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|  | **Line** The visual line is formed by the contrast between features. Lines in a design help move our eye through the space, whether they be flowing curves or energetic angles.   Vertical lines move your eye up and down. (Don’t forget opportunities to make use of vertical space in your garden, which can add a whole other dimension.) Horizontal lines draw your eye across the scene. Curving lines will tend to draw you into the space, as you want to see where it leads.  **Example:** A line is formed by the edge of the turf grass and the flowerbed.  **Tip:** Strong lines that denote the edge of beds are much easier for young students to identify. If kids can distinguish between spaces, they will stay on paths and out of the middle of beds, as long as they can clearly see the distinction.   **Form** Design features perceived by our eye have an overall form and are used to add interest through contrast, harmony, or repetition.   **Example:** A pyramidal evergreen or a vase-shaped ornamental tree can draw our eyes in and create focal points on the landscape. For example, an arch and/or two upright shrubs can be spaced to create and define a visual “entrance” to the garden.   **Texture** Rough or smooth, textures affect our perception of the relative distance of the object. Fine textures tend to recede toward our eye and coarse textures tend to advance. Contrasting coarse and fine textures helps provide energy.  **Example:** Magnolias, with their large leaves, are considered coarse-textured, while boxwood or fine-needled evergreens, with their delicate, foliage are fine-textured.   **Color** Color can provide a subtle, soothing mood when used in monochromatic families, or color can inject energy when used with contrasting, complimentary colors.  **Example:** Red, orange, and yellow are considered “hot” colors, appear to advance (appear closer), and are “excitable” colors. Blues, purples, and greens are considered “cool” colors, appear to recede into the distance, and are “calming” colors.  **Tip:** People tend to design landscapes around flower colors first, but really should focus on the lines, forms, and textures of the overall plants, as the flowers are only in bloom for a short time. Think of plants in terms of their "architecture".  Did you know that most meditation gardens use cool colors, while large theme parks often use hot color schemes to keep people excited and moving? Perhaps the overall presence of green in any garden is one contributing factor to gardens being regarded as calming places.   **How do I apply basic design to my garden?**  **Repetition** Add harmony to the design by repeating an element, particularly form or color, throughout the landscape. This will help unify different areas as well.  **Variety** Add energy and interest by varying the features so it’s not all the same view; think in terms of seasonal variations and varying focal points at different times of year. Consider what will greet students when they return to school in the fall.  **Balance** Place comparable “masses” on either side of a feature; may be symmetrical or asymmetrical.  **Emphasis/Focal point** Create a spot in the landscape where the eye pauses and looks for a longer period, usually because something is particularly interesting or pleasing - an interesting ornamental tree, a sculptural element, an arbor or trellis, etc.  **Sequence** Provide cues for the garden visitor on how to move through the various areas and what to do in each; refer to the sequence of the flowering and seasonal colors of the planting scheme. Provide clear indications of where people are to walk, enter new areas, even touch/not touch.  **Scale** Keep in mind the relative sizes of the areas within the garden and the features and plants used. Most people plan too small; step back and consider the mass of the building and other nearby features.   **Garden-specific design issues**  **Choreography of experience** When designing a garden, the designer is in essence choreographing a “dance” of movement through a space; she is specifically planning how you will move through that space and what you will do in each area, for example. Do you meander slowly along a stepping stone path? Do you move quickly along a broad, paved walkway? Are there quiet alcoves with seating that entice you to pause and reflect? How the garden space is arranged creates a particular experience visitors will have as they move through it. This is particularly true for children  **Transitions** Spatial transitions refer to how the various areas of the garden relate to one another. For example, how do you transition from the vegetable growing area to the prairie and butterfly meadow? Seasonal transitions refer to how the garden includes features and plant choices that keep the space interesting and functional in every season – even winter!  **Movement** This is how you move through a space, but it also refers to plant movement. For example, ornamental grasses are great for adding movement to the planting design.  **Focus** This is where your eye rests, which is often on the details of the plants or the added features (like arbors or artwork). The spot where your eye comes to rest naturally is called the “focal point.” Too many focal points in a small space are mentally confusing, as the eye does not know where to rest.  **Sense of space** This is the overall feeling the space conveys when you view it and when you’re in it. For example, is the garden sunny, open, and colorful? Is it shady, secluded, and quiet? What atmosphere do you want to create?  **Composition** This is the overall look of the garden, the visual impact of the space, and how all of the features and areas work together to create a whole. |  |