

# Innovative Teaching Manual

## PROJECT TITLE

Creative Thinking with Materials and Finishes

## AUTHOR

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## PROJECT LEVEL

Third Year

## ABSTRACT

This assignment encourages the student to combine a semester's accumulated knowledge of materials and finishes with creative thinking and mental imaging in order to satisfy and report, in written form, a mock client's design preferences. The use of music and a relaxation process assist the student in effectively focusing creative thinking.

## OBJECTIVES

- To focus creative thinking prior to considering technical boundaries
- To use classical music and mental imaging as a tool for effective thinking
- To develop skills in synthesizing design concepts and preferences of a client
- To demonstrate proper use of materials and finishes
- To complete a detailed written expression of the design solution
- To prepare a color board of materials and finishes that represent the design solution. (Optional depending on time available)

## CRITERIA

Determining the materials and finishes for a selected interior is the first task a design student imagines when choosing to major in Interior Design. However, the technical content of a Materials and Finishes course can sometimes cause a student to overlook their creativity in favor of meeting project criteria for functionality, suitability and budget restrictions. At the end of a semester, it is helpful for the student to realize that creativity is still a crucial component for problem solving, and it is just as important to the client and the designer as it has always been.

## PROCESS

- 1) The student will be instructed on the theories and benefits of creative thinking.
- 2) The student will be reviewed on the concepts of programming.
- 3) The professor will discuss analytical and evaluative processes relative to decision making criteria.
- 4) The student will experience mental imaging techniques as the lighting is dimmed in the classroom. The student is asked to close his/her eyes and focus on the music he/she is about to hear, while allowing the music and reading to guide the development of visual images. A tape recording of Pachelbel's, Canon in D is played while the professor reads a prepared mental visualization exercise. It is as follows:

*As if . . . in a dream, you are in a taxi traveling from an airport. Turn, turn, left, right, forward, forward, on you go... Your taxi comes to a halt at your destination. You get out of the taxi and approach a towering, glimmering*

*structure. You calmly walk through a set of polished glass doors to enter this building, In front of you is a large expansive room. You look from side to side, and the room seems to extend almost infinitely. You look up and the ceiling appears to be floating miles above. You feel a sense of wonder, of expectation, yet serenity. You walk forward to an escalator. Once you are on the escalator, you rise upwards slowly. You are approaching one level, then another. Your eyes and ears are filled with the sights and sounds of familiarity, of memories and experiences, of newness and innovation. Colors, lights, textures, shapes, volume ...the images are constant flashes, sequences that pull you into yet another. On each successive level, new feelings and impressions stir within your thoughts. You feel a clarity of mind, a freshness. Energy and relaxation flow throughout you. The escalator continues to rise, but now at a quicker pace. Your energy reserves open up and feed you. Your mind begins to operate at a faster pace, but clearly and organized. You have a feeling of confidence that begins to build inside as you rise higher and higher. You realize you'll soon be arriving at the uppermost level and your energy, confidence and focus are now what flows throughout and supports your every thought.*

The music is allowed to play for 1 to 2 minutes after the recitation is complete until it reaches a change in transition conducive to ending this exercise. The lights are turned back on.

The purpose of this portion of the experience is to clear the student's mind of distraction so that focus on the assignment is more easily attained. Secondly, the musical selection is one that starts with a calm and serene mood, but building in intensity or tempo. This helps to facilitate the accumulation of responses the student may have as he/she listens to the recitation. Playing the musical selection for a short time frame of five to seven minutes is sufficient to see a response in clarity of thought and focus for this experience.

