Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:

Design as a health equity concern: Architecture and Nursing at the Intersections of Chronic Illness among Urban Schools

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• Abstract (300 words):

Problem: In School settings, problems with air quality and other environmental conditions in schools that exacerbate asthma have also been broadly surveyed and emphasized. However, no critical analysis of how these learning spaces are produced exist in architecture, education, nursing and medicine from the perspective of children and their health experiences, as well as, the questions of environmental justice and health equity inside these spaces for children with chronic health conditions embodying disability. Even in cultural geography, where significant work has otherwise taken place relating space, illness and disability during the past three decades, dedicated research on children with special health needs and the school architecture is not available. The only exceptions are where architects have designed separate special schools for children with disabilities. Purpose: We describe the intersection between socio-spatial issues and health equity for schoolchildren with asthma from the interdisciplinary perspectives of architecture,
nursing, and disability access. **Methods:** We situate our discussion from original research conducted with Black youth with asthma in an urban school system. We present an exemplar of stairs employing photovoice stories from the youth. We identify the critical nursing practice and architecture challenges imbricated in the socio-spatial aspects of the management of a chronic health condition such as asthma by urban youth. **Discussion:** We argue for an inclusive practice in architecture and school nursing that moves beyond the spatial accommodation and care of a normal body and attends to the concerns of equitable involvement and environmental justice for minority children with a chronic conditions. We underscore the need for understanding the complexities embedded in the body environment interactions for improving accessibility. We stress the need for participatory and iterative approaches from transforming our material and conceptual thinking in architecture, nursing, and education towards an inclusive, interdisciplinary, and integrative turn.

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

Dr. Sushil K. Oswal is an associate Professor of Human-Centered Design in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences at the University of Washington, Tacoma. His current research intersects the fields of Socio-Spatial Design, digital Technology, and accessibility for diverse users. Consulting with industry and universities, Dr. Oswal realizes his zeal for accessibility through participatory action design which brings together users, designers, and industry representatives on a shared rhetorical platform for conceptualizing services, systems, products and interfaces that meet everyone’s needs. His Ph.D. research in technology and R&D work in a Japanese corporation earned him the 1995 C. R. Anderson Award. Dr. Oswal is also the recipient of the 2014 Computers and Composition Digital Press Award for his theoretical work in technology and disability, 2015 Association for Business Communication Research Award for work on the accessibility of online education delivery, and 2016 Harlan Hahn grant for teaching-related scholarship in Disability Studies.

Dr. Evans-Agnew is an Associate Professor at the University of Washington Tacoma Nursing and Healthcare Leadership program (2012-). His research and scholarship are concerned with critical and emancipatory approaches to solving the challenges of asthma inequities, environmental justice, and 21st Century school nursing practice. He has an ongoing research commitment with a six-year Community Based Participatory Research study led by Mexican American mothers of children with asthma. He has published papers in national and international settings including Health Promotion Practice, the Journal of School Nursing, and Journal of Asthma. Dr. Evans-Agnew is the recipient of the 2009 Sarah Mazelis Paper of the Year Award from Health Promotion Practice. He
completed his bachelors of science in nursing at Johns Hopkins University in 1994 and completed his PhD dissertation research on asthma management disparities in 2011 at the University of Washington.