

The Science and Design of Conditions

Foundational Principles for a Discipline of Human Flourishing

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Version Notice

Version 0.1

This manuscript introduces the initial framework for the proposed discipline of Condition Design. It is intended as a living scholarly work that will evolve through observation, research, critique, and practical application. Subsequent versions may refine definitions, models, and methods as the discipline develops.

Abstract

Human behavior has traditionally been studied through the lenses of biology, psychology, sociology, education, economics, architecture, and numerous other disciplines. While each contributes essential insight, no single discipline places the design of conditions themselves at the center of inquiry.

This manuscript proposes Condition Design as an interdisciplinary field dedicated to observing, understanding, measuring, and intentionally designing the conditions that influence human flourishing.

Its central proposition is that human function cannot be understood through individual characteristics alone. Rather, human function emerges through the continuous interaction between people and the conditions that shape their access to their capacities.

The framework introduced here proposes a simple but generative architecture:

Conditions → Access → Human Function → Observable Outcomes → Flourishing

This manuscript establishes the initial vocabulary, first principles, conceptual boundaries, and research agenda for an emerging discipline.

Part I — The Foundation

Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout history, humanity has developed disciplines devoted to understanding different dimensions of the human experience.

Medicine studies the body.

Psychology studies the mind.

Sociology studies groups.

Economics studies resources.

Architecture studies space.

Education studies learning.

Each has expanded our understanding of what it means to be human.

Yet one question remains comparatively underdeveloped:

How do the conditions surrounding human beings influence their ability to flourish, and how can those conditions be intentionally designed?

This manuscript proposes that this question deserves sustained, systematic study.

That proposed discipline is Condition Design.

Condition Design does not replace existing disciplines.

It integrates insights across them while focusing on a different primary object of inquiry: the conditions that shape human function.

Chapter 2: Why a New Discipline?

New disciplines emerge when existing knowledge reveals a new organizing question.

Condition Design arises from such a question.

Psychology studies cognition and behavior.

Sociology studies social systems.

Architecture studies built environments.

Public health studies population well-being.

Design studies intentional creation.

Each contributes valuable knowledge.

Condition Design asks a different question.

How do conditions interact to influence human function, and how can those conditions be intentionally designed?

Rather than centering individuals, buildings, organizations, or societies independently, it studies the relationships among conditions and the ways those relationships influence access to human capacities.

Its purpose is not to replace existing fields.

Its purpose is to connect them.

Chapter 3: The Problem

Modern systems are remarkably effective at measuring outcomes.

We measure:

Performance.

Behavior.

Productivity.

Attendance.

Engagement.

Achievement.

Compliance.

Symptoms.

Motivation.

Retention.

Yet these measurements frequently direct attention toward individuals rather than toward the conditions surrounding them.

We ask:

Why is this student struggling?

Why is this employee disengaged?

Why is this patient noncompliant?

Why is this community unhealthy?

Often the analysis ends with the individual.

This framework proposes a different starting point.

Human beings do not exist independently of the conditions shaping their experience.

Every person continuously responds to biological, relational, environmental, organizational, technological, and cultural conditions.

To understand human function, we must first understand conditions.

Part II — Conditions and Access

Chapter 4: The Central Thesis

The central proposition of this manuscript is:

Human function is influenced not only by what people are capable of, but by what their conditions make accessible.

Conditions influence access.

Access influences function.

Function produces observable outcomes.

Across time, repeated outcomes influence flourishing.

This shifts the primary question.

Instead of asking,

"How do we fix people?"

we begin by asking,

"What conditions are influencing access?"

Chapter 5: Defining a Condition

A condition is any persistent or recurring internal or external circumstance that meaningfully influences access to one or more human capacities.

Conditions are neither inherently good nor bad.

They are influential.

They increase, reduce, constrain, enable, stabilize, or destabilize access.

Conditions exist across multiple domains — biological, relational, environmental, organizational, technological, cultural, and others. The taxonomy presented here is illustrative rather than exhaustive and will evolve as the discipline develops. A comprehensive taxonomy is maintained as a separate reference document.

What is not a condition?

The following are not conditions in themselves:

Behavior.

Performance.

Achievement.

Failure.

Diagnoses.

Personality labels.

Moral judgments.

These may reflect conditions.

They are not themselves conditions.