Students are given handouts of mock client design concept preferences in the form of short phrases. Students are asked to number off in order to distribute one phrase to each. In classes totaling more than nine students, the numbering rotation is repeated until each student has been assigned a phrase. The following phrases have been used in this assignment:

- ... crashing breakers of the ocean on a solid rock cliff
- ... a crisp, clear, powder blue sky with scattered feathery clouds
- ... a small quiet child sitting in a rocker contentedly reading a book
- ... healthy livestock grazing in a lush rolling meadow
- ... bright lights and dark sky along a busy boulevard in a major city
- ... a drive on a rain soaked autumn highway covered by gently dropping colored leaves
- ... a fast-paced jet flight across the country to attend a diplomatic conference
- ... mist of early morning during a stroll along well kept hedges and color splashed flower beds
- ... the quiet hum of a street sweeper and the rumble of an early commuter bus passing morning joggers in a city park

The Professor explains the assignment by telling the students that the task is to develop an interior environment that would fulfill the image the client is trying to express through the phrase. The solution for the assignment should be for one room.

Furthermore, the concepts of mental imaging and creative thinking are to be used in combination with the theories reviewed at the beginning of class regarding programming, analytical/evaluative thinking and decision making criteria as to the selection and specification of materials and finishes.

The student will be instructed to graphically record any design ideas while listening to the musical selection again. Thumbnail sketching, bubble diagrams, and notations, will be used to preserve creative thoughts for the decision making process. The remainder of the project is developed outside of class.

It is suggested that the student reference and use all of the following ten categories to help stimulate a complete solution for the environment:

- Mood
- Theme
- Style
- Design principles
- Color
- Texture
- Furniture
- Lighting
- Architectural features
- Materials and finishes

After developing a satisfying sketched design solution for the mock client's phrase, the student will begin writing a detailed description of the interior which includes appropriate, significant and specific design terminology. The written description should also contain a thorough use of verbs, adjectives, nouns, (etc.) to fully describe the character and appearance of the environment. It is important that the environment be described in as much detail as possible utilizing the ten categories previously listed. The solution should include an introductory paragraph stating the mock client's phrase, and conclude with an appropriate closing paragraph.

The student will prepare a color board of materials and finishes that represent the design solution. (Optional depending on time available)

#### PRESENTATION

Each student submits a type written solution along with sketches in a folder. Color boards are turned in, if required. An oral presentation of the student's written solution is desirable; however, it is possible that time will not allow this at the end of a semester.

#### EVALUATION

- 70 pts. Ten creative thinking categories worth 7 points each are evaluated (points awarded on merit and inclusion)
- 10 pts. Neatness, grammar, punctuation
- 10 pts. Title page, introductory and closing paragraphs
- 10 pts. Quality, applicability and variety of sketches and notations
- 100 pts. TOTAL (redistribute if a color board is required)

#### PROJECT LENGTH

2 weeks (4 weeks if the Professor requires a color board)

## RESOURCES

Ching, Frank. (1987) Interior Design Illustrated. (pp. 48-57). New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.

Kilmer, Rosemary and W. Otie. (1992). Designing Interiors. (pp. 88-177). Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Nielson, Karla J. And David A. Taylor. (1994). Interiors: an Introduction. (pp. 32-55; 79-100; 172-288). Madison, Wisconsin: Brown & Benchmark Publishers.

Pachelbel, Johann. Canon in D (cassette or CD; various artists)

Riggs, Rosemary. (1996). Materials and Components of Interior Architecture. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Tew, Shannon. (199-) The Role of Business and Communication Skill Preparation for Interior Design Graduates. Journal of Interior Design Education and Research. 17(2), 51-58.

## DOCUMENTATION

Excerpt from student submission in response to the phrase: *"mist of early morning during a stroll along well kept hedges and color splashed flower beds"*

As you awake to the tranquil sounds of your radio from a deep and restful slumber, you gently rub your eyes and roll out of bed thinking of the day's tasks that lie ahead. Lazily as your toes kiss the plush carpet, you feel yourself rise to your feet. Walking gingerly out the door and down the dimmed lit hallway, you slip into your robe. As your vision comes into focus, you notice how the furniture in the den is showered by the sunlight. While you meander through the den, you embark on the full light of the morn through the archway leading into the kitchen. You notice your body start to awake as your feet descend upon the textured, coral stone, brick floor while feeