Embracing change: Preserving dynamic interaction and contact with materiality in the online interior design studio.

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"The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order." Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947)

The growing demands from industries to equip students with qualifications that prepare them for the rapid changes to social, environmental and economic environments continue to place immense pressure on educators. Amidst the global changes caused by artificial intelligence and machine learning, robotics, biotechnology, and genomics, tertiary institutions faced further challenges by the jump to the online studio during the Covid-19 nation-wide lockdown in South Africa 2020.

At the University of Johannesburg, the nation-wide lockdown occurred when skills-based and peer-to-peer learning was critical in the Interior Design 3 module. The knowledge and skills that support the Interior Design 3 module learning outcomes cannot easily be translated from the physical to the online studio. New technologies, not ordinarily associated with design teaching, were explored to preserve the dynamic interaction and contact with materiality in an online studio environment. This exploration became a
necessity as many students at the institution did not have access to computers and a reliable internet connection. It begs the question: how can interior design education strategies be innovatively adapted, using lesser technologies, to transfer the knowledge and skills needed to equip students for the online design studio?

This paper will use critical reflection as a method of inquiry. Data collected from semi-structured interviews with students and reflection by interior design educators will describe the adapted design teaching strategies employed to meet the module learning outcomes. It is not the aim to evaluate these methods' success, but rather to present the adaptation of these new teaching strategies. The findings will contribute to interior design education strategies for developing or modifying curricula that preserve dynamic interaction and contact with materiality in the online interior design studio in a time of change.

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

Sadiyah Geyer has built up over a decade of industry experience and is highly skilled in the execution of interior architecture and design projects, focusing on conceptual development, technical documentation, project management and administration. She has a deep passion for working with people, designing to contribute to the enrichment of society and creating spaces that provide maximum user comfort and efficiency, with minimal impact on the environment. With the aim of sharing her passion and knowledge of the built environment with aspiring, young interior designers, she joined the University of Johannesburg in the faculty of Art, Design and Architecture as an academic and researcher. Her teaching experience in the past five years has been an energizing and rewarding step in her career. She has recently completed her MA (Design) qualification at the University of Johannesburg. Her research focuses on urban regeneration strategies through the implementation of interior design as a creative industry.

Ilse Prinsloo is an academic, researcher and interior architect with more than 30 years of progressive experience in interior design and higher education. She has a special interest in retail design as it relates to retail management, brand management and marketing. She is dedicated to providing innovative teaching and learning with good pedagogic practice to enhance student and staff experience. She has been part of the course transformation, partnered with research communities and cultivated collaborations with professional interior design partners, nationally and internationally.