Experiential Design – Rethinking relations between people, objects and environments

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Adaptability, Naturalness and Playfulness – exploring spatial design strategies for Positive Education in existing learning environments through case studies in Hong Kong

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• Abstract (300 words):
There is a recent trend of increasing cases of suicide in Hong Kong among young people. As surveyed by the Paediatric Society in 2016, 27% of local students have thought of committing suicide or inflicting self-harm. Prior to remedial solutions, application of positive education (posEd) as preventive measures has emerged. Within the posEd framework, learning environments as physical settings have rarely been discussed.

This paper investigates the correlation between architectural design strategies and posEd theories in psychology through specific design-research projects. Using actual interventions in local schools, the research examines the extent to which design interventions in the physical learning environment can contribute to posEd goals. Two specific test cases are discussed – designing an outdoor playground with pavilions for a rural school, and designing an indoor multi-purpose room for an urban school.
The themes explored are adaptability, naturalness and playfulness. Adaptability refers to manifoldness of scenarios, flexibility of configuration and usage. The correlation of adaptability to student engagement, autonomy, variability in pedagogy will be examined. Naturalness refers to the degree to which the elements, landscape and ambience of a space resembles a natural environment. The correlation of naturalness to students’ sense of connectedness with nature and their emotions will be examined. Playfulness refers to abstract forms, materiality and collectivity, and their correlation to vestibular movement and students’ imagination will be examined.

The research aims at developing design methodologies at pre-occupancy stage; evaluating the impacts on effective learning at post-occupancy stage. Theories of various posEd models – Character Strength, Self-determination theory, Mindset – are analyzed as design drivers for behaviors as affordances, ones in which architectural qualities can afford. At pre-occupancy stage, each design-research project adapts an evidence-based design approach – a triangulation of best design practice, client information and relevant research evidence. At post-occupancy stage, the impacts on effective learning are evaluated through surveys, self-reports, and observations as empirical research. For both projects, the post-occupancy stage begins in September 2019.

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

  **Thomas CHUNG**
  
  Thomas Chung is Associate Professor at the School of Architecture, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Thomas graduated from the University of Cambridge, and has practiced as a registered architect in the United Kingdom. His research interest involves understanding how architecture contributes to the urban order and culture of the modern city. His research focuses on the interplay of architecture with urban representation and cultural imagination, and the metabolisms of urban vernacular in Hong Kong.

  **HO, Tsz Wai Jimmy**
  
  Jimmy HO is a PhD student at the School of Architecture, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Jimmy graduated from CUHK and has practiced as a multi-disciplinary designer in Hong Kong. His research interest focuses on relationship between positive
education and physical settings in existing building environment in Hong Kong. His design ability has been demonstrated in recent Frame Award (Social Award) and Design For Asia Award (Merit Award) in 2018.

Dr. LEE, Sau Lai Venus

Venus Lee is a Research Fellow at the Faculty of Social Science, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Venus is a trained social psychologist. She is now working for a project that supports nine local schools in Hong Kong to develop Positive Education. Her research interests cover a wide range of topics, include understanding the processes and outcomes, the Positive Education, the relationship between environment and human behaviors, the mediating mechanism of art making and mental health.