ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Closing the Distance Between Us: Providing Sensory Experiences to Remote Viewers

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• Abstract (300 words):
Prior to the challenges of the pandemic a global economy was already challenging traditional communication methods in the interior design profession. Clients could be hundreds or thousands of miles away from designers when working on remote projects but now, given social distancing, even local meetings are often virtual. Video communication applications may be utilized but designers typically rely on many physical aids to explain their proposals. How can designers provide an experience that is multi-sensory and immersive for those at a distance in this new challenging environment?

In fall 2020, in a hybrid studio combining both online (3/4) and onsite (1/4) learning, sixteen interior design juniors set out to explore this question as they designed tranquility pods focused on full sensory stimulation. Inspired by the work of Juhani Pallasmaa and Steven Holl, students used an iterative process through sketching and 3d software investigations to experiment with light, color and materiality, as they designed cohesive sensory experiences. Integral components of the investigation were the development of small physical manifestations of the senses. The physical modules were provided to the juror/client to be explored during the online final presentations and were noted as being very successful or extremely successful in delivering a more engaging experience in almost 90% of the projects.
Online methodologies that were utilized to produce these results can be shared during the presentation to act as a blueprint for both virtual educational projects and business meetings in this ever-changing world. This research can act as an essential resource to narrow the communication gap in both local and global design communities of tomorrow.

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

Lisa Phillips, NCIDQ is an Associate Professor of Interior Design at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia. She has a Bachelor of Architecture degree and Master of Education degree, both from Temple University. Ms. Phillips has over twenty years of experience teaching in interior design and has won numerous teaching awards, including DesignIntelligence’s 25 Most Admired Educators for 2017-18. She currently teaches design studios, visualization courses, and capstone research and programming. Her areas of research include design pedagogy and material psychology.