaries, instils more terror into the "victims" than an ordinary theft, as it challenges deeply ingrained societal norms.
src.:https://media.outnow.ch/Movies/Bilder/2004/FettenJahreSindVorbei/movie.ws/02.jpg

**Right: Hawkins\Brown Lab, Kinsale School/Cork/Ireland**
Participants were asked to (ab) use "found objects" of all kinds to transform a range of spaces and explore how this alters the shadow and light modulation.
src.: SENSE.

## Further suggestions

As a first step, you should ask yourself: How does the space I am in work? What does it want me to do? This can range from a simple analysis to a more profound examination; it's up to you.

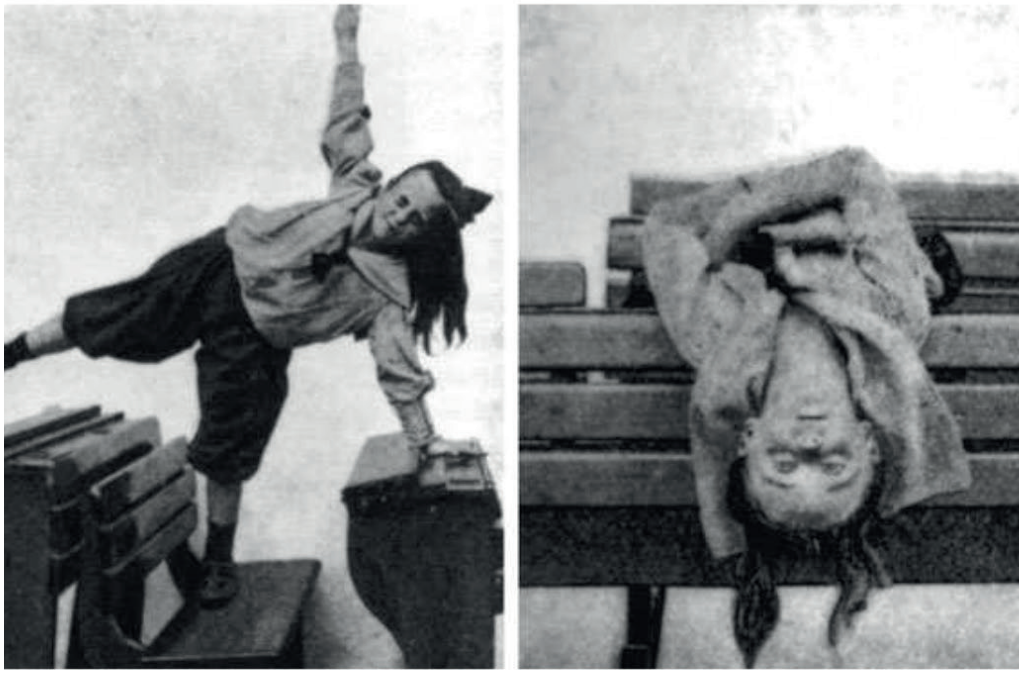
Next, consider setting up the space differently from the usual arrangement to support your practice or create an unexpected change.

You might rearrange everything in the room, create a sculpture from the furniture, or use tables for sitting and chairs for eating. Think about transforming your office into a living room or your classroom into a dining hall with a long table at the centre. Or, consider utilising an art gallery or even a supermarket. How could you adapt the space of a supermarket or a large parking lot?

Once a decision has been made, if you work in a group, everyone can be asked to bring equipment such as lights, cushions, tablecloths, or other

**Top: KAPUTT, Academy of Destruction, Hamburg 2018**
In this "science theatre piece", students research the destruction of their used environment as a creative act to construct new, unexpected constellations. "Hacking" becomes creating..
src.: Fundus Theatre Hamburg

**Right: Claude Parent, Dining Room/ Villa Peupliers/ Neuilly (1960)**
The French architect Claude Parent insisted on using sloped floors in his private house, including a sloped living room, where wedges were used as "furniture" to match the gradient. Parent's theory was that slanting architectural elements like walls and floors forced people into a deeper reflection about their physical environment. We only understand "normality" when we deconstruct it.
src.: https://032c.com/magazine/the-supermodernist-architect-claude-parent



**Left: School bench as gymnastic equipment, Erich Fischer (1910)**
The German teacher Erich Fischer transformed school benches into sports equipment to allow students to exercise between lessons. While not intentionally subversive, this "Hack" turned a piece of furniture - the Prussian school bench - aimed at disciplining the body into a fun climbing and liberating experience.
src.: Hnilica, Sonja. "Schulbank Und Klassenzimmer – Disziplinierung Durch Architektur." Sinnliche Bildung?, 2010, 141–62.

"stuff". You can then move the furniture around and observe the resulting configuration.

The term 'hacking' is also used to describe the utilisation of a space for a purpose different from its intended use. Teaching can happen anywhere as long as you hack the space appropriately. A kitchen could be used for a physics, chemistry or technology lesson, a lab for dance classes, the staircase can become a solar system. It will change the way we teach, and there are numerous processes and potentially numerous devices, furniture, and components to be explored that provide learning opportunities.

Hacking spaces can be a chance to bring together usually separate areas. As part of the SENSE project, participants used the Louvre art museum in Paris to learn about geometry and the physics of colour. Do you have a similar idea?

Any space can be "hacked". One of the most famous historical examples is the repurposing of 19th-century school benches for gymnastic exercises by the German teacher Erich Fischer, who adopted them as physical training devices for his pupils, thereby turning the affordances of the school bench —i.e., the normative posture —into its opposite.