

Outdoor Learning Environments that Support Educator Wellness and Success



Applied Research Consortium Spring 2022

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PROJECT TEAM



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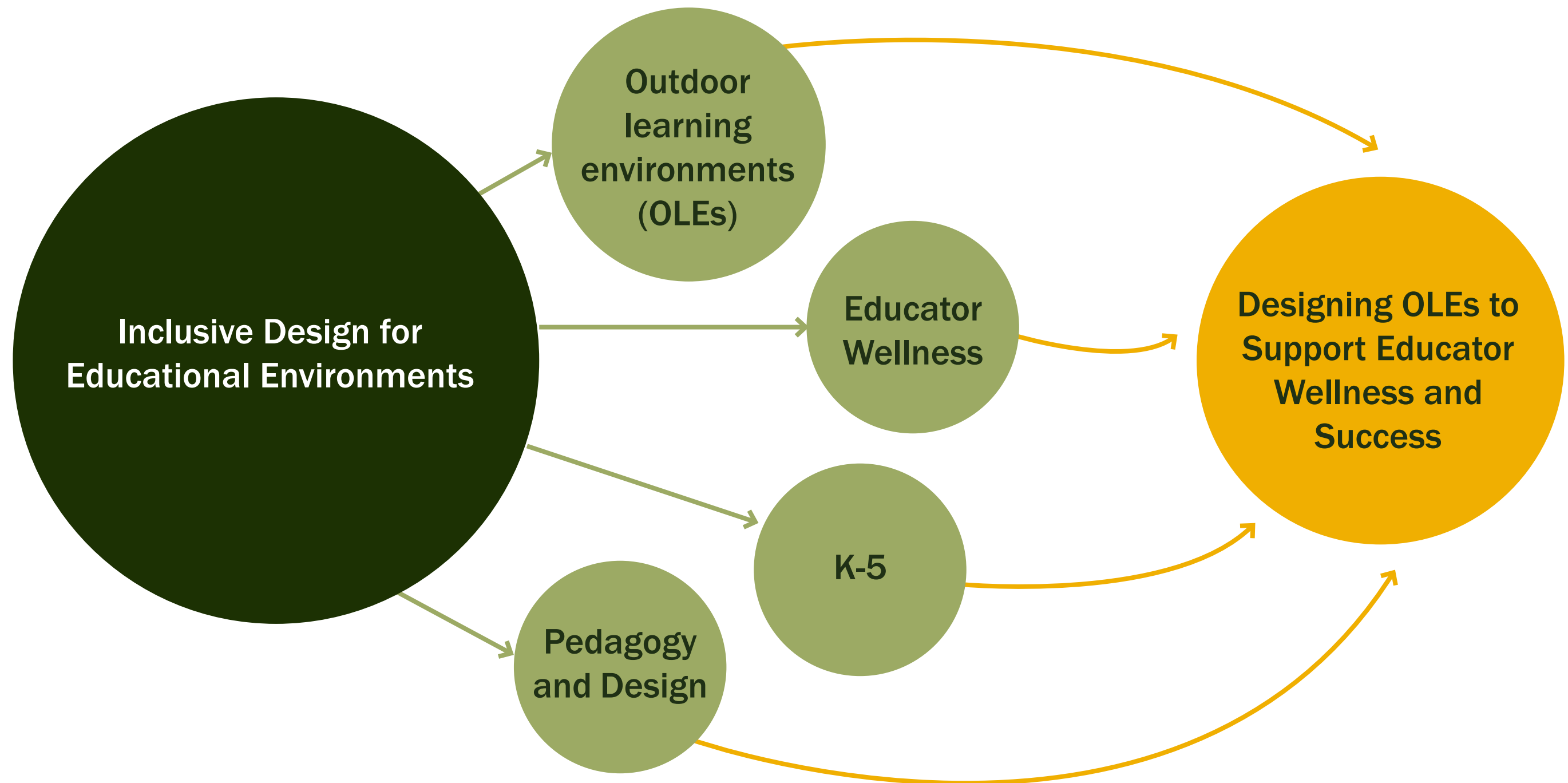
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Firm Advisors

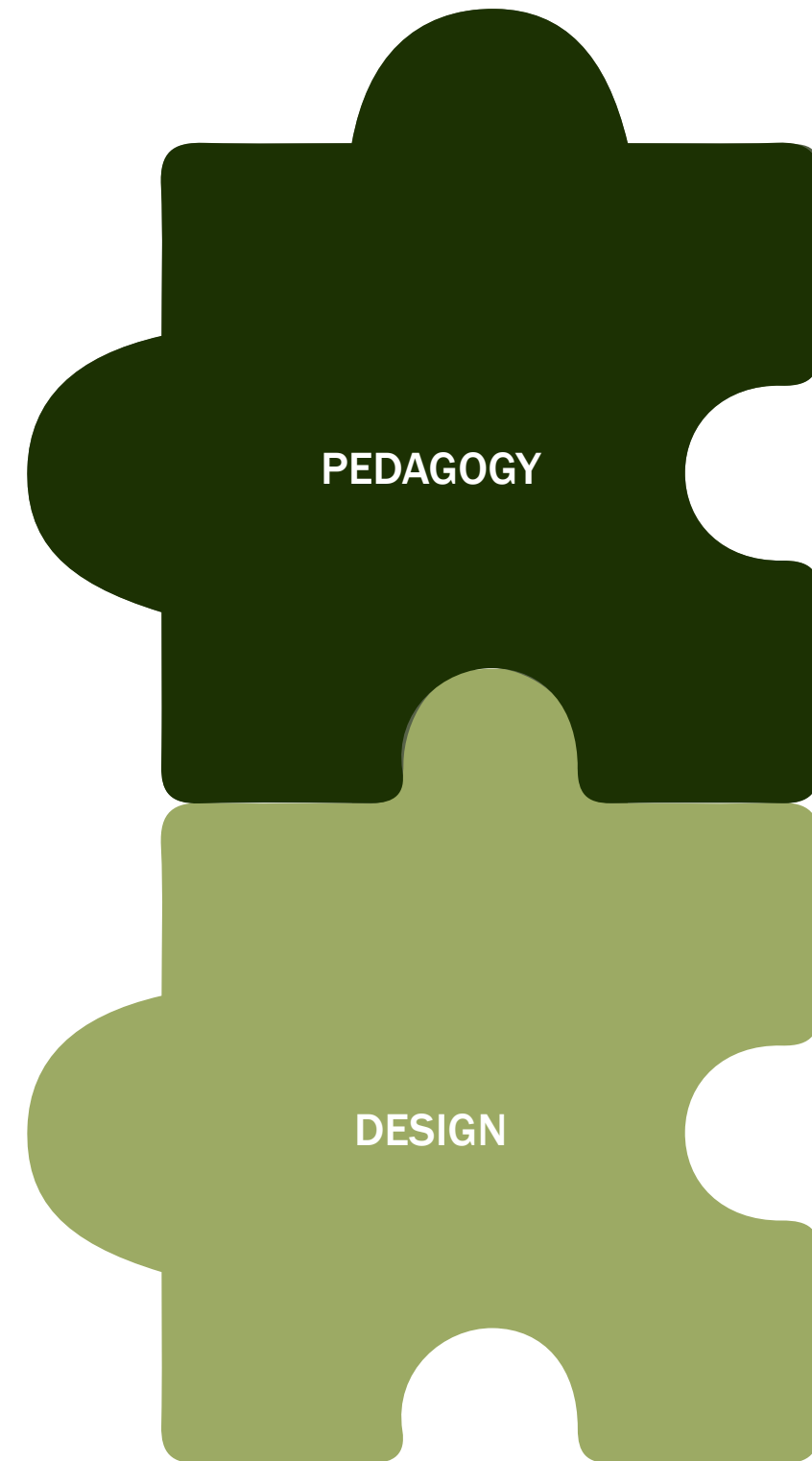
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RESEARCH CONCEPT



IMPLEMENTATION

How can we ensure
that OLEs are
implemented as
viable options for



TIMELINE

FALL 2021

**Literature
review, initial
case study
inquiry, IRB
Protocol**

WINTER 2022

Case Studies

WINTER 2022

**Educator
and Expert
Interviews,
Post-Interview
Questionnaire**

SPRING 2022

**Analysis and
proposal
for design
guidelines,
training
materials for
BOLD**

CASE STUDIES



IslandWood¹



Madrona School²



Captain Johnston
Blakely School³



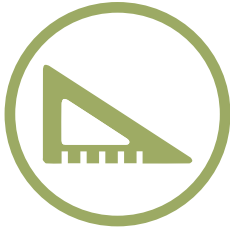
Omaha's Henry Doorly
Zoo Education Building⁴



Core School Beliefs



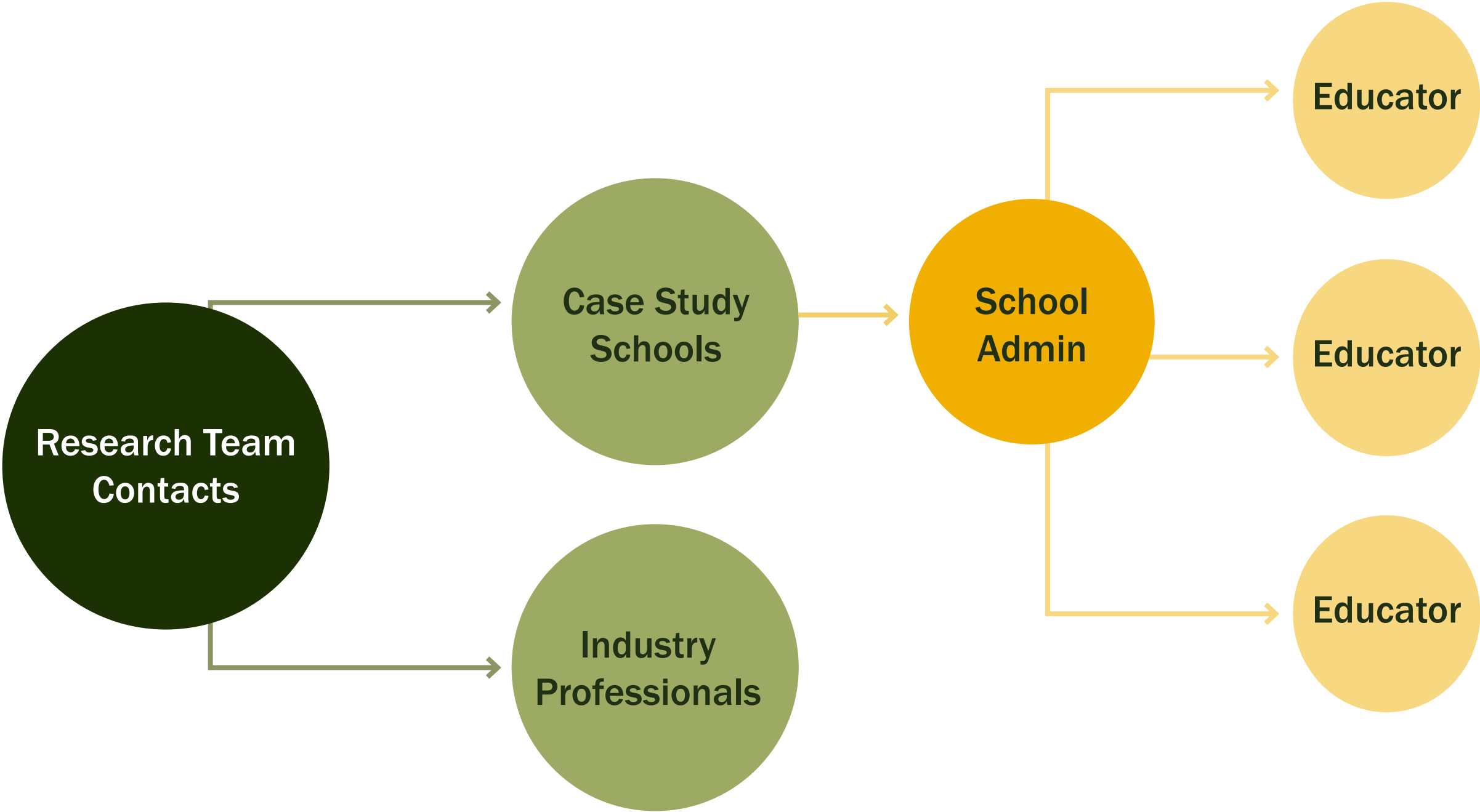
Curriculum



Design

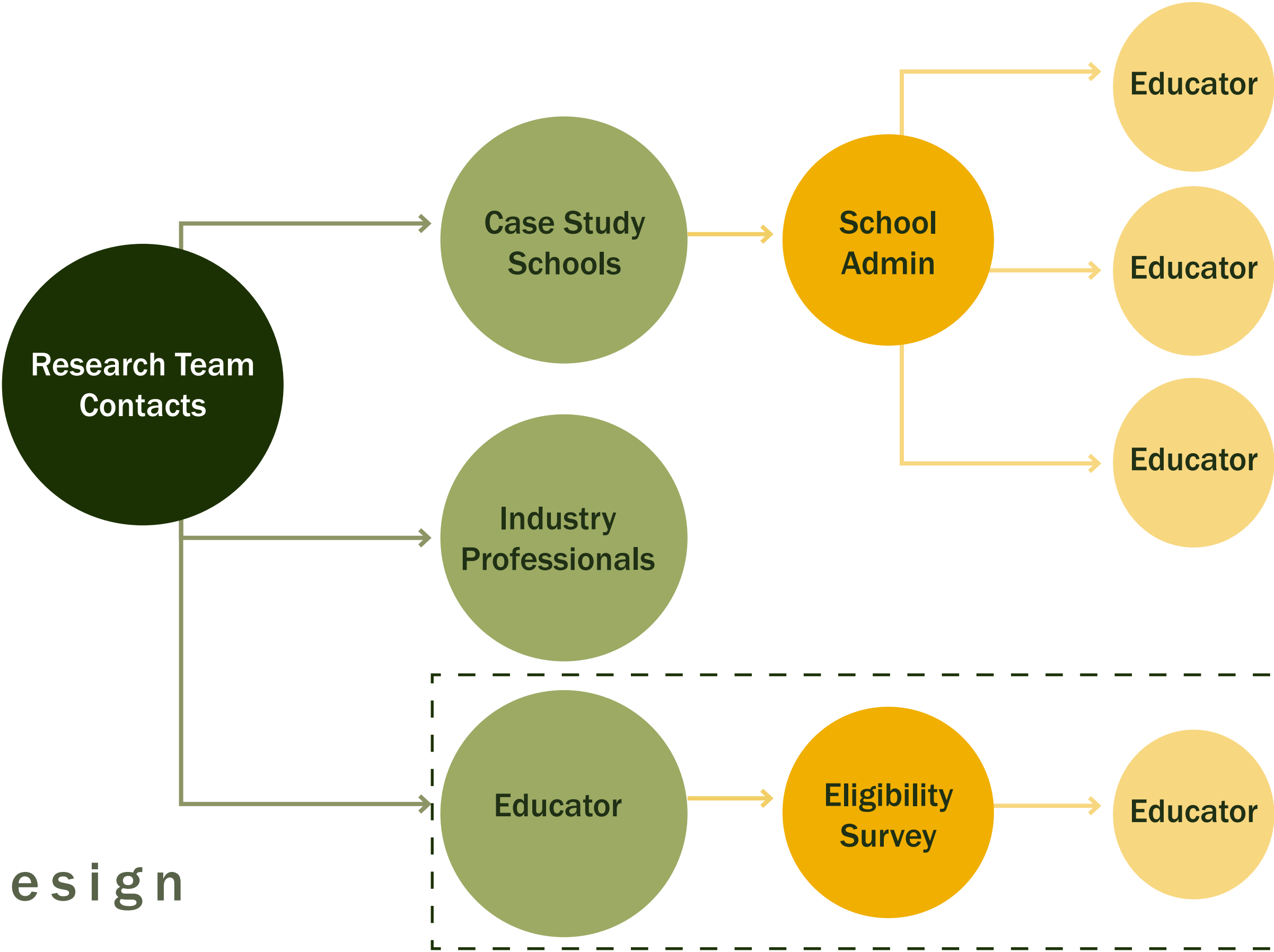
1. Islandwood School: "The Garden Classroom", Islandwood, <https://islandwood.org/school-overnight-program/the-experience/garden-classroom/>
2. Madrona School: "Madrona School", Mahlum, <https://www.mahlum.com/projects/madrona-school/>
3. Blakely School: "Shared Learning at the Forest Edge, Blakely Elementary School Replacement", Mithun, <https://mithun.com/project/captain-johnston-blakely-elementary-school/>
4. Zoo Education Building: "Connecting Students Through Adventure Education", DLR Group, <https://www.dlrgroup.com/work/omaha-henry-doorly-zoo-education-building/>

IRB APPLICATION- MODIFICATION



Study Design

IRB APPLICATION- MODIFICATION



Study Design

PARTICIPATION - INTERVIEW PROGRESS

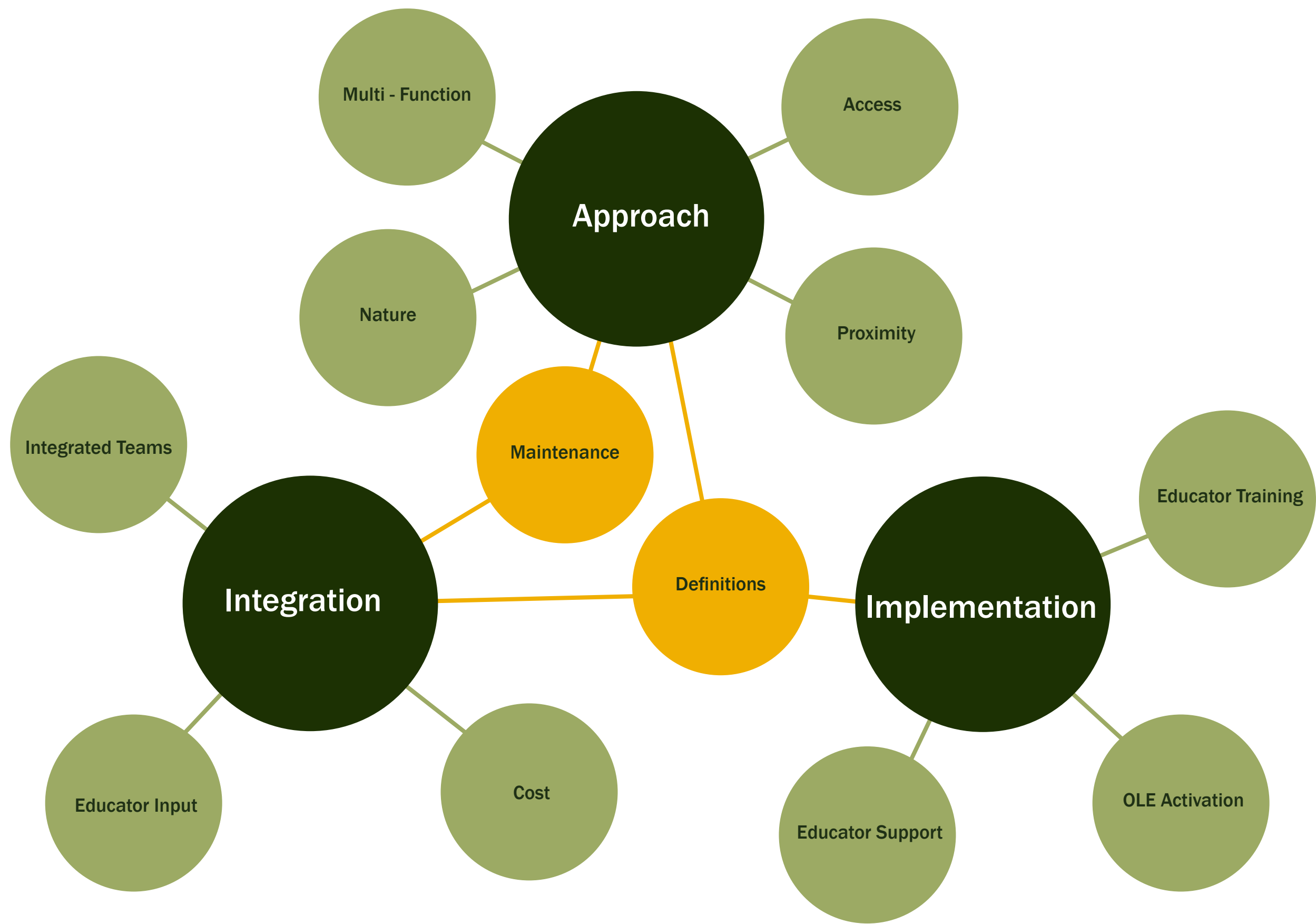


8 Industry Professionals

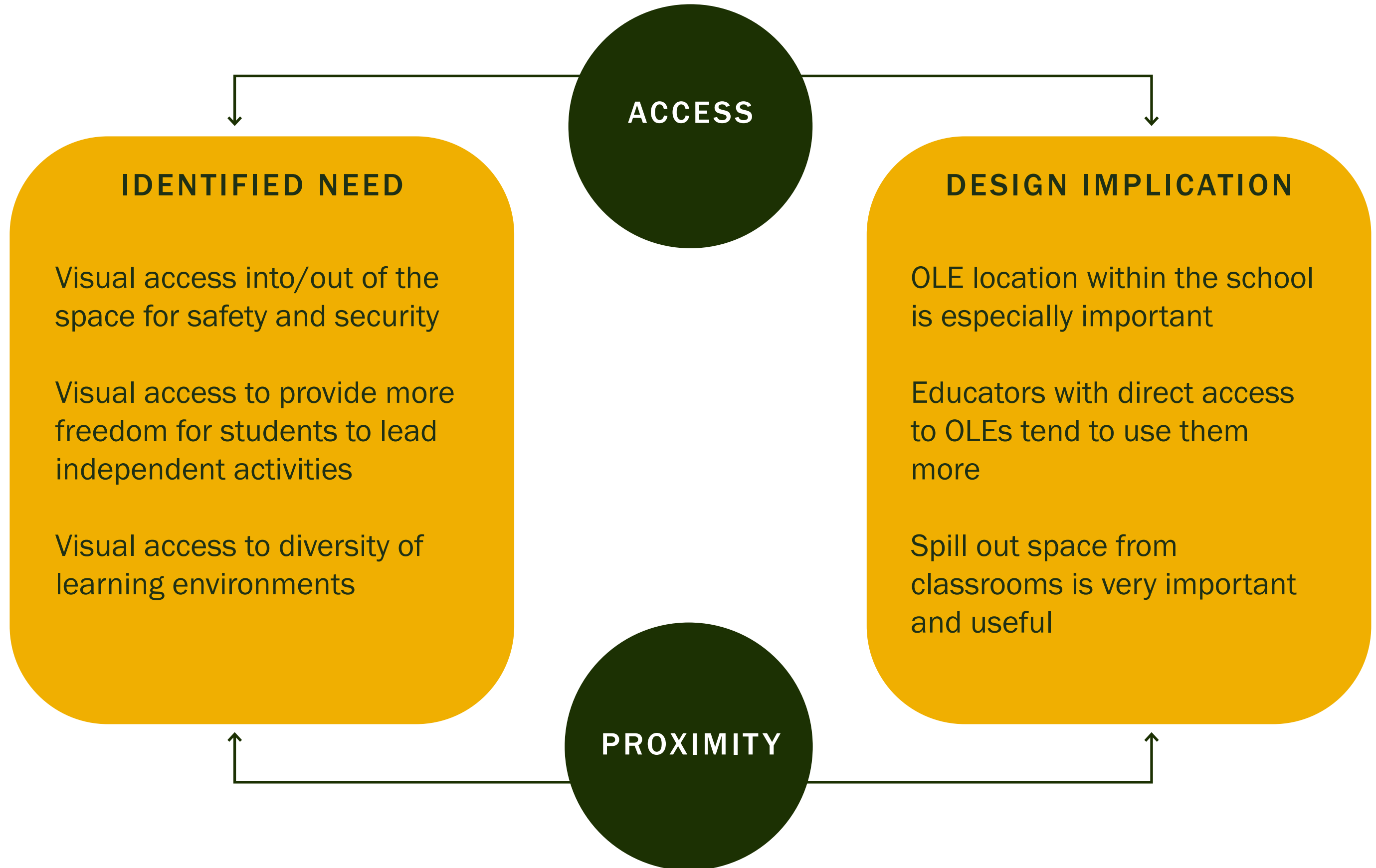


2 Educators

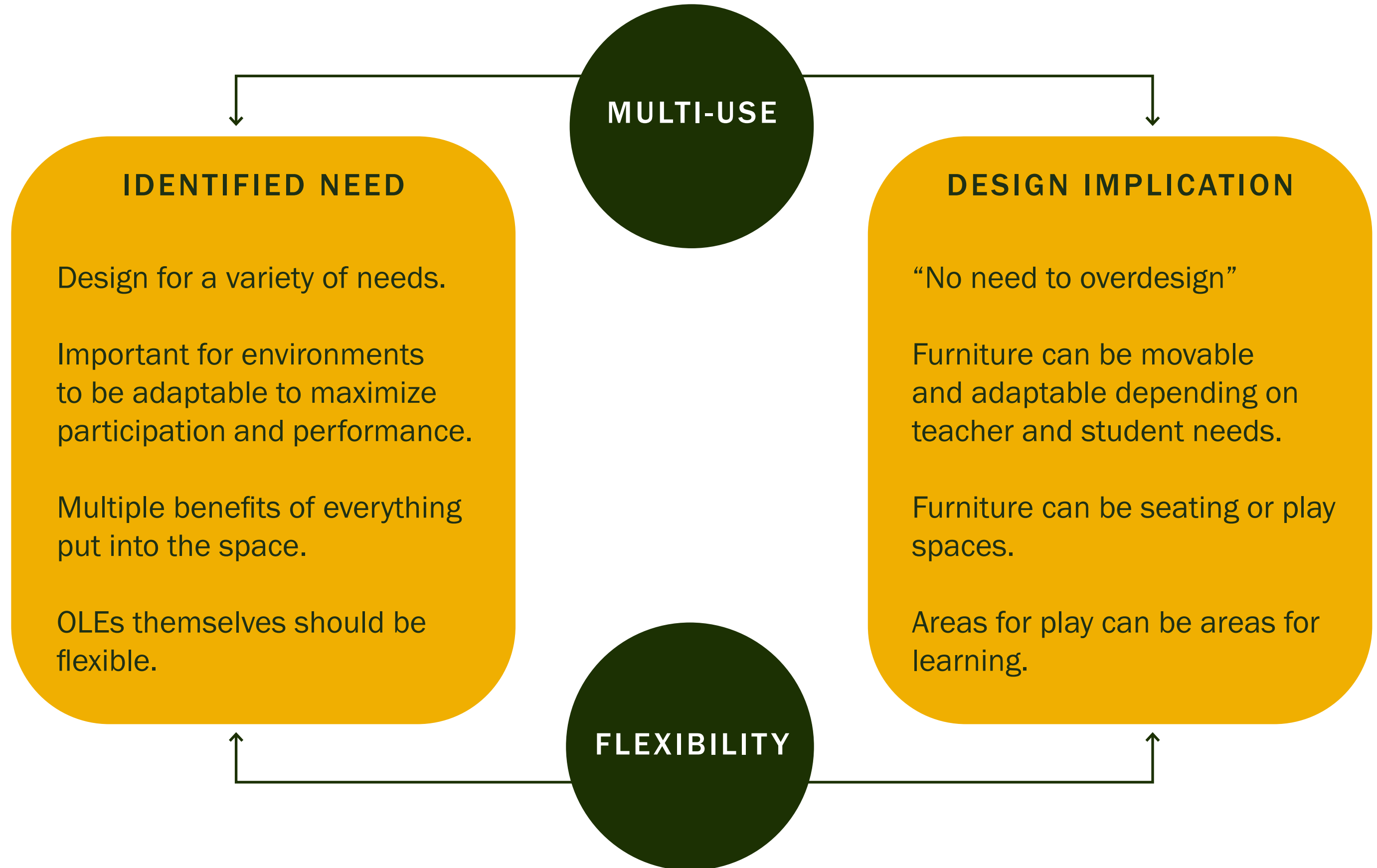
EMERGING THEMES - INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS



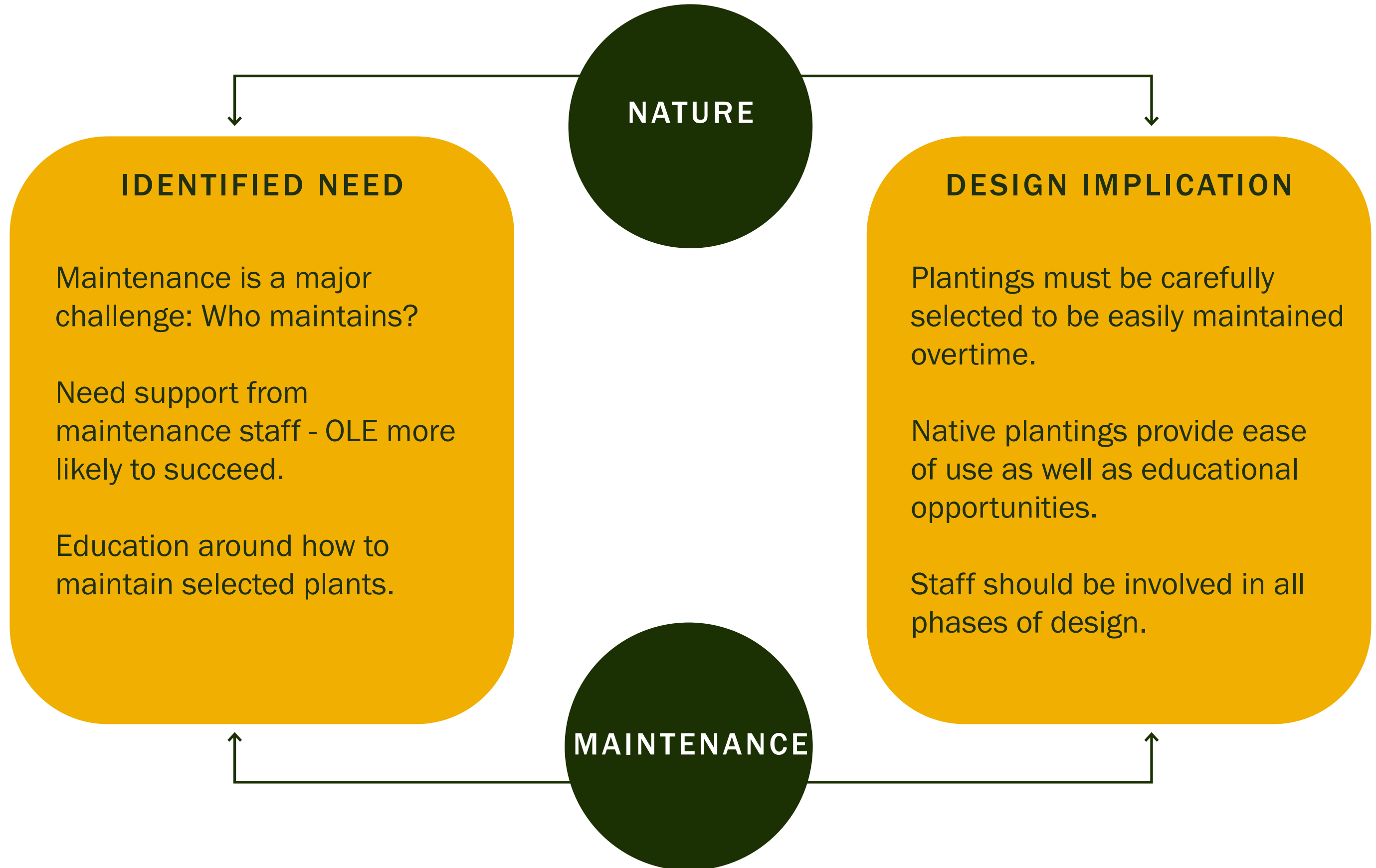
EMERGING THEMES - APPROACH



EMERGING THEMES - APPROACH



EMERGING THEMES - APPROACH



EMERGING THEMES - NATURE

Design Professionals



Definition of nature has shifted.
Nature is everywhere, right
outside your door.

Nature is having plantings
incorporated in a space. Bugs
in the cracks of the asphalt as
nature.

Industry Professionals



There should be enough nature
as to feel enveloped. Focus on
sensory elements.

Nature trails, forest classrooms
can provide different immersive
experiences for students.

EMERGING THEMES - AMENITIES



IDENTIFIED NEED

Need water for a diversity of outdoor learning activities as well as hydration.

Bathroom breaks are disruptive to outdoor class sessions.

DESIGN IMPLICATION

Access to water and bathrooms nearby are important.



IDENTIFIED NEED

Protection from rain.

Protection from sun.

OLEs that can be used more frequently during all kinds of conditions.

DESIGN IMPLICATION

Covered and sheltered spaces are important to consider.



IDENTIFIED NEED

Provide for the ability for students to take their computers outdoors.

Allow for educators to have more options for outdoor learning.

DESIGN IMPLICATION

Provide access to wifi..

EMERGING THEMES - IMPLEMENTATION

IDENTIFIED NEED

It is important for educators and maintenance staff to be involved in design decisions during all phases of design.

Cost is a major challenge to implementing OLEs. They are often the first to get cut from the budget.



DESIGN IMPLICATION

Having integrated design teams when designing OLEs is very important.

Expanding the definition of outdoor learning to include spaces for all kinds of activities (multi-use). Helps to justify the cost.

EMERGING THEMES - INTEGRATION

IDENTIFIED NEED

Educators feel like they need permission to use OLEs.

Educators feel like they don't know what to do in an OLE.

BOLDTM
B R I D G I N G
ORGANIZATION LEARNING AND DESIGN



“ I know we need to change,
but I don't know what that looks like. ”

 DLR Group

IMPLICATION

Support for outdoor learning at the district and administration level is very important for the integration of effective OLEs.

Educator training around OLEs is especially important to activate the outdoor space.

THEMES TO EXPLORE - EDUCATORS



Design Preferences

Overhangs, views, access, proximity

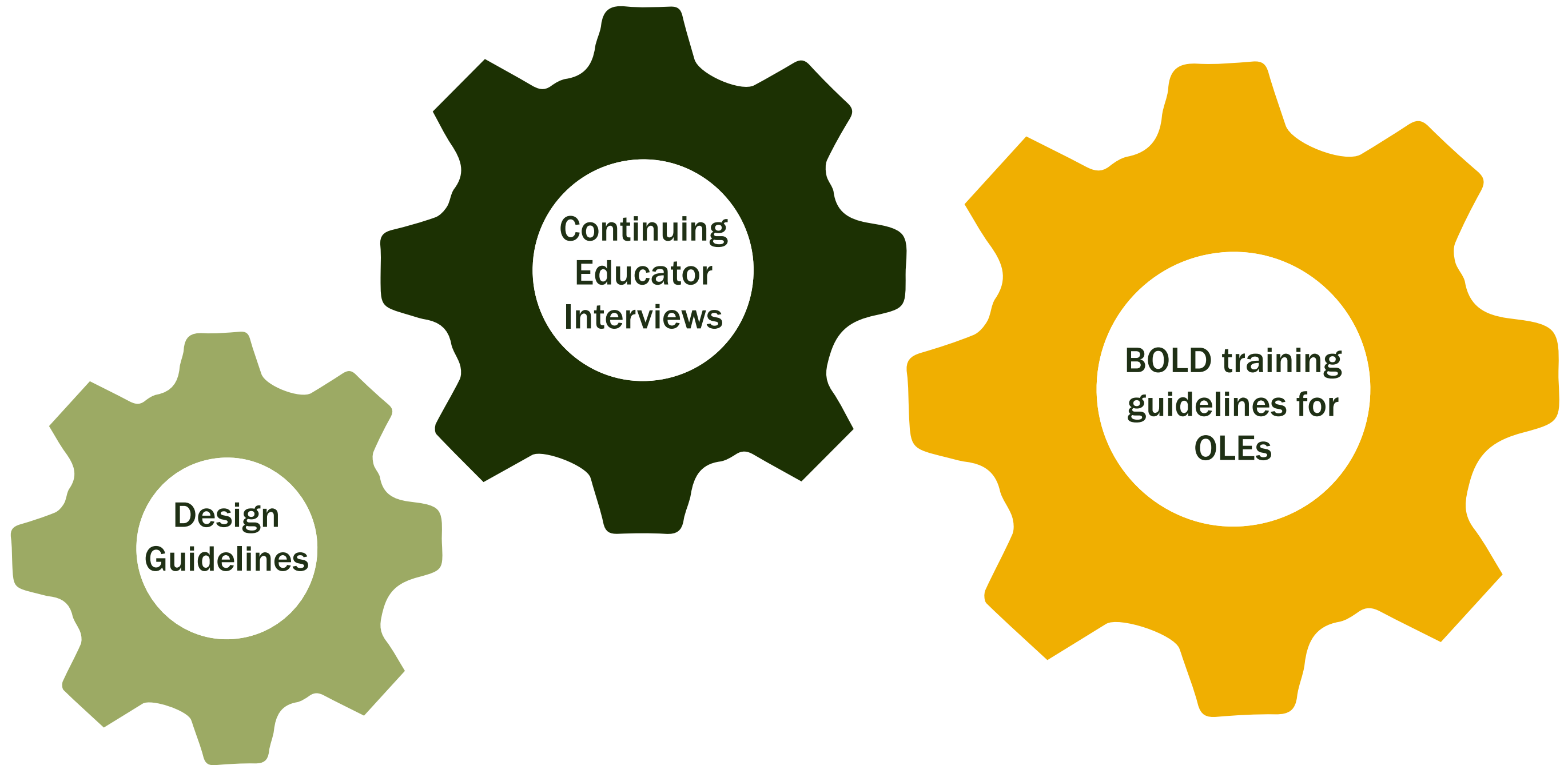
Challenges

Distractions, limited access, limited time, various emotions from students in OLEs

Curriculum

Group sizes, students need training as well, indepent activities, spill out spaces

NEXT STEPS - DOCUMENTATION



QUESTIONS?



SOURCES

1. Dymont, J. (2005). Green School Grounds as Sites for Outdoor Learning: Barriers and Opportunities. *International Research in Geographical and Environmental Education*, 14(1), 28–45.
2. Gulwadi, G. (2006). Seeking Restorative Experiences. *Environment and Behavior*, 38(4), 503–520.
3. Toropova, A., Myrberg, E., & Johansson, S. (2021). Teacher job satisfaction: The importance of school working conditions and teacher characteristics *Educational Review (Birmingham)*, 73(1), 71–97.

Image Source:

Cover: "Outdoor Classroom Culture and Management". Green Schoolyards America. <https://www.greenschoolyards.org/outdoor-classroom-management>

End Image: "Outdoor Classroom". Bloomfield Hills Schools. <https://www.bloomfield.org/schools/lone-pine-elementary-school/school-life/outdoor-classroom>