

10-24-2011

How graduate interior design programs prepare emerging educators to teach

Anne Wilkinson-Burke

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How Graduate Interior Design Programs Prepare Emerging Educators to Teach

by

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Thesis

Submitted to the School of Engineering Technology

Eastern Michigan University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Interior Design

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October 24, 2011

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Acknowledgements

I would like to start by thanking my Thesis Committee, Dr. Shinming Shyu, Dr. Virginia Harder, and Professor Steven Webber. I appreciate your time, helpfulness, and support during this journey. Your dedication and passion have been inspirational, and the profession of teaching is fortunate to have you. I would also like to thank the academics who helped me with earlier course work research. Their willingness to assist me, along with my Committee's guidance, led me to this study. There are two individuals who went above and beyond, although they barely knew me: Dr. Migette Kaup of Kansas State University and Dr. Stephanie Clemons of Colorado State University. Their gracious responsiveness and readiness to share their thoughts and precious time helped direct me in this endeavor.

A special thank-you goes to my husband, Preston; my daughter, Danielle; my dad, Colin; and two dear friends, Lili Trudell and Michelle Belt. Your opinions, energy, and constant support were appreciated. Every time I asked for help, you were there, and I am grateful for your love and friendship.

Abstract

This research study explored Interior Design Master's Degree programs and looked at the preparation emerging educators received to teach Interior Design at higher level institutions. The study examined current graduate programs to find out how teaching objectives are incorporated into curricula. Earlier research showed that graduate schools are aware that many students want to teach Interior Design, and a possible disconnect between emerging educators and program objectives was suspect. The project reviewed thirteen master's degree programs through personal interviews with university representatives and program graduates. Required skill sets and the unique challenges of teaching Interior Design were also examined. Results of this research supported previous research conclusions that many students pursue teaching after graduation. The findings suggested that university programs are aware that preparation to teach is of consequence, and some programs incorporate teaching objectives into curricula to address students' needs. Further exploration is necessary to direct additional research.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Interior Design is a profession recognized in the twenty-first century. The profession has grown over the past fifty years and integrates with many other disciplines. With the growth and expansion of Interior Design, the education of an Interior Designer has grown too. Previously, a bachelor's degree in Interior Design and passing the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) exam were sufficient to be acknowledged professionally. However, now master's degrees in Interior Design have increased in popularity as designers want to teach Interior Design, increase opportunities for career promotion, and conduct research (Wilkinson, 2011). This study focuses on those who want to teach.

The graduate degree involves research and inquiry. Pedagogical understanding and educational accountability are meaningful to the process of teaching and learning regardless of discipline. Instructors must understand roles and responsibilities of teaching and have a solid foundation of how to share their knowledge. With these, education will benefit as a result, and Interior Design education is no exception. Ankerson and Pable (2008) agreed:

For all its progress as a field, Interior Design may suffer from a lack of vision in its teaching potential, as well as a lack of resources to remedy the situation. Design educators require enhanced comprehension of the nuts and bolts of how ideas are learned to successfully impart insight to their students in a lifelong, meaningful way.

(p. 3)

Instruction, knowing and understanding curriculum and assessment, is critical to the art of teaching. Having knowledge and preparation of how to teach will strengthen interior design education. However, having a master's degree does not mean one can teach. Educators

require a base they can build on. This foundation must be incorporated into curricula for those who choose teaching as a career path. A positive learning experience is a major objective to teaching and can be achieved through instructors who have the knowledge, preparation, and necessary skill sets to be effective in the classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Many universities in the United States and Canada offer Interior Design Master's degree programs. Students enter these programs for a variety of reasons. Information learned in an earlier study showed that two of the most popular reasons are to teach Interior Design and to make a career change. The study analyzed twenty-two Interior Design Master's programs and discovered that approximately one third of graduates intended to pursue a teaching career, and only one school addressed a teaching track in their curriculum. While curricula in the remaining surveyed institutions are effective in preparing students in the disciplines of Interior Design, the approach to effective teaching appeared intuitive. The infamous quote of George Bernard Shaw, "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches," insinuates there is no skill to teaching (as cited in Shulman, 1986, p. 4). This demeaning assertion, widely held in society, finds little support in the teaching profession and relevant research. The art of teaching is complex and requires exceptional skill sets and dedication. Educators must think about what they are doing and have a sufficient base for facts, principles, and experiences from which to reason. A more appropriate quote would be "Those who can, do. Those who understand, teach" (Shulman, 1986, p. 14). Teaching involves understanding the challenges of the classroom, developing techniques and strategies to address those challenges, effective communication, and assessment. Most importantly, teaching is about motivating the learner to promote a positive learning experience.

Thus, essential questions that need to be addressed regarding Interior Design Master's programs are: Why do students pursue a teaching career? Do institutions know many students pursue teaching after graduating? What are necessary skills and the unique challenges of teaching Interior Design? While programs may not include courses or concentrations in teaching, are institutions incorporating learning how to teach design in course objectives?

How graduate Interior Design programs are preparing emerging educators to teach in higher education institutions is of concern. Do universities consider the profession of teaching within curricula? Is it assumed having knowledge of the design profession gives way to knowing how to teach it? Has a teaching foundation been neglected or is it being addressed? Successful teaching involves many variables. Training and preparation make absolute sense. Therefore, master's degree programs must be assessed to find answers to these questions.

Purpose of the Study

This research explored graduate Interior Design programs and looked at the preparation emerging educators had to teach Interior Design at the university or college level. The study will attempt to explain whether educational gaps exist between what graduates need and what programs do to prepare them to teach. To presume emerging educators have the necessary foundation after graduating is not appropriate. Teaching is very challenging and has numerous roles and responsibilities. Effective educators must have appropriate skills sets and solid pedagogical understanding. Preparing emerging educators promotes improvement in Interior Design education. Additionally, incorporating pedagogical scholarship will

provide validity to a relatively young profession that is often misunderstood. This study will add beneficial information to the body of knowledge in Interior Design.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will help guide Interior Design Master's degree curricula by highlighting existing strengths and shortfalls. Awareness of strengths and weaknesses within curricula will provide insight and promote positive change within interior design programs. Current programs can assess what is working and what can be improved. Such changes will add value and could increase student enrollment. Incorporating teaching objectives within curricula makes tremendous sense because many students graduating from such programs are pursuing a teaching career. Bringing awareness to this issue is important because preparing emerging teachers can only improve Interior Design education and the future welfare of the Interior Design profession.

Limitations of the Study

The discipline of Interior Design, at the university level, was the focus of this research. Approximately sixty institutions in the United States and Canada offer master's degrees in Interior Design recognized by the Interior Design Education Council (IDEC). Higher level institutions vary. Schools have different frameworks, and programs have different objectives. Institutions are public, private, large, medium, and small. Master's degrees in Interior Design are professional based and research based. Thus, expected differences existed when comparing programs.

Program coordinators, or the equivalent, were contacted by e-mail to participate in research regarding their respective program and what course content was offered to students who want to teach. Coordinators also referred graduates from their programs to participate in

the study. Program sampling was randomly selected and was qualitative in nature. Sample size was small, and future research would include more interviews or involve surveys. Data were skewed because variables existed in programs, and some graduates were not interested in teaching. Personal interviews were conducted over the telephone by the author due to geographic distances. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality and thus were forthcoming.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

The future of Interior Design graduate education was the focus of an earlier mentioned study. The study evaluated current master's degree programs in the United States and Canada. Twenty-six universities were identified through an internet search using keywords: Master's degrees in Interior Design. The website used was www.universities.com. Institutions were invited to answer questions in a simple survey regarding their schools' graduate Interior Design program. Of the twenty-six, twenty schools participated. However, twenty-two programs were assessed because two of the universities offered two different Interior Design Master's programs, and each school filled out the survey twice. Conclusions were drawn from the survey. One, relevant to this study, is that approximately one third of graduates from Interior Design Master's programs chose teaching as their profession. Of the many concentrations that universities offered, only one mentioned learning how to teach interior design at higher level institutions. These findings inspired further investigation. There is an entire pedagogy, psychology, and philosophy to teaching, and the desire to find out how curricula are addressing these variables became of interest. The earlier study brought awareness to possible gaps within current master's degree programs relative to students' objectives of choosing to teach. This prompted exploration because knowing how to teach effectively is important to the success of Interior Design education and the profession.

Research conducted by the author indicated that a collective body of knowledge on how to teach Interior Design at higher level institutions appeared limited and too narrow. Thus, the review of literature was expanded to include the profession of teaching. Literature on scholarship in higher education, strategies for teaching and learning, evidence-based teaching, and research and theory was reviewed and analyzed. Content analysis of articles in

the *Journal of Interior Design* from 1990 to 2011 and the International Interior Design Association's (IIDA) *Perspective Magazine* from 2003 to 2011 was also conducted. Research literature collected for review focused on the profession of teaching and what makes an excellent educator. A number of recurring themes emerged, such as the challenges of teaching, teaching skills, educational accountability, and pedagogical scholarship, which will be discussed in the thesis.

