Environment as THE THIRD TEACHER
Using Design to Transform Teaching & Learning
About VS
**VS Germany**

- Leading furniture manufacturer
- Founded in 1898
- Headquartered in Tauberbischofsheim, Germany
- Growing portfolio of more than 2,000 innovative products
- Products designed to create flexible solutions for any learning environment

**VS America**

- Established in 2003
- Headquartered in Charlotte, NC
- Showrooms in Charlotte, NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles
VS and Montessori

• In the 20th century, Maria Montessori started to develop education reform for infants and elementary school children
  • Supporting children in discovering for themselves their strengths and abilities
  • Creating environments suited to that purpose – from learning materials and furniture to spaces and architecture

• The original VS Berlin firm had sole rights to manufacture and distribute Montessori furniture and teaching materials in Germany in 1913
VS believes that students are shaped by adults, by peers, and ultimately by places, the physical environments where students learn.

Through VS’ adaptable furniture solutions and the design philosophies from the book *The Third Teacher*, we believe together we can create an environment for learning that serves the whole child.
The Third Teacher
Learning environment as the third teacher

• Book created through collaboration between Cannon Design, VS, and Bruce Mau Design
• 79 ways you can use design to transform teaching and learning
• Intuitive, innovative ideas from variety of educational experts worldwide
• Explores critical link between school environment and how children learn
• Offers practical design ideas to guide efforts to improve schools
1. Everyone can be a designer

Look to many sources for design inspiration. Teachers and students, as well as architects and designers, have ideas about their ideal learning environment.
6. Assign the solution

Make health and safety a classroom project and develop lesson plans that will produce real improvements to the learning environment.
9.

Let the sunshine in

And the gray skies too: Increasing daylight in classrooms has been shown to cut down on absenteeism and improve test scores.
10.

Shuffle the deck

Change up the locations of regular activities so children can explore new surroundings with their bodies and their minds.
Make it new

Look at your learning space with 21st-century eyes: Does it work for what we know about learning today, or just what we knew about learning in the past?
12. Support great teaching

Free teachers from the traditional desk at the front of the classroom and encourage new settings for teaching and learning.
13.

Build neural networks

Spark cognitive development by providing students of all ages with places to test new skills.
16. Emulate museums

An environment rich in evocative objects – whether it’s a classroom or a museum – triggers active learning by letting students pick what to engage with.
It seems obvious but is often forgotten: Teaching and learning should shape the building, not vice versa.
20. Make peace with fidgeting

Think of it as brain development, which it is. Then think of how to make room for it in the classroom.
23.

Make classrooms agile

A learning space that can be reconfigured on a dime will engage different kinds of learners and teachers.
24. Respect fitness facilities

Make them attractive and visible to reinforce the connection between physical activity and overall well-being.
28.
Scale the wall

Climbing builds kids’ motor skills and self-confidence, so don’t be afraid to install walls and structures they can clamber up.
Imagine like a child

Visualize a proposed school from a student’s perspective – the poignancy of that point of view may help transform a proposal into a build project.
62. Put the fun in fundamentals

Injecting a learning space with playfulness and humor creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
70. Create a movement

Engage in meaningful conversations about changing the education landscape. Parents, teachers, students, principals, community members, and politicians are all important and powerful stakeholders in this movement.
Dream big and be brave

The rate of technological advancement is increasing exponentially. When designing schools, don’t let today’s reality limit tomorrow’s possibilities.
“I believe that the school is primarily a social institution... I believe that education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.”

– John Dewey
6. Assign the solution.
20. Make peace with fidgeting.
42. Reveal how stuff works.
23. Make classrooms agile.
55. Trigger the senses.
46. Let students lead.
32. Build for change.
70. Create a movement.
78. Dream big and be brave.
75. Plan for the unknown.
66. Break down social barriers.
62. Put the fun in fundamentals.
76. Unleash learning.
1. Everyone can be a designer.
5. Think small.
33. Operate 24/7.
67. Break down social barriers.