



# SCHOOL CASE STUDY

## Szkoła Podstawowa 27 Primary School

School name	Primary School 27 in Gdansk / Szkoła Podstawowa nr 27 im. Dzieci Zjednoczonej Europy w Gdańsku
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Age of students	6-14
Number of staff	54
Area of focus	Teaching by doing with use of wide range of technologies, both traditional and digital, STEM education

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# Background, Context and Drivers to change

The transformation of educational spaces was extended to the entire school. This included not only classrooms, corridors and usable spaces but areas around the school as well.

The process started with a reconfiguration and redecoration of the English language classroom named “The English Corner”. This small change initiated a snowball effect in school spaces. Seeing the reactions of students and teachers to the “new, different, attractive” educational space in this classroom, further changes were obvious and motivated the staff to bring new ideas. Where do the ideas come from? From everywhere. School management, teachers, parents, students and even non-teaching staff were involved in the process of changing the space. The aim was to create flexible spaces that will support development of wide range of students’ competences. The philosophy of learning changed. Less lecturing in a traditional form. The school space is now used to educate in action, to engage students, to respond to different learning needs. In the process of changes, cooperation of teachers and students, modern and creative methods of teaching, relationships, combining new and old technologies and purpose of the rooms are some of the most important principles.

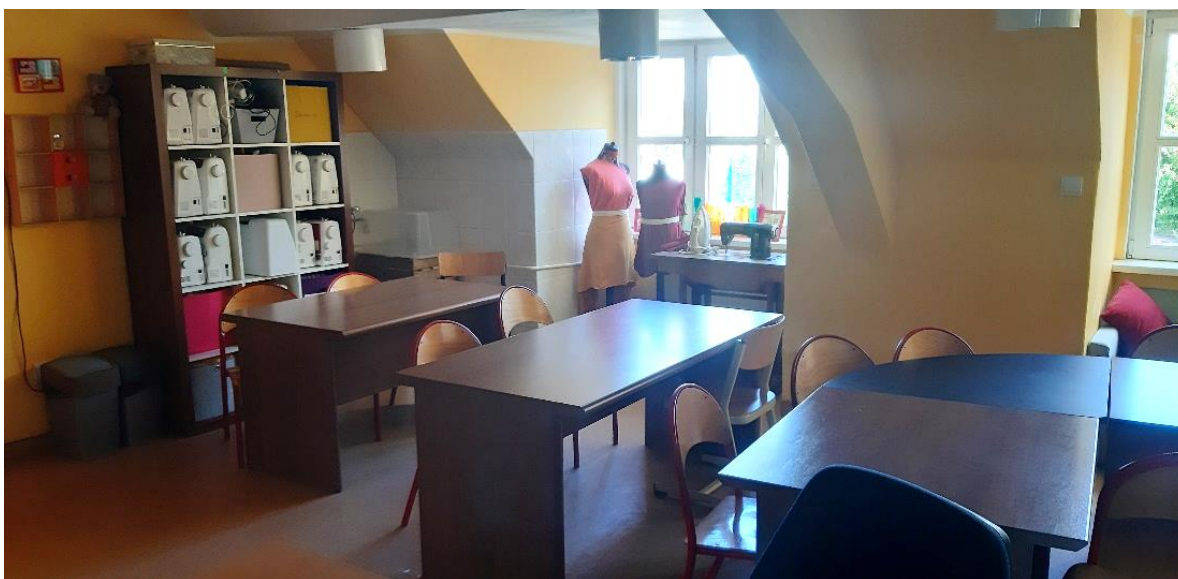
The main guideline for arrangement of the space is of course proxemics. Spaces must be safe and support learning. Each classroom has a slightly different character, so they are designed and organised in a different way. The space should inspire both students and teachers. Teachers should be encouraged to engage in action, create conditions for discovery of talents and development of creativity, communication and cooperation.

School Principals, Adam Perzyński and Anna Krause, presented their pedagogical concept at the INSPIR@CJE 2019 conference. The [video is available here](#) (in Polish)

## Flexible/innovative learning environment

Most of the school’s spaces have been transformed to support engaging learning processes. In the school an educator’s room, workshop room, craft room were created. These are places where students can actively learn, use modern technology, or develop manual and artistic skills. Keeping balance between technology and offline activities is very important in this school.

The example of this school shows that even in old walls, in very limited conditions and with no financial support, changing the space is possible thanks to the headmaster’s vision, strengthening the leaders of change – teachers and looking for allies outside the school. The transformation of selected spaces in FLE has caused that more and more teachers started looking for didactic and organisational solutions. They started to use not only active methods and forms of work but modern technology as well. For instance, to increase expression and communication old blackboards in some classrooms, where replaced by wall boards in which all students can make notes and express as well as interactive monitors were replaced with additional screens (the signal from the monitor is copied on the screen above, so all in the classroom can see what is presented).