Challenges of Teaching

The challenges of teaching are many, such as strategies, techniques, and scholarship. Teaching Interior Design has its own unique set of challenges. As a profession, Interior Design is complex and diverse. Ankerson and Pable (2008) highlighted the work of Niederhelman (2001), saying, "Design education is unique amongst fields of study. It is an integrator and connector of knowledge, forming links between ideas, information, people, and objects" (p. 3). This statement supports why learning how to teach interior design is so important. Educators require a variety of exceptional skills. Weimer (2006) emphasized, "Teaching does involve skills, instructional nuts and bolts, strategies and techniques. It is related and inextricably tied to content. These simplistic conceptions trivialize the complexity that is inherently a part of teaching" (p. 9). Reviewed literature suggested that educators, in many disciplines, are not prepared to teach after graduation, and few standards expecting growth or development of higher level institution teachers exist.

A number of scholars understood the significance of a teaching and learning movement in higher education called the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The review of literature indicated SoTL is a popular subject of interest. In Murray's (2008) *The scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education*, McCarthy emphasized:

The story of scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) is worth telling, not only because it gives teaching its rightful place in universities, colleges or institutes, but because it puts focus on what good teaching is all about: student learning and the search for its compelling evidence. (p. 7)

The major objective to effective teaching is developing a confident, knowledgeable learner. According to Murray (2008), “There is need for material to support the development of knowledge and practice” that is meaningful to academics across disciplines (p. 1). Murray also supported Boyer’s belief, saying, “Teaching is about learning” (as cited in Boyer, 1990, p. 11). SoTL is creating a need for good, innovative material at the college level. From the literature, it appeared that SoTL is relatively new and is growing. Acknowledging the importance of SoTL is essential to the profession of teaching.

Graduate education is about higher learning and a desire to advance the body of knowledge in a chosen discipline. Boyer (1990) examined graduate education and challenged what graduate studies do to prepare tomorrow’s scholars. He pointed out that in 1930, G. J. Laing, the dean at the University of Chicago’s graduate school, questioned:

What are we doing in the way of equipping students for their chosen work? Have the departments of the various graduate schools kept the teaching career sufficiently in mind in the organization of their program(s) of studies? (p. 70)

Besides Boyer and Laing, research showed that other scholars have doubts about the preparedness of emerging educators. According to Weimer (2006), most faculty teach with little training on how to teach. Boyer (1990) acknowledged the issue and suggested, “Faculty confront circumstances in which more general knowledge and more precise pedagogical

procedures are required. Helping new professors prepare for this special work is an obligation graduate schools have, all too often, overlooked” (p. 70). Research confirmed that graduate programs have an obligation to prepare emerging educators to teach. Boyer (1990) believed that including teacher training in graduate programs would improve classroom skills and that teaching assistant programs and mentoring would be worthwhile to prepare future teachers and foster good teaching practices. Many lessons can be gained from experience in the classroom. Competent faculty can share experiences and provide useful feedback. Including such programs in curricula could help to produce effective teachers.

Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, must be organized, examined frequently, and integrated with the subject to be taught. A number of things should be considered, the classroom being one. Classrooms have their own unique characteristics. Variables in students’ personalities, gender, age, class policies, subjects taught, physical space, and cultural aspects exist. Hill (2007) said, “Student learning relates directly to the classroom climate, not to grades alone” (p. 40). Classrooms are constantly changing environments. What happens one day can be completely different from the next. Salter and Persaud (2003) emphasized, “Understanding the dynamics of the classroom can empower teachers” (as cited in Hill, 2007, p. 37). An excellent teacher is more than a person with knowledge of the subject. A solid foundation of knowing how to teach effectively, understanding the classroom environment, adapting to learner needs, and successfully motivating student learning is also necessary.

A unique aspect of teaching Interior Design is the studio experience. Ankerson and Pable (2008) summarized, “The studio provides the epitome of project-based learning exercises, with activities that include research, inquiry and analysis, synthesis, criticism,

collaboration, and communication” (p. 142). Whether traditional classroom or studio setting, each teaching delivery requires various skill sets. Studio involves exploratory learning, creative problem solving, discovery, and group discussions. The conventional classroom or lecture involves lectures, reading, questions, and answers. Overlapping aspects exist in both formats; however, methods of teaching and learning are different and require exceptional teaching skills.

Teaching Responsibilities and Skills

Research literature revealed that many graduates teach after receiving their graduate degree without proper preparation for teaching. Also noteworthy is the fact that design ability often takes precedence over teaching skills when being considered for a higher education Interior Design teaching position. Ankerson and Pable (2008) emphasized, “It is both interesting and ironic that prerequisites for success as an interior design educator in today’s post-secondary systems are often much more stringent about one’s design capability than about possessing the actual teaching skills to successfully impart these skills to others” (p. 4). Practitioners may have a higher level of design knowledge and be good at what they do, but this does not mean they are effective in conveying that knowledge. Weimer (2006) added, “Future growth and development is stunted when learning derives only or mostly from what they experience” (p. 7). It is not only important that instructors be prepared to teach but that they also continually develop and improve skills throughout their careers.

The art of teaching is complicated. There are set principles and practices of what makes an excellent classroom teacher and a plethora of published research on strategies that promote teaching and learning (Gillies, 2009). Some of these principles and practices encourage interaction between students and faculty, use active learning techniques, give good

feedback, communicate high expectations and respect different ways of learning, to name a few (Chickering and Ehrmann, 1996). The role of educator is multifaceted, with diverse functions and responsibilities. Boyer (1990) believed that original research, professionalism, high performance standards, and staying abreast of new developments within one's discipline are all part of teaching. Additionally, educators must counsel and advise students. Specific to Interior Design, "Researchers suggest four major roles interior design instructors have: instructional delivery, instructional design, content expertise and record keeping and management" (Ankerson & Pable, 2008, p. 214). Teachers have a tremendous effect on student learning and influence how students think, reason, and solve problems. Gillies (2009) professed, "There is a considerable body of research that indicates that a teacher's discourse affects how students react to learning, their willingness to engage in tasks that challenge them and the perceptions they develop of their competencies to learn" (p. 91). Instructional practices are key to how students solve problems, learn from mistakes, learn to reason, and understand the importance of asking questions. Effective strategies encourage creative and critical thinking and, when such learning comes to fruition, a sense of accomplishment is experienced by both teacher and learner. Achievement and fulfillment are essential to effective teaching and learning in the classroom (Ankerson & Pable, 2008). If the student is not motivated to learn, the well prepared lectures, assignments, and readings are futile.

Developing new approaches and strategies to stimulate learning is significant to teaching. It can take learning, and teaching, in a new direction. In Martin and Guerin (2010), Poldma claimed that to sustain education and the future direction of Interior Design is to consider the issues that affect the profession and develop new pedagogical methods to address such trends. Trends in teaching and learning, according to Ankerson and Pable

(2008), are collaborations with other disciplines, “Real-world” applications and experiences, technology, and globalization. Educators must engage skills that address current and upcoming trends and realize that learner expectations influence teaching styles. Ankerson and Pable (2008) confirmed, “Interior Design educators are rethinking the methods by which they communicate knowledge to learners and the nature of learners’ active involvement in the educational process” (p. 188). Educational techniques and approaches are changing as additional views are considered because collaborations, experiential learning, the global market, and technology factor into the process of learning (Ankerson and Pable, 2008). Developing new strategies and evolving existing ones based on such trends is crucial in shaping the instruction of Interior Design.

Trends in interior design education.

Collaboration. Collaborating between students in Interior Design with other disciplines and real life clients has been successful (Wilkinson, 2011). Because of positive outcomes, collaborations are encouraged. Ankerson and Pable (2008) supported this trend, saying, “Collaborations between students and other groups provide fulfilling and exciting methods of learning interior design procedures and honing teaming skills” (p. 188). Interactions between different disciplines have grown in popularity across college campuses. According to Ermoli and Singelsen (2010), collaboration is important because if students are not exposed to other fields, their learning is restricted and “prevents them from learning to relate to the potential partners or clients they will encounter in their careers” (n.p.). Interaction between disciplines stimulates different ways of viewing and designing interior spaces and is considered essential in today’s world.

Experiential Learning. Real world experiences and hands-on participation are effective ways to understand and learn. Dr. Ronald Phillips at the University of Missouri-Columbia believes, “After years of searching for a learning approach that could accelerate students’ understanding of clients’ needs, I developed an understanding of what was lacking—the empowerment and knowledge derived from living life” (as cited in Ankersen & Pable, 2008, p. 195). Learning by doing has proven effective in teaching and learning. Real world clients for project assignments and working internships are good ways to incorporate experiential learning world into Interior Design education.

