



Technology: Design and Delight

What if design and technology brought delight to others?

Hayley wanted her class to think about design in terms of delight as well as usefulness, so she arranged a different design lesson.

"I started by placing safe, fun items on each table: party favors, a kaleidoscope, a pinwheel that spins when you blow on it, gorgeous fabrics, delightful images, and fun music. I gave students time to move around each table and explore or play as appropriate. After they had returned to their seats, I gave them three tasks:

- to say what they liked about the items and express their enjoyment;
- to decide what guided the selection of the items; and
- to decide on the purpose of the item(s) on their table.

"We discussed the results of the task and explored the idea of designs whose primary purpose is to bring delight rather than just be 'useful.' We considered the ideas of 'delight' and 'delightful' and created a definition. This led us to thinking about what good things might bring delight to different people, like babies, friends, and grandparents. Then I asked the students to design something that would bring delight to another person, focusing on the response and enjoyment of the receiver."

What's going on here?

Hayley **saw** her design lesson as a way of introducing the concept of delight.

She **engaged** students in approaching the lesson through a new frame, responding to designed objects as delightful (not just useful), and then reflecting on the experience (play, exploration, designing objects of delight). She also asked students to design something for another person as a way of acting in service of another's delight.

Hayley **reshaped her practice** by using objects to create a particular atmosphere (joyful) and framing the creative task so that skills were put to use creating for others.

What does this have to do with faith, hope, and love?

A world full of delights is the gift of a **loving** God to his people. God created a world that is extravagant in its variety and beauty; he did not just create something useful. The world is not now the delightful place it was intended to be. Sin has spoiled our world so that we experience not only the delights of creation but also sorrow and pain. The Christian **hope** for the future is a world where there is no more sorrow or pain and where God will wipe away all tears. Once again people will be able to fully delight in creation, each other, and God. This hope for the future is founded on **faith** in God; it is more than wishful thinking. Delighting in God's world now acts as a signpost to the future.

What difference does it make?

Designing objects that fulfill a useful function is a legitimate objective for design, but sometimes creating objects to delight balances the emphasis on usefulness.

Where could we go from here?

The concept of delight could be explored in information technology, music and art, as well as design. Students also could explore how even objects designed primarily for usefulness (e.g., kitchen utensils and appliances) also are often designed to be pleasing to the eye and touch.

Digging deeper

The term "Eden" means delight (Genesis 2:8). Eden was a garden of delight, and it offers a way of looking at our world: it is a garden of delights to be explored; it is God's box of delights to be unwrapped. Throughout history Christians have often talked about

learning in terms of being in God's garden of delight, and that is part of the history of the word *kindergarten*. It is easy to drift into seeing knowledge only in terms of usefulness and to neglect delighting in it. In the Bible God tells people to "take delight" in the things he has given them ([Deuteronomy 26:11](#)). Delight is a form of joy; it is consciously taking pleasure in someone or something. It involves a raised awareness, taking notice, reveling in something, whether that be the beauty of math or the pleasure music creates, the joy of giving or the simplicity of a design. The Bible describes God as delighting in his people ([Psalm 149:4](#)).

Seeing the world and life itself as gifts from God leaves people more open to delight and joy. Such an attitude replaces a mindset that focuses *only* on rights and entitlement, which can leave people looking for what they are missing rather than what they have and could be enjoying. Christians experience a delight that is a response to God's delight in his people. We also delight in the grace that God has placed in the work of others' hands. Delight and joy emphasize the relationship with God that goes beyond a contractual one. It is not just obeying God out of duty and commitment.

I think we all sin by needlessly disobeying the apostolic injunction to "rejoice" as much as by anything else. C. S. Lewis

Giving is a strong motif in the Bible. One of the most famous verses in the Bible is about God loving the world so much that he gave his only son ([John 3:16](#)). He also gave the world to humanity and provides for them. In response God calls for generosity. Giving to the poor and needy is accepted as done to Christ ([Matthew 25:37-40](#)). The possession of gifts and material wealth carry responsibility: they are for serving the common good ([2 Corinthians 9:6-7](#)).

All the blessings we enjoy are Divine deposits, committed to our trust on this condition, that they should be dispensed for the benefit of our neighbors. John Calvin



Previous: Design and Communities
What if design and technology wer...