## Student-centred pedagogy

A well-thought-out and well-designed space provides better opportunities to build relationships, especially when it is designed collaboratively by members of the school community. Therefore, school's new space has a very positive impact on the quality of educational processes. It influenced methods of teaching, activated teachers and made their work more effective. New space made teachers satisfied with their job. Thanks to the new model of work which activates students, the perception of the school in the local community has changed. Nowadays there are a lot more students willing to attend to this public school in Gdansk than the available places.

The teachers are not only eager to make use of the flexible space they are also more and more eager to create new projects and educational initiatives and to develop new, modern technics of teaching.

Less traditional ways include lessons where students can collaborate with each other or use technology. An important aspect of the school's work is also the workshop classrooms, such as the craft-room where students develop practical skills thanks to project work and collaboration. And learning came out of the building too – the new "external" classroom was built next to the school sport facilities where teaching can also take place even during cloudy days.

There are a lot of examples of innovative activities that are student-centred. For instance:

1. Using technology (flips, tablets, 3D printers, laptops) as a part of educational processes to enhance creative, critical and innovative thinking, co-operation and develop communication and students' agency, also learning by doing.
2. Project based learning – computer science using 3D printers, robots, programming, tablets.
3. Implementing innovation called EDU DNA conducting in 4 teaching blocks such as experiments, manual activities, ICT and chess.
4. Combining technology (3D printing) with practical activities (e.g., creating models of cellars, sewing backpacks) with subjects such as Biology and Maths.

5. Outdoor projects and activities conducted in “Green class” situated in a green area of school.

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***“It is worth taking advantage of what you have around you – especially looking for change leaders and allies among parents. That way the transformation will be permanent and profound.”***

Adam Perzynski, School Principal

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## Use of technology

The school tries to use ICT every day. An increasing number of teachers use it quite effortlessly but there are still a lot who do not know how to do it. There are interactive whiteboards, interactive monitors, computers & tablets, drones, robots, 3D printers which are not used because teachers do not feel confident to use them. On the other hand, it took a lot of time and effort to find appropriate interactive whiteboards that would give comfort of work and a lot of possibilities while being easy to use. Fortunately, it is slowly changing, and more and more teachers start using the equipment.

Using a wireless connection between a computer and an interactive flipchart, sharing the computer screen with a projector, installing software for smartphones or tablets to use augmented reality is slowly becoming a standard. The school has virtual reality goggles, a professional telescope and these are, for example, equipment that is still not used every day, waiting to be deployed.





# Impact

## Benefits

The school has used proxemics in building relationships, in the learning and in educational processes, especially those focused on learning by doing. The impact of space is huge therefore teachers build their classroom space according to the lessons' objectives. When teachers want to focus on the socialization of students or cooperation, they use round tables or combine individual tables into islands. In some classrooms there are desks arranged in a horseshoe - it gives students the feeling of attention, the teacher has an opportunity to move freely around the classroom, establish contact with each student. Appropriately selected colours make students quieter, and soundproof panels installed in some classrooms give acoustic comfort. The classroom, having hammocks and pouffes, gets a casual and relaxing atmosphere.

The school workshop rooms equipped with special tablets and tools give the possibility to conduct practical classes in safe and suitable conditions. As an example, in the Art Classroom students can paint on easels, create in clay and then fire it in a clay kiln. These places allow students to create and let their minds and imagination free. Another example of space is a green classroom located outside the school building which encourages learning and playing outdoors on sunny days. The school playgrounds, treadmill, ropes course, climbing wall provide opportunities for integration and formation of physical fitness in an interesting way. All these, give an opportunity for comprehensive development to both students and teachers.



## Challenges

- The biggest challenge has been the integration of smartphones into the education process. It is difficult to make the whole community understand that smartphones are not only toys but an educational device as well. Smartphones can be used in everyday learning and can be used on lessons. Finding out how to use them safely and meaningfully has been an incredible challenge.
- Another challenge is to encourage and convince all staff to use modern technology, to make them understand that it is useful and makes educational process more interesting and interactive. It has taken a lot of time to overcome this difficulty.

- A space for all employees called Relaxation Zone is a room with professional massage chairs and a rocking chair. Teachers can relax there and take care of their body and so called “well-being”. This place is not visited – teachers do not know how to find time for that place or are ashamed or do not know how to organize time for themselves at work. This is a challenge for the near future – to encourage employees to use the Relaxation Zone.
- Funding is always a problem. In the school a lot of things has been done by people from the staff or friends – builders, architects, designers. The school very often organises fund-raising events among parents, also companies are asked for support, and it really works. Last year the school managed to collect nearly 12 000 PLN in two days for mobile sinks which are extremely needed during the pandemic.



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Pictures provided by Szkoła Podstawowa 27 Primary School

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