Technology. Technology has affected the teaching and learning environment and has worked its way into most classrooms. As an Interior Design tool, it makes many tasks easier. Three-dimensional modeling is popular in design studios. These programs provide tools for learners to model interior spaces and view their creations in new ways. Virtual walkthroughs and lighting simulations are possible. This allows students to see space three-dimensionally and to note how lighting affects the environment, which provides another learning perspective.

Global platform. Many Interior Design programs offer studies abroad or actual class projects in other countries, providing opportunities to learn and understand other cultures. Jane Kucko, Interior Design associate professor at Texas Christian University, emphasized, “The contributions Interior Design makes to the world’s built environment requires a global perspective of our graduates” (as cited in Ankersen & Pable, 2008, p. 198). Cultural awareness is vital to the success of a design project because it can provide a positive experience with the customer, develop mutual trust, and instill respect and confidence (Wilkinson, 2011).

Trends are useful to Interior Design education. Educators can make decisions on effective teaching strategies and methods by incorporating emerging trends and, through trial and error, determine which are most effective in their classrooms.

Educational Accountability

Assessment is key to educational accountability and important to the practice of teaching. Without accountability, the educational process is only a process lacking quality check mechanisms. A measure to determine and assess effectiveness is key to pedagogical delivery. Gillies (2009) shared:

Teachers use assessments to provide them with feedback on students' achievements about what they understand and what they still need to master.

This information is critically important in enabling teachers to make adjustments to their planning to accommodate students' ongoing learning needs. (p. 151)

Assessment helps instructors evaluate students' progress and reflect on their own teaching methods. Change and improvement can result and can affect strategies, courses, and curricula. McKeachie (2002) elaborated:

Skill in teaching is not something learned and simply repeated; what makes it exciting is that there is always room to grow. As you reflect on your classes, you will get insights and will continue to develop both your theory of teaching and learning and your repertoire of skills and strategies. (p. xvii)

Assessment was reviewed because it is an important measurement of learning. Different forms of assessment exist, and Weimer (2006) and Boyer (1990) discussed three types: self-evaluation, peer assessment, and student assessment as effective forms.

Assessment types.

Self evaluation. This form of evaluation can be simple and may include documenting course objectives, description of assignments, and copies of test results. It may also involve reflection on how the class was taught, determining what worked and what could be done differently.

Peer assessment. Though not popular with faculty (Weimer, 2006), peer evaluation has value. Boyer (1990) argued its importance, saying, “Problems notwithstanding, faculty should be primarily responsible for evaluating the teaching performance of colleagues, and the process should be as systematic as that used to evaluate research” (p. 38). The review of literature supported peer assessment, but whether it is currently used was not mentioned. If implemented, it makes sense to consider faculty dynamics and employ a method best suited to the culture of the institution.

Student assessment. Student assessment can be useful when anonymous and not in the presence of an instructor. Asking students to fill out an evaluation form at the end of the semester, without serious consideration to the process, is a mistake (Boyer, 1990). Student evaluations should be professional and comments truthful and supportive. Boyer (1990) suggested addressing faculty assessment during freshman orientation so students understand the significance of the evaluation and not as a venting opportunity. Students upset with a grade or incident may give a slanted assessment that may not be helpful. In theory, addressing assessment during orientation sounds valid, but how its value is questionable because understanding assessment is not a focus of orientation and may be forgotten by the time assessment is done. Involving alumni with evaluations would provide a reflective perspective and could offer positive suggestions (Boyer 1990). Although important,

assessment is only productive if honest evaluation and reflection are involved. Strengths and shortfalls can be identified and then improvement can be made.

Pedagogical Scholarship

With assessment, educators look back at what was done, paired with what can be done, to improve and move forward. Weimer (2006) professed that the same should be done with pedagogical scholarship, the scholarly work on teaching. She noted as of 2006, “No one has taken a serious and comprehensive look back” (p. 3). However, research revealed that many scholars understand and maintain its importance. McKeachie (2002) supported Boyer’s study (1990) on scholarship, stating, “As a result of the debates about Boyer’s proposal, there is increasing acceptance of the idea that good teaching involves much scholarly activity” (p. 5). Boyer delved into a matter that still requires attention. The fact that scholarship is often neglected prompted concern because educators should be encouraged to explore areas of interest or controversy to advance their profession.

The literature review indicated that quality pedagogical scholarship is lacking in many disciplines. Weimer (2006) declared, “Pedagogical scholarship has a long history of being dismissed or marginalized in virtually all our fields and at most of our institutions” (p. 15). Because scholarship is seen as unworthy and faculty are either not interested or expected to read it, educators may repeat mistakes. Pedagogical scholarship should be viewed as a form of accountability, making it necessary. Shulman and Hutchings (1999) claimed, “The scholarship of teaching is a condition for excellent teaching and underlines the long-term commitment necessary to bringing such scholarship about” (as cited in Murray, 2008, p. 14). Pedagogical scholarship does not have to be traditional research. Writing for peer-reviewed journals is scholarship (Murray, 2008). To gain respect, however, it must be read and

considered feasible. Weimer (2006) agreed, saying, “If practice is to improve and college teaching is to develop respect as a profession, there must be viable literature associated with it” (p. 7). Credible scholarship contributes to a discipline’s growth and development and adds respectability. Weimer (2006) also declared, “Doing pedagogical scholarship does make you a better teacher” (p. 170). Some scholars may debate this statement, but the literature review did not find an opposing viewpoint. It did support the theory that scholarship has a positive influence on teaching.

The review of literature showed there is much debate among scholars on scientific research in education and what methods for doing educational research are acceptable. Initially, there were no standards; when established, they did not have the same expectations as traditional research, stated Weimer (2006). Murray (2008) agreed when she noted the contrast in the methods and definitions between research and scholarship. Traditional research is based on scientific methods that can be repeatable, and the results are justified by the evidence. Weimer (2006) also claimed research universities are less open to pedagogical scholarship (p. 3). The issue of identifying acceptable methods for educational research and who believes in what may explain why previous scholarship was discounted: because guidelines varied and the quality of work was inconsistent. The academic community needs to say what will make pedagogical scholarship excellent (Weimer, 2006). It is critical that recognized standards are developed, standard that academics find acceptable, to effectively produce scholarly work.

Summary

Teaching is intellectual and complex work. How emerging educators are prepared to teach seems not only relevant, but also central, based on the critical roles and responsibilities. Therefore, learning how to teach is an important topic in graduate Interior Design curricula. Literature uncovered a number of elements involved with being a good instructor, regardless of discipline. This helped explain why emerging Interior Design educators must attain preparation on how to teach at higher level institutions. Having a solid foundation to build upon is essential. There are many challenges to teaching and many others to teaching Interior Design. The role of an educator involves multiple skill sets. Alexander pointed out, “Courses give you access to the most relevant skills and information to enable you to start, and continue to learn about your own, and other, perceptions of scholarship and to apply these within your own discipline” (as cited in Murray, 2008, p. 69). How to assist students to apply and develop their learning is the meaning of an excellent teacher.

Interior Design educators must be passionate, organized, technical, and creative. Through the review of literature, it is clear without proper or adequate training, emerging educators may not be equipped to teach. They may have knowledge of the subject but not the skills to convey that knowledge. To assume that future teachers know how to teach is not appropriate. Therefore, graduate Interior Design programs should address teaching skills and methodologies in their curricula so that emerging educators can then provide successful learning in the classroom and, in turn, contribute to the future welfare of the interior design profession.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

Limitations in the review of literature prompted further investigation to add relevance to this study. Additional perspective and meaningful information were necessary to determine the preparedness of emerging educators from current Interior Design graduate programs. The literature review revealed that future teachers graduating from programs in many disciplines often do not have the skill sets to prepare them to teach. The requirements to be an excellent instructor are essential. Therefore, delving further into the issue was imperative to understand what programs do to prepare future Interior Design instructors. This is significant because it may bring awareness to Interior Design education at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, and help determine what steps can be taken for improvement which can positively affect the Interior Design profession.

Besides cited literature, professional journal articles and proceedings from the IDEC 2011 Annual Conference were examined. Information learned from previous coursework also contributed to the research. Sources supported the importance of effective teaching practices, acknowledged the challenges to teaching Interior Design and highlighted the limited information available on how teaching preparation is addressed.

Research Design

The primary purpose of collecting and analyzing data for this study was to discover what Interior Design Master's degree programs do to prepare future educators to teach at higher level institutions. The secondary reason was to add to the body of knowledge on the subject. Teaching has many challenges, and proper training is extremely important in preparing effective teachers. University programs offered emphasis in various disciplines of Interior Design, but few advertised a teaching track. Many students pursued teaching after

graduation, and how they are being prepared to fulfill their objectives was of concern.

