Education, Design and Practice – Understanding skills in a Complex World

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Talking, Drawing, and Pointing: Enhancing design studio with online critique

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• Abstract (300 words):
Critique is an essential form of assessment for design education, activating dynamic exchanges of ideas that facilitate student growth. Schön (1987) describes this dynamic reciprocity of dialogue as fundamental for practice-based learning. The benefits of fluid, descriptive dialogue are clear. However, maintaining the fluidity of dialogue beyond intermittent studio sessions is a challenge. To learn about the perceived effectiveness of design critique methods and perceptions of online methods, second-year design students were given an anonymous online questionnaire at the beginning of the semester. The purpose of the questionnaire was to facilitate instructional decisions that might enhance the learning experience. The analysis of responses revealed that the students 1) value design critique, 2) perceive some design critique methods as more effective than others, and 3) perceive the value of online methods of critique despite lacking experience. VoiceThread is an online program that simulates in-person feedback by allowing asynchronous audio comments and drawing on visual content. The instructional team implemented VoiceThread to facilitate project critiques outside of studio time. An anonymous online questionnaire was distributed to the students after the course ended to learn about the experience of using the program. The students shared that VoiceThread supported project development and design studio learning. The students also expressed a desire to use the program in future studios. The analysis of the descriptive responses suggest that students discern distinct ways in which online critiquing methods have an impact on their learning. Positive experiences are associated with enhancing aspects of access (to professors and to
content shared during critique) and the ability to discuss projects remotely using a talking, drawing, and pointing format. This study presents strong evidence that students respond positively to online, asynchronous critique and provides critical insight that can be used to improve how online platforms can complement traditional design studio.

• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

**Jody Nyboer**, PhD is an Assistant Professor at the School of Design, Syracuse University. She teaches studios and lecture courses for the Environmental + Interior Design and the MFA Design program. She also teaches transdisciplinary design courses, including Creative Problem Solving. Nyboer’s range in research and teaching reflect the diversity of her academic disciplines and professional experience. Her current research includes investigating the relationship of environmental design and creative instruction, creative workplaces, space planning and creative behavior, the relationship of course methods on the creative ability of learners, multimodal design critique, and the intersection of environmental design graphics and place attachment.

**Zoriana Dunham** is an assistant professor at Syracuse University in the School of Design, where she serves as assistant program coordinator of the environmental and interior design program and teaches design studio and lecture-based courses. Dunham holds a professional degree in interior design from Syracuse University. She specialized in designing for higher education and healthcare. Several of her projects have received awards from the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Interior Designers. Dunham is NCIDQ certified and a LEED Accredited Professional.