

Discovering Unrealized Generational Differences in Kitchen Design Preferences between Next Generation Interior Designers and Current Resident-Users

Principal Investigator: Jessica Goldsmith, Art

Number of Undergraduate Participants: 8

The interior design program at Valdosta State University focuses on preparing the next generation of practicing interior designers through studio and subject classes that develop students' interior design skills. Interior design students are exposed to many aspects of interior design as they practice designing in studio. This project built upon students' studio experiences by teaching them to examine critically their own assumptions when designing.

When clients and designers are members of different generations, the communication process can be difficult, because each group may have different unspoken assumptions about appropriate interior spatial arrangements. This research project exposed students to the fact that they make unique assumptions about interior space, taught them that these assumptions can be different from clients' assumptions, and taught them ways to discover clients' assumptions and use that information to create better interior designs. Students applied the knowledge and techniques learned in this course to their classroom projects, interior design practice, and future academic research.

This project spanned two semesters. During the first semester, students learned to review interior design academic literature and practice discipline specific data collection methods. All participating students worked together during the first semester of the project to answer the primary research question: Do residents in assisted-living facilities and current interior design students have different conceptions about the kitchen layout preferences of assisted living residences? Students analyzed and coded past studio projects, built models for participants, and worked with project participants to complete the models. Students also developed survey and interview questions for project participants and use these questions to develop individual research questions and presentations. The second semester gave students who wished to present their research from the first semester at regional or national conferences an opportunity to develop their poster or paper presentations. Students were encouraged to join the second semester class and develop their projects for presentation.

By exploring the differences between kitchen layouts in assisted living facility residences designed by interior design students and the layouts designed by residents of assisted living facilities, students learned how to 1) conduct research in interior design through discipline specific methods, 2) work with potential clients and building users who do not have formal design training, and 3) review related scholarly literature to develop research supported methods for inquiry into the processes and outcomes of interior design practice.

Presentations:

Delke, S. (2012). The logic behind design. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

Evans, J.M. (2012). Privacy in institutional living: student dorms and assisted living facilities. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

Taylor, B.H. (2012). Transitions from student dormitories and assisted living facilities to institutionalized living facilities. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

Thompson, A.M. (2012). Companionship matters. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

Panagopoulos, N.A. (2012). Can a kitchen design last a lifetime? Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

York, A. (2012). Social circulatory spatial use in assisted living facilities. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

York, A. (2012). Social circulatory spatial use in assisted living facilities. Interior Design Educator's Council South Region Conference.