Understanding strategies and techniques to motivate student learning, being versed in current issues and trends, and understanding the value of pedagogical scholarship are important elements to effective teaching and require instruction. Correspondence with current program coordinators and emerging educators was deemed necessary to collect informative data on university programs and what they do to incorporate teaching objectives into curricula.

Because numerous titles exist for department representatives, the term “program coordinator” was used in this study. It encompasses Department Chair, Program Officer, Director, and the like. “Emerging educator” refers to a graduated student who chose teaching as a career path.

Two methodologies were considered for collecting data to evaluate school programs: questionnaires and interviews. Both methods were analyzed, and a brief summary of each is shown in Figure 1.

Questionnaires	Interviews
Questions put on a form for response	Deliver questions and record responses
Can be done through mail, internet, groups	Personal contact (in person or telephone)
Cannot probe beyond initial responses	Can probe beyond initial responses
Cannot clarify question if misunderstood	Can clarify a question if misunderstood
Do follow up with non-respondents	Better response rate over mailed surveys

Figure 1. Comparison of methodologies for data collection. The two methods above were considered to evaluate school programs.

Interviews are guided conversations and provide qualitative information. Personal communication allows interaction, probing beyond initial answers and clarification of questions when necessary. Thus, interviews were chosen as the method for data collection.

Review of literature acknowledged doubt to the preparedness of emerging educators but did not disclose why or how the issue is addressed. Speaking directly with coordinators and graduated students was a way to get meaningful information that would add value to the study. Telephone interviews were conducted because of geographic distances as institutions were located across the United States. This type of interview is not appropriate for personal or sensitive questions, limits the use of visual aids, and prohibits observation, none of which affected this study. Conducting personal interviews required approval from the Human Subjects Committee, which was attained (Appendix A).

Sample Selection

A sample collection of 59 Interior Design graduate programs was identified on the IDEC website. IDEC is the professionally recognized association for Interior Design educators (Harwood, 2010) and is respected within the industry. IDEC focuses on the advancement of Interior Design education and scholarship. They provided a list of institutions, contact information, degrees offered, and programs' emphasis, where applicable. The list was updated spring of 2011. The IDEC list was used because it was believed the sample population would be adequately represented and programs were considered valid. A letter (Appendix B) was e-mailed to all 59 institutions, introducing the study and inviting program coordinators, or equivalent, to participate. E-mail provided an easier, more immediate response time and was more cost-efficient than the postal system. A few e-mails were returned due to invalid addresses. Hard copy letters were mailed to those institutions to the attention of the Interior Design Graduate Studies Program Coordinator. Attached to every e-mail and letter was an informed consent form (Appendix C) that had to be signed and returned before conducting interviews.

Low response rates were anticipated because of previous survey research experience. According to Bickart and Schmittlein (1999), response rates to all types of surveys are declining (as cited in Sheehan, 2001). Fifteen percent of the sampling responded to the initial request. To increase this rate, a reminder message, re-explaining the study, was e-mailed two weeks later to 56 universities. Sheehan and Hoy (1997) claimed that reminders increase e-mail survey response rates by 25 percent (as cited in Sheehan, 2001). A reminder was not mailed to the three universities with invalid e-mail addresses as the postal system would not be quick enough to get a reply. The second e-mail prompted an eleven percent increase of interested participants. Respondents' names were put in a paper bag, and thirteen names were drawn by the author. Selected schools and coordinators were re-contacted. Interview dates were initiated, and informed consent forms were signed and returned. In the first ten interviews, coordinators were asked for a referral of a recent graduate from their program. The objective was to get five or six graduates' perspectives on why they wanted to teach, how learning to teach was addressed in their program, how they felt prepared, and what challenges of teaching Interior Design they had experienced. Graduates were contacted by e-mail, and eight volunteered to participate. All volunteers were informed that identities would be kept anonymous, information was confidential, and they could discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Interviews began with personal introductions and an explanation of how interviews were to be handled. Interview questions were asked, as written, using a predesigned format (Appendices D & E). Responses were hand recorded verbatim to eliminate error. Personal attitudes and feelings were not interjected by the author. It was understood that the phrasing

of questions could be interpreted differently by interviewees and that further explanation may be required.

Two separate sets of interview questions were designed: one for program coordinators and one for emerging educators. All participants in each group were given the same questions. Questions were clear and concise. Open- and closed-ended questions were asked of both groups. Questions were grouped together by subject matter, beginning with easiest questions. Each bank of questions was geared to respective audiences and included the essential questions of the study: Why do students pursue teaching? Do universities know many students want to teach after graduating? What are the necessary skill sets and unique challenges of teaching Interior Design? Interview questions focused on programs' emphasis or concentrations, students' interests, how teaching is incorporated into curricula, skill sets required to teach lecture and studio, and the challenges of teaching Interior Design, in that order. Specific questions were asked of coordinators about master's degree programs to understand programs' objectives, and questions specific to emerging educators were asked to determine work experience and professional objectives. The open- and closed-ended questions helped with interviews because respondents could give short, to-the-point answers as well as longer, interpretive ones. Keeping questions limited to specific subject areas also kept conversations focused and elicited useful responses. There was redundancy to certain questions, allowing additional and/or supportive comments. Respondents were asked permission to be re-contacted should clarification be necessary. After each interview, the questions and responses were typed and e-mailed back to each individual to read and verify accuracy. The objective was to eliminate interviewer error and provide reliable information.

Participants were aware that recurring themes and supportive information would be documented in thesis research and that findings could be presented at future conferences.

This method for collecting data provided an opportunity to understand different Interior Design Master's degrees, how programs and objectives differ, and why programs do what they do. Conversations allowed for further clarification on questions, which was beneficial and added validity. Volunteers were contacted through e-mail to set up interview dates. The process of scheduling interviews was laborious. Multiple e-mails were sent to initiate interviews and determine time zones. Some individuals responded promptly and some did not. Requested information was not always sent the first time. Few individuals attach e-mail signatures with contact information, thus phone numbers were often difficult to obtain. To eliminate this problem in the future, the consent form would request a telephone number along with personal name, school name, and date. E-mailing typed questions and responses back to participants for editing was extremely useful. However, not all respondents were timely, and reminders were sent. Interviewees were able to see questions and often added information after reviewing initial responses. Because of the number of steps and people (21 participants) involved, a spread sheet was designed to track dates of interviews, phone numbers, consent forms, and verification of accuracy for each person/university.

It was not understood until research was underway that plenty of variation exists with Interior Design Master's programs, and improvements would be made in the research methods. Initial contact made to schools on the IDEC list would clarify that post-professional and/or research master's degrees were of interest for the study. This would help provide a narrower focus and allow for comparing and contrasting of degree types.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Analysis of Data

Thirteen Interior Design Master's degree programs were researched and analyzed. Schools were randomly selected using the 2011 IDEC master list of programs. Five regions in the United States were represented: Northeast, East, South, Midwest, and West. The study focused on how programs prepared students to teach Interior Design at higher level institutions and what skill sets are required and challenges involved teaching Interior Design. Data were collected through personal interviews with program coordinators, or equal, and recent graduates. Data, along with common threads and recurring themes, were documented and presented in various formats. Besides thirteen program coordinators, eight recent graduates, representing seven programs, were interviewed. The post-graduate sampling graduated between the years of 2008 and 2011, and each had different backgrounds. Four (50%) had practiced Interior Design before graduating with their master's degree, and experience ranged from three to twenty years. The four with professional practice experience were currently teaching full-time at schools with four-year Interior Design degrees. Two of the four educators were expected to do research as well as teach at their schools. The other two full-time educators were not required to do research. A different graduate was currently teaching part-time and had been practicing design for one year. The remaining three graduates were not currently teaching and had little (one year or less) or no practice experience in Interior Design.

University programs, program coordinators, and graduates are referenced by letter in the analysis of data to maintain anonymity. Program and affiliated individuals have the same letter (i.e. Coordinator A and Graduate A are affiliated with University A). Interviews with coordinators brought awareness to the different types of master's degrees that exist in Interior

Design. In this study, schools offered first professional degrees (second degree seekers), post professional degrees (prior undergraduate design degree pursuing a master's in design) or research degrees (not a professional degrees). The program sampling included eight (8) post-professional degrees, three (3) research degrees, and two (2) first professional degrees. Therefore, programs did not have the same objectives, and data were skewed. However, because interview questions addressed motivations of students, available teaching processes, skill sets, and challenges of teaching Interior Design, most responses were relevant or contributed to the thesis question: How do Interior Design graduate programs prepare emerging educators to teach at higher level institutions? Besides the different types of degrees, schools called an Interior Design Master's degree by different names (Figure 2).

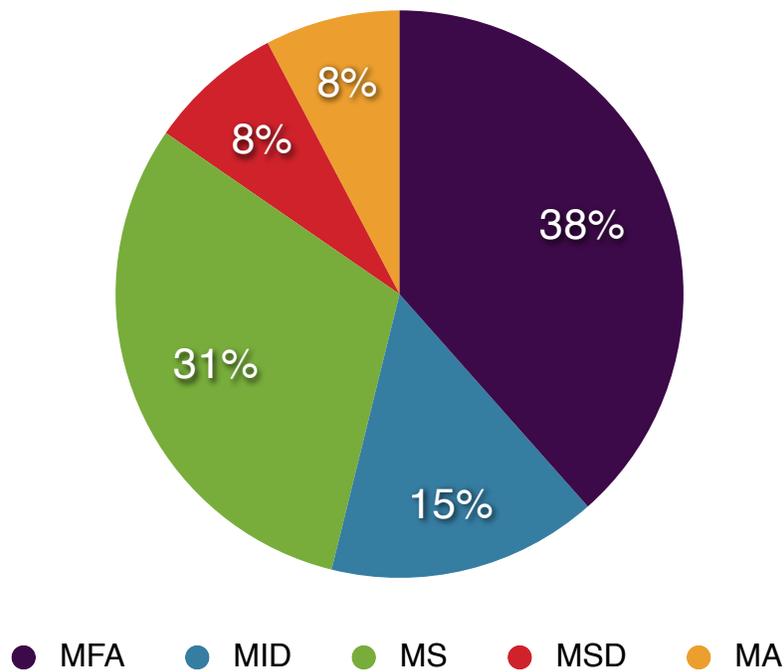


Figure 2. Master’s degree names in Interior Design programs. This figure illustrates the percentages of different names given to current Interior Design Master’s degrees.

- MFA - Master of Fine Arts
- MID - Master of Interior Design
- MS - Master of Science
- MSD - Master of Science in Design
- MA - Master of Art

Additionally, some schools listed a specific program emphasis. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the reviewed programs did not list or advertise a concentration. Their objective was to allow Interior Design students to establish an interest area and work with faculty or colleges within the University to develop and support their specialization or research interest. Thirty-eight percent (38%) offered concentrations or emphasis as part of the program. Emphases varied, but were not limited to, Practitioner Track, Educator Track, Environment

and Behavior, Design History, Theory and Criticism, Healthcare Design, Universal Design, Gerontology, Historic Preservation, Sustainability, Digital Media, and Technology.

Understanding what motivates students to pursue a master's degree in Interior Design was important. Each coordinator provided two or three reasons why students enter their programs. The most popular were teaching (46%), specialized area of Interior Design (38%), and research (16%). This study supported previous research that showed that many students pursued a master's degree in Interior Design because they wanted to teach. Eleven of the thirteen coordinators in this study (approximately 85%) acknowledged that teaching was one reason. The remaining two stated that students wanted experience in Interior Design first and may go into teaching later, or that teaching was a fairly uncommon reason to attend that program. All thirteen programs (100%) acknowledged that their schools or departments are aware that many students do pursue teaching after graduating. This may sound contradictory; however, universities are aware of what is happening in the larger world regardless of the reasons why a student attends their program. Interviews with graduates and coordinators revealed that after graduation, teaching Interior Design and practicing design were the most popular career paths; this corresponds to the top two reasons for entering master's programs.

Emerging educators were interested in teaching because they wanted to share their knowledge with students, inspire them as they had been as students, have an influence on students as they enter the real world, and improve educational experiences through their professional practice experiences. Working with students as something enjoyed was not mentioned as a reason, which was a surprise to the author because dealing with students is a major part of teaching. Perhaps this seemed obvious and not necessary to state.

How Programs Addressed Teaching in Curricula

Evaluating how programs addressed teaching and what they did to prepare emerging educators to teach was the next step. Two schools in the study (approximately 15%) offered specific teaching tracks within programs, and eleven schools did not. Figure 3 shows different ways programs addressed teaching initiatives within curricula.

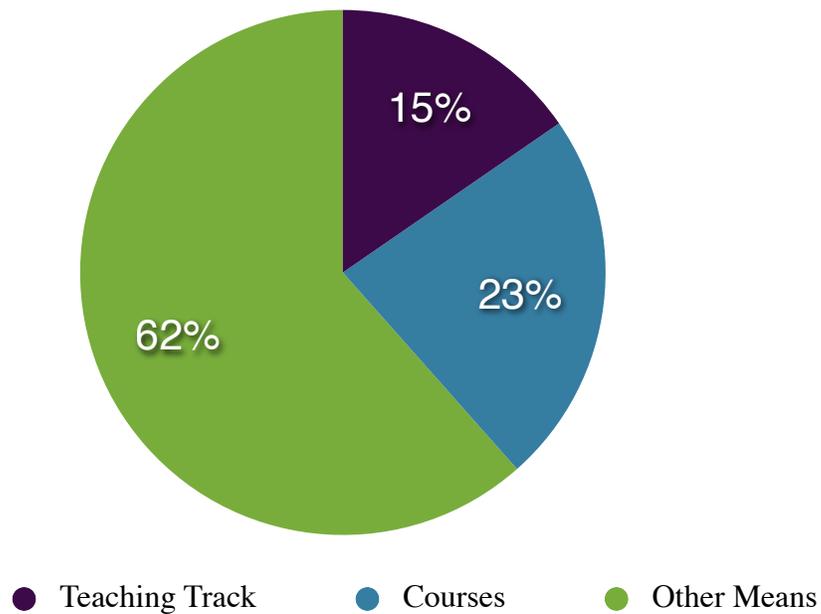


Figure 3. Teaching initiatives in curricula. This figure illustrates how university programs addressed teaching preparation.

Of the two Interior Design programs with teaching tracks, one (University F) dedicated thirty percent (30%) of curricula to teaching courses, and the other (University E) more than fifty percent (50%). Collectively, classes included, but were not limited to,

Teaching Theory and Learning Methods, Education Technology, Teaching and Learning Evaluation, Interior Design Classroom Preparation and Instruction, Teaching Strategies for Interior Design, Trends and Issues in Interior Design, and Advanced Pedagogy for Interior Design. Courses addressed many areas of teaching as addressed in the Literature Review. Such instruction supported the reasons why teacher preparation is important, such as methods, strategies, trends, and assessment. Emerging educators, trained in courses dedicated to helping them be excellent teachers, are better equipped to make informed decisions on effective teaching and learning practices than unprepared or untrained individuals. Both programs included a college preparation and teaching course in curriculum. This class provided an opportunity for students to teach an Interior Design undergraduate course. Each program organized it differently, but the outcomes were the same: preparation and instruction in a classroom. The value of real life experience is an effective way of teaching and learning as discussed in the Literature Review. These programs appeared to believe this also. Because Universities E and F have developed and incorporated Interior Design teaching tracks, they have demonstrated that they understand the importance of learning to teach and that it is a specialized area that requires attention in curricula.

Besides teaching tracks, another way schools addressed teaching preparation was to include courses in curricula (Figure 4). Three programs (approximately 23%) in this study included teaching courses. Two programs (Universities D and K) offered one course, and the other program (University C) included two courses. Collectively, courses included Practicum in Teaching, Acquiring Teaching Skills, Supervised Teaching (similar to an internship), and Educational Praxis (summary of how to teach Interior Design). Coordinator B stated that their program hopes to add a class on teaching interior design within the next two years.

Though offering a course or two may not be enough to adequately prepare an instructor, these universities understand that learning about teaching is of consequence and requires attention.

The remaining eight programs (approximately 62%) did not incorporate teaching courses in curricula. When asked how students are prepared to teach, several ways were explained. Four universities (including University K, which offered one teaching course in curricula) directed students interested in teaching to their College of Education (Figure 4), where an array of courses are available based on student objectives. Certificates in College/University teaching were also accessible in two of the four programs. Coordinator L believed that courses addressing teaching in higher education may be available in a different college of the university but could not identify them. University A offered a Teaching Practicum course (Figure 4) where students developed teaching lectures, project assignments, and tests for a specific course of the students' interest. Each student worked with the Department Chair, built course content, and presented it in notebook format. University A also connected interested students with the Center of Teaching Excellence, but this was neither for credit nor part of the program. Universities B and J offered seminars or workshops (outside of the Design Department) to students regardless of discipline (Figure 4). Seminars varied and included, but were not limited to, how to navigate academia, prepare students to be university instructors, and share innovative ways of teaching. The ideas shared by coordinators showed initiative and suggested that knowing about teaching and being prepared has merit. Students directed to Colleges of Education may receive adequate teaching preparation from cognate courses but miss out on learning and preparation specific to teaching Interior Design. Those programs that addressed teaching minimally seem to have other objectives.

Five programs (approximately 38%) in the study mentioned Teacher Assistant (TA) positions as a way to prepare students to teach (Figure 4). TA positions vary depending on the school. Positions help faculty on many levels, and teaching may be involved. Positions were paid, often paying for the student's tuition and providing a stipend. Three of the eight graduates interviewed had TA positions, but only one wanted to teach after graduating. TA positions were enjoyed, but the financial aspect factored in significantly. Besides TA positions, one program (University M) developed a Design Assistant (DA) position (Figure 4). It differed from a TA position because it was not a paid position and the graduate student did not enter student grades. The focus of the DA position was how faculty teach. Students worked alongside a teacher who taught first-, second-, and third-year classes. Another idea shared by University L was that students in their second year participated in rigorous peer review sessions in seminar and studio courses. Students offered critiques to one another and were encouraged by faculty mentors to think critically. Though critical thinking is important in education and the class may be valuable, how these sessions prepared student to teach was not clearly understood although clarifying questions were asked.

The remaining two of the thirteen programs (Universities G and I) stated that teaching was not a strong reason for students to pursue master's degrees at their schools. Thus, their programs didn't focus on preparing students to teach. University I justified that faculty did plenty of pedagogical scholarship and it trickled into the classroom, but they don't teach students how to teach. Scholarship is definitely significant to the teaching profession and should be done.

What programs do to address teaching preparation	Number of Programs**
Educator tracks; percentage of curricula is dedicated to courses in teaching preparation and teaching experience	2
Two (2) teaching courses included in curriculum	1
One (1) teaching course included in curriculum	2
Directed students to the College of Education for courses	4
Offered one (1) course in class preparation	1
Offered seminars or workshops outside of Design Department	2
Teacher Assistant (TA) position	5
Design Assistant (DA) position	1

Figure 4. What programs do to address teaching preparation. This figure shows different ways programs prepare students to teach in higher level institutions.

** Numbers under Program heading exceeds 13 (number of school programs studied) because some schools included more than one way to prepare students to teach

Interviews with six of the eight graduates provided perspective on how they felt programs prepared them. They shared how they were or were not prepared, provided expectations of respective programs, and suggested areas for improvement (Figure 5). The remaining two participants did not want to teach and declined to comment.

Student Needs/Expectations	Program Improvements
Wanted more courses; one course was not enough to be prepared to teach	Need better communication on elective options and independent studies
Wanted to learn different teaching methodologies	Offer seminars on different teaching methodologies
Wanted to understand the hiring process and what is expected of a first year teacher	Offer more teaching options with good faculty feedback
Wanted to learn teaching strategies	Include a statistics course
Learned how to prepare for a class, do a lesson plan & how to do research	Incorporate teaching courses on how to teach (tools, theories, strategies)
Expected teaching experience and got it	Need a course on culture of academia

Figure 5. Graduates' expectations from programs. This figure lists students' objectives of their graduate degree programs and what improvements could be made to better prepare them for teaching.

Skills for Teaching Interior Design

The role of an educator is multifaceted with diverse functions, responsibilities, and skills, as discussed in the Review of Literature. Personal interviews provided detail, and coordinators shared a plethora of skills needed to teach Interior Design (Figure 6).

Skills Required for Lecture	Skills Required for Studio
Intellectually flexible and understand that there are different ways to learn and teach students	Intellectually flexible and understand that there are different ways to learn and teach students and switch between them quickly
Command the room, clear oral delivery	Have knowledge and practical experience
Organize lectures into cohesive units	Be organized and balance time between lecture and critiques
Engage students and visually engage also	Engage students and visually engage also
Provide meaningful assignments	Create well thought out projects
Assess student learning	Assess student learning
Have excellent presentation skills	Well prepared, articulate presentations
Very organized because cannot wing it in large lecture hall, manage time well	Can be more flexible in this setting because have fewer students in class
Infuse creativity into lectures	Have good resources available for predesign research of projects
Manage class & develop discussion	Allows hands-on practice, experiment
Collaboration (students, faculty, designers)	Collaboration (students, faculty, designers)
In-depth research required for day to day lectures	Teach students to handle constructive criticism
Allow time for reflection	Respond immediately
Less intimate setting; everyone does same assignment, paper, or exam	More personalized instruction and individualized projects

Figure 6. Skill sets required in classroom settings. This figure lists some of the skills needed to teach in lecture and studio environments.

Lecture environment summary. Program coordinators said lecture skills vary depending on the size of the university and the size of the lecture; there can be 30 to 300 students. The ability to command attention, be confident, and be highly organized are

important to the success of teaching and learning in this setting. Lecture involves good research, knowledge of the subject, organizing information into cohesive units, presenting information in an engaging manner, encouraging discussion, and teaching different processes to help students learn the material. Communication skills are different in a lecture setting because classroom discussion is group-oriented and often relies on technology such as Blackboard (Coordinator C) to communicate announcements, assignments, and tests. Considering the author's experience, this technology delivers information quickly on a large scale, encourages interaction between the student and instructor, and keeps students informed. Assessment, as a form of educational accountability, was also mentioned as important: assessing student learning, to verify whether students are grasping ideas and information, as well as self-reflection by the instructor to evaluate what is working and what is not.

Studio environment summary. Program coordinators shared critical skills to teaching studio. This environment is more intimate and personalized. It involves some lecture but focuses on projects and desk critiques or reviews. Faculty can be more flexible in classroom structure and provide personal instruction because there are fewer students. Individual projects may result rather than the large lecture where everyone is doing the same paper or exam. Not only is understanding different learning styles vital, but being able to switch between them quickly is important in the studio environment. Assignments are often project-based, and one-on-one learning is part of the studio experience. Faculty who teach studio should have experience in the field, develop well thought-out projects, direct students for pre-design project research, manage the classroom well, balance their time between lecture and studio, and know how to give good desk critiques that help students learn. As discussed

in the literature review, experiential learning and collaboration were also addressed during interviews. Hands-on learning and field trips are an effective way to teach. Coordinator H stated, “Immerse students in real settings so they can see how all the pieces go together and faculty need to have the capacity to add reality based complexity.” Learning by doing has been a well supported method of learning and remains important. Collaborations with and among students, faculty, and between educators and practicing designers (Coordinator F) are significant to effective learning and can provide a broadened perspective. When students are exposed to other fields, their learning is expanded, allowing for better relationships with potential partners or clients (Ermoli and Singelsen, 2010). As in the lecture setting, assessment of student learning was also mentioned.

Participants shared viewpoints that support the importance of knowing how to teach, developing appropriate skill sets, preparing adequately, and understanding assessment. Most coordinators provided skill sets for each class setting. Coordinator E believed that each format is different and “involves differences in classroom management, engaging student learning, developing discussions and offering reference points for learning assignments types.” Coordinators F and H believed that there is less difference in teaching between lecture and studio than in the past. Collaboration, passion, knowledge, organization, adaptability, and understanding different ways to learn and teach students applied to both. Regardless of classroom setting, to be an effective instructor, there is much to know: understanding the subject, student audience, techniques, strategies, assessment, and scholarship all come into play.

Challenges of Teaching Interior Design

Teaching Interior Design has its own unique challenges. Understanding what the profession of Interior Design is and does was an issue shared by participants. Interior Design is often misunderstood. The general public frequently does not comprehend the qualifications of an Interior Designer. The National Council of Interior Design Qualifications (NCIDQ) defines an Interior Designer:

Interior Design is a multifaceted profession in which creative and technical solutions are applied within a structure to achieve a built interior environment. These solutions are functional, enhance the quality of life and culture of the occupants and are aesthetically attractive. Designs are created in response to and coordinated with the building shell and acknowledge the physical location and social context of the project. Designs must adhere to code and regulatory requirements, and encourage the principles of environmental sustainability. The interior design process follows a systematic and coordinated methodology, including research, analysis and integration of knowledge into the creative process, whereby the needs and resources of the client are satisfied to produce an interior space that fulfills the project goals” (NCIDQ, 2011).

Interior Design is more than interior decorating. Faculty are frustrated because the profession is misinterpreted on many levels. Coordinator A thought that University A did not understand what Interior Design is about. It is an intellectual study (Coordinator L) and has many complexities of which the public is not aware (Coordinator B). Countering the stereotype of HGTV has become a big challenge on public perception and affects what incoming students think of Interior Design (Coordinator C). Students need to consider all aspects and

components of a design project and not only the aesthetics (Coordinator J). There is a level of detail involved in design that is often misconstrued. Adding to the confusion is understanding how the discipline is related to architecture, product design, and human behavior, and where the division is between them (Coordinators L and M). Another big issue, according to Coordinator H, is the idea of “publish or perish.” Do Interior Designers act as academics and publish to be successful or stay loyal to the profession of design? Interior Design faculty need to figure out for whom they are conducting research (Coordinator H). Scholarship is important and should be done; however, there are controversial aspects with scholarship as noted by Murray (2008) and Weimer (2006) in the literature review. “Balancing the time committed to studios and the time necessary for research and creative scholarship is challenging,” noted Coordinator J. Data showed that pedagogical scholarship appears to be a source of conflict in the discipline of Interior Design also.