Likewise, isolated events do not necessarily constitute conditions.

One interruption is an event.

Persistent interruption is a condition.

One disagreement is an event.

Chronic relational instability is a condition.

The discipline studies enduring influences rather than isolated occurrences.

Chapter 6: Access

Access is the central explanatory concept of this framework.

Access describes the availability of a person's capacities within particular conditions.

Access is not ability.

Ability refers to what a person possesses.

Access refers to what a person can meaningfully reach, express, or utilize within a given context.

Two individuals may possess similar abilities while experiencing profoundly different levels of access.

One may have access to curiosity.

Another may not.

One may have access to regulation.

Another may not.

One may have access to agency.

Another may experience that agency as significantly constrained.

The distinction is essential.

Availability is not synonymous with ability.

This proposition gives rise to an empirical question:

Can changes in conditions alter access without altering underlying ability?

The discipline of Condition Design proposes that they can.

This proposition invites observation, measurement, refinement, and empirical investigation.

Examples of access include:

Access to regulation.

Access to attention.

Access to safety.

Access to belonging.

Access to curiosity.

Access to creativity.

Access to hope.

Access to recovery.

Access to agency.

Access to connection.

Access to oneself.

Chapter 7: Human Function

Human function refers to a person's capacity to engage effectively with themselves, others, and their environment.

Function is dynamic.

It changes as access changes.

Human function includes, but is not limited to:

Perception.

Attention.

Learning.

Decision-making.

Emotional regulation.

Relational capacity.

Creativity.

Agency.

Recovery.

Meaning-making.

Human function cannot be understood independently of the conditions influencing access.

Chapter 8: The Architecture of Human Flourishing

This manuscript proposes the following conceptual architecture:

Conditions → Access → Human Function → Observable Outcomes → Flourishing

Conditions influence access.

Access influences human function.

Human function produces observable outcomes.

Across time, patterns of outcomes contribute to flourishing.

Observable outcomes are expressions of function.

They are evidence.

They are not the entirety of human function.

Flourishing therefore cannot be understood through outcomes alone.

It emerges through sustained interaction between people and the conditions shaping their lives.

Part III — Condition Design

Chapter 9: What is Condition Design?

Condition Design is the intentional practice of observing, understanding, measuring, and designing conditions that expand human access and support flourishing.

Condition Design applies across many domains.

Education.

Healthcare.

Hospitality.

Technology.

Organizations.

Communities.

Public policy.

Consumer experiences.

The goal is not simply to improve environments.

The goal is to improve the conditions through which people gain access to their capacities.

Chapter 10: Ethical Boundary

Condition Design is not the practice of controlling people.

Its purpose is not compliance.

Its purpose is not manipulation.

Its purpose is to increase access.

Condition Design seeks to create conditions that support agency, regulation, belonging, curiosity, reflection, and flourishing.

Individuals remain free to exercise those capacities according to their own values, choices, and circumstances.

The discipline therefore distinguishes between designing conditions and directing human behavior.

Its commitment is to expanding possibility, not prescribing outcomes.

Part IV — MoreLife Society

Chapter 11: Institutional Purpose

MoreLife Society exists to advance the science and practice of Condition Design.

Its purpose is not merely to create products.

It exists to generate knowledge.

Conduct research.

Develop practical applications.

Publish findings.

Cultivate partnerships.

Support education.

Steward an emerging discipline.

Every initiative undertaken by MoreLife Society is guided by one central question:

What conditions help human beings flourish?

Part V — Research Agenda

The propositions introduced in this manuscript invite continued investigation.

Among the questions requiring further study are:

Which conditions most strongly influence access?

How can access be measured reliably?

How do multiple conditions interact?

Which conditions appear universal?

Which are context-specific?

How should Condition Design be evaluated ethically?

What interventions produce durable improvements in access and flourishing?

This manuscript presents an initial framework rather than a completed theory.

Like every mature discipline, Condition Design is expected to evolve through observation, critique, empirical research, replication, and refinement.

Closing Statement

Human flourishing is not solely the product of individual effort.

It emerges through the continuous interaction between people and the conditions that shape what becomes accessible to them.

By learning to observe those conditions with greater precision, understand their influence with greater clarity, and design them with greater care, we expand the possibility of human flourishing.

This manuscript proposes that this work deserves a discipline.

That discipline is Condition Design.

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