The need to keep up with trends and stay current was shared by several coordinators and graduates. Their comments supported Poldma (2010), when she stated educational strategies must address new and changing realities of the world, in the literature review. Collaboration in both the studio and lecture settings was stressed by Coordinator F. Technology and lighting are two popular trends that change constantly. Keeping up with them can be challenging and frustrating (Coordinators D, F, and I). “Interior Design is an ever-changing profession and faculty must keep up with current trends, materials, technology and be connected to the outside world” (Coordinator I). Coordinator D summarized by saying that it’s about being relevant, staying current with course content, and not continually doing the same thing.

The challenge of teaching the subject of Interior Design was a recurring theme and reflects on Ankerson and Pable's statement, "Design is an integrator and connector of knowledge, forming links between ideas, information, people, and objects" (p. 3). Students often come into the discipline with preconceived ideas of what Interior Design is and do not understand what is involved or the skill sets required. This relates to the misperception of the discipline. Students often do not understand it and believe Interior Design is a discipline in which they can pick and choose what they want to learn. Students must learn what is involved in Interior Design, not just the areas that are interest them (Graduate C and Coordinator K). Students must understand the bigger picture and how the parts and pieces work together. Coordinator E shared many questions of teaching: "How do you help students further develop their creativity and accurately communicate ideas? Use both the right and left sides of their brains in the field? Visualize and then modify their designs in three dimensional space?" To be an effective teacher, such questions must be considered and hopefully addressed. Interior Design is an abstract subject to teach, not straightforward like science (Graduate G), which adds to the problem of conceptual teaching. Developing creativity and helping students accurately communicate something that is not built yet is difficult (Coordinator E). Not all students are the same creatively, and the challenge is to motivate and encourage them to do their best work (Graduates C and K). The process of programming is time-consuming to teach, and University A stated that sophomore year is spent making sure it is understood. Another issue to teaching is getting students to understand the process of creativity. Graduate E stated "Creating floors, walls and a ceiling in a 3D program is not design." They often believe they are designing because of what they see in such a program, rather than understanding it is a tool. Graduate B believed that because of the Council for

Interior Design Accreditation's (CIDA) requirements, faculty must be creative and innovative, deliver the required information, and make the most of the time in the classroom.

Grading creativity was another difficult task, according to emerging educators. Grading can be challenging (Graduate K). It is hard to create benchmarks that grade fairly because Interior Design is a creative discipline and grades are based on criteria and a creative aspect (Graduate E). Graduate C felt it would be helpful if experienced faculty would share suggestions and experiences to help with instruction and what to look for in design work. Coordinators did not mention grading as a challenge. Perhaps it is because they are experienced in grading and it does not pose a challenge or because they did not teach Interior Design.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Further Research

A master's degree in Interior Design appears to have increased in popularity over recent years. Previously, the degree was uncommon because the profession was young, and to practice Interior Design, the bachelor degree was the accepted requirement. As the profession grows, more students pursue an Interior Design Master's degree. This study showed that two of the most popular reasons are to teach Interior Design or specialize in an area in design. The emerging educators interviewed said they pursued teaching because they wanted to share their knowledge, improve experiences through real world practices, and inspire and motivate future designers. Thirteen current graduate programs were researched in an attempt to find out how emerging educators are prepared to teach at higher level institutions. Previous research caused concern as to a possible disconnect between students who wanted to teach and program objectives. This study brought awareness that the profession of teaching Interior Design is currently not seen as a specialized area in curricula and therefore not treated as equal to other specialized areas of study such as Sustainability or Healthcare Design.

Teaching is complicated. Effective teaching requires training and education, as does any specialty, because one must gain knowledge and understanding. Shulman's (1986) statement, "Those who can do, those who understand, teach" was written twenty-five years ago (p. 14). His insight reflects an accurate view of the teaching profession. Teaching requires significant understanding, preparation, and the ability to convey information effectively in a variety of ways. Without suitable preparation, a first-year teacher may have an adverse affect on student learning, and a practitioner with valuable experience to share may not convey information effectively for student learning.

The research showed that approximately six-two percent (62%) of programs did not address teaching preparation in curricula. Types of master's degrees (first professional, post-professional, or research) varied, as well as programs. Thus, schools had different missions, and few commonalities existed regarding teaching preparation. It should be noted that two programs in the study did not address teaching because incoming students do not typically pursue teaching at their schools. Data collected from interviews provided answers to the study's objectives and opened other doors, provoking additional questions. Program coordinators (approximately 85%) believed that teaching is one popular career path of students. Emerging educators, who did not experience an educator track, wanted additional preparation and shared ideas for improvement, like adding classes and more teaching options.

Three university programs addressed teaching preparation by developing an educator track to prepare students to teach Interior Design at higher-level institutions. Two schools that participated in the study have teaching track programs. The third school declined to participate because the teaching track will start in 2012, so the study was a little early. Two graduates from educator track programs were interviewed, and both currently teach full-time at four-year Interior Design programs. One is teaching at a small (less than 1,000 students) private college; the other has a tenure-track position at a medium-sized university (approximately 10,000 students).

Programs with incoming students who want to teach but do not provide a teaching focus must communicate options and resources to address students' needs. Directing students to the College of Education for courses is beneficial in understanding curricula, instruction, educational assessment, psychology, and technology. However, do colleges address their audience, and are the specific challenges and skills of teaching Interior Design being

addressed? Incorporating workshops and seminars specific to Interior Design would be useful. Venues could be designed for both students and faculty. Students could learn skills, strategies, and the like, while faculty could learn the latest techniques and improve on existing skills. Internships designed into curricula would be beneficial because they would provide practical experience.

The teacher assistantship (TA), although not available at every school, could be a good source for learning and experience. However, TA positions generally are not designed to prepare students to teach, though this may be a benefit. They are often limited positions at schools and not available to every student interested in teaching. Research showed that not all students with TA positions get teaching experience, and not all TA's want to teach as a career path. Graduates in this study pursued TA positions because of tuition funding and provided living expenses, opportunities to work with and get to know faculty, and/or to gain experience in teaching. To suggest that a TA position is the way a program addressed teaching preparation for emerging educators is weak unless the focus is to specifically prepare students to teach and meets student objectives. Those programs (approximately 23%) that included teaching preparation courses in curricula appear to be aware of the significance of introducing the subject matter. Further investigation is necessary to find out why one or two courses are incorporated into curricula. A course (or two) is a good introduction to teaching but does not seem enough for teacher preparation unless other aspects, like multiple workshops or seminars and mentoring, are involved.

One evaluated program appeared to have a disconnect between program and student objectives. The program coordinator believed students did not attend their program to pursue teaching. However, the referred graduate who participated in the study stated that teaching

was not an immediate goal but was of interest in the future. The graduate wanted to gain teaching experience in the studio environment while attending this school and did so through a TA position. Because there were only eight graduates in the study, this gap may or may not indicate other disconnects between programs and students.

Regardless of master's type, similar skills sets specific to teaching Interior Design were shared. In the lecture environment, the most mentioned skills were being organized and prepared and delivering information creatively and clearly. Many skill sets for studio were also provided. The top three were the process of effective design project critiques, knowing and understanding the different ways to teach and learn, and the ability to be flexible in the design studio. The skills of teaching Interior Design were consistent. Not all participants provided the same answers, but recurring themes were disclosed. Lecture skills did not appear to be unique to Interior Design. However, the skills needed for the studio setting are unique. The overall shared objective was to effectively communicate through a variety of methods and develop creative, critical thinking, in hopes that the students comprehend and effectively demonstrate their knowledge.

Many challenges existed to teaching Interior Design. The shared trends were how Interior Design is perceived by students and the public, how Interior Design relates to other disciplines, keeping up with ever-changing technology, developing creative thinking in students, and teaching students visualization. The other challenges mentioned by two coordinators were scholarship and balancing the time between teaching and research. Participants also shared ideas that were individualized, but the study's focus was to document recurring themes.

The process of personal interviews was an effective means for collecting data. Interviewing people provided detailed information and allowed for questions and clarification if something was misunderstood. The cloak of anonymity permitted participants to be honest and forthcoming. During data analysis, two questions surfaced: “What attracts students to certain schools?” and “Why do university programs offer one course in teaching Interior Design?” Answers may have helped in the analysis of data and provided additional information to be considered. Because the author is not an academic, the post-professional and research degrees in master’s degree programs were not understood until interviews were near completion. Thus, the initial contact letter to program coordinators would have specified type of master’s degree, interview questions would have expanded on program objectives, and comparing and contrasting degree types would have been included in data analysis.

Because teaching is a popular reason that many students pursue a master’s degree, Interior Design graduate programs should have available teaching courses and offer teaching experience, to help prepare students to teach at higher-level institutions. This is not to say all programs must address teaching as schools have different focuses. This study showed that many students want to teach after graduation, and few programs provide enough options for adequate preparation. It makes sense to treat teaching Interior Design like a specialized area of design so graduates have the necessary tools to be good teachers. Besides cognate teaching classes, curricula should address SoTL, forms of assessment, and familiarization of the academic culture to provide emerging educators with the necessary knowledge of the educational profession. Specific to Interior Design, awareness of current trends in education and methodologies pertinent to the design studio setting should also be included. Educator tracks can be effective in attracting students and appeared to be designed as a specialized area

in Interior Design, focusing on student objectives. Those universities without specific teaching tracks but with Colleges of Education may accomplish similar outcomes when student objectives are considered, effective communication on options and electives is given, courses specific to teaching Interior Design are added, and “real life” teaching experience is provided.

Research prompted several questions. At the undergraduate level, should a teaching course be an option for students interested in pursuing the teaching profession? How should the master’s program in Interior Design be designed to prepare graduates to teach? What should it be named, and what is the program’s focus? Traditionally, the focus of teaching is to do research and teach. How does the Interior Design Master’s degree currently fit into that scenario? Last, should the master’s degree be the terminal degree, and how does it relate to master’s degrees in other areas of design?

To investigate further, a larger net needs to be cast and additional programs evaluated to help direct research. The relationship of the Interior Design Master’s degree and the profession of teaching at the university level is significant. Exploration and evaluation of existing graduate teaching tracks would be relevant to the development of curricula specific to teaching Interior Design. Introducing an introductory teaching course, or courses, at the undergraduate level may be beneficial to determine an interest in teaching and could be linked to the master’s degree with an educator track. Delving into the history of Interior Design education and university classifications could add value to further research. It is likely that the profession and education of Interior Design are experiencing growing pains because it is a young industry. However, there is little doubt that emerging educators armed

with the necessary foundation will add value to Interior Design education, positively affect emerging Interior Designers, and improve the welfare of the profession itself.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Human Subjects Approval Letter

EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Education First

COT-HSRC Initial
Application

August 17, 2011
Determination

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

To: **ANNE WILKINSON-BURKE**
COT-STs

Re: **COT-HSRC # 1020** Category: Approved Expedited Research Project
Approval Date: 8/17/2011

Title: **Emerging Educators: How are Graduate Interior Design Programs Preparing Graduates to Teach?**

The College of Technology Human Subjects Review Committee (COT-HSRC) has completed their review of your project. I am pleased to advise you that **your expedited research has been approved** in accordance with federal regulations.

Renewals: Expedited protocols need to be renewed annually. If the project is continuing, please submit the **Human Subjects Continuation Form** prior to the approval expiration. If the project is completed, please submit the **Human Subjects Study Completion Form** (both forms are found at <http://www.ord.emich.edu/research/compliance/human/human.html>).

Revisions: Expedited protocols do require revisions. If changes are made to a protocol, please submit a **Human Subjects Minor Modification Form** or new **Human Subjects Approval Request Form** (if major changes) for review (see: <http://www.ord.emich.edu/research/compliance/human/human.html>).

Problems: If issues should arise during the conduct of the research, such as unanticipated problems, adverse events, or any problem that may increase the risk to human subjects and change the category of review, notify the COT-HSRC committee within 24 hours (email and phone below). Any complaints from participants regarding the risk and benefits of the project must be reported to the COT-HSRC.

Follow-up: If your expedited research project is not completed and closed after three years, the COT-HSRC will require a new **Human Subjects Approval Request Form** prior to approving a continuation beyond three years.

Please use the COT-HSRC number listed above on any forms submitted that relate to this project, or on any correspondence with the COT-HSRC.

Good luck in your research. If we can be of further assistance, please contact me at 734-487-1161 or via e-mail at pmajeske@emich.edu. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Paul T. Majeske
Administrative Chair
College of Technology Human Subjects Review Committee

Appendix B: Letter Introducing Study

-----Original Message-----

From: Anne Wilkinson <wbinterior@aol.com>

To: WBInterior <WBInterior@aol.com>

Sent: Sat, Aug 6, 2011 5:41 am

Subject: Eastern Michigan University - A.Wilkinson

Good Morning,

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Anne Wilkinson. I am an Interior Design graduate student at Eastern Michigan University and am working on my Master's thesis.

My research topic is to discover what courses or course content are offered in Master's degree programs to prepare graduates for teaching Interior Design in higher level institutions. My plan is to conduct phone interviews with program coordinators or the equivalent. The interviews should take only 15 minutes. All information will be anonymous and confidential. The Human Subjects Committee at Eastern Michigan University is reviewing my approval form and I anticipate approval by September or earlier.

I would like to include your institution's program in this study and hope you will allow me to interview you. I have attached the Informed Consent Form in anticipation of your agreement.

I appreciate your time and consideration. I will share the results of my thesis research when it is concluded.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Anne Wilkinson, IIDA, IDEC

NCIDQ Certified #4456

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

The study I am conducting is for my Master's Thesis at Eastern Michigan University. My research topic is to discover what courses or course content are offered in Master's degree programs to prepare graduates for teaching Interior Design in higher level institutions. I am asking you to participate in an interview via telephone. The interview will involve pre-determined open and close-ended questions, as well as candid conversation. This interview is anticipated to take 15 minutes of your time. Participation is completely voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Recurring themes and supportive information will be documented in my thesis research. Comments that are pertinent and significant to my thesis may also be used. You, and your school, will remain anonymous and your confidentiality will be maintained. Information is confidential. You will only be identified by letter as well as any universities that you may be affiliated with or referencing. I see no foreseeable risks with regard to your participation. If there is any benefit, it may be that you are adding to the body of knowledge in the profession of Interior Design.

Information will be saved and filed in a locked file cabinet. I will be the only person privy to this information. Thesis will be submitted to Lisa Walters in the Graduate School at EMU. It then will go to the Halle Library for posting to Digital Commons - the online journal. I may also present my findings at upcoming conferences.

This research protocol and informed consent document has been reviewed and approved by the Eastern Michigan University Human Subjects Review Committee for use from 7.19.11 to 12.15.11. If you have questions about the approval process, please contact Dr. Deb de Laski-Smith (734.487.0042, Interim Dean of the Graduate School and Administrative Co-chair of UHSRC, human.subjects@emich.edu).

Your Name/Institution:

Signature:

Today's Date:

Thank you in advance for your participation.

PLEASE SCAN THIS SIGNED FORM & E-MAIL IT TO ME: wbinterior@aol.com

Anne Wilkinson-Burke
Eastern Michigan University

Appendix D: Questionnaire for Program Coordinators

1. What type of Interior Design Masters degree is offered by your program? (MFA, MID, MS, other)
2. What concentrations are offered in your Interior Design program?
3. What are motivations for students pursuing a Master's degree in Interior Design?
4. What are the career paths of program graduates (teaching, design, research, marketing, PhD or other)?
5. Is your institution aware many students pursue teaching upon graduation from Master's degree programs?
6. Does your program offer a teaching track for students interested in pursuing teaching as a career?
 - a. If yes, how does it work? Please explain.
 - b. If no, are there courses within the curriculum that address teaching at higher level institutions? What are they?
 - c. If not, how does your program prepare students to teach?
7. Can you explain the different skill sets required to teach both classroom and studio experiences?
8. What are unique challenges to teaching interior design?
9. May I re-contact you if I need clarification on what we discussed today?
10. Would you mind referring a recent graduate of your program to whom I may speak with?

Appendix E: Questionnaire for Emerging Educators

1. What year did you graduate?
2. Are you currently teaching? Full time or part-time? If part-time, how many courses? If full time, where?
3. Did you work in the profession of Interior Design?
4. Why did you decide to pursue your Master's degree in Interior Design?
5. What career path did you want to pursue after graduation?
6. What courses did your Interior Design program offer that addressed learning how to teach?
7. Were you interested in teaching while in school? Yes/No. Why?
8. How did your program prepare you for teaching in higher education institutions?
9. Where your needs met upon graduation with respect to teaching? Yes/No. What were those needs?
10. How could the program improve regarding learning to teach?
11. Because teaching design involves both the classroom and the studio experience, how were you prepared to teach both styles?
12. What do you feel are unique challenges to teaching interior design?
13. May I re-contact you if I need clarification on what we discussed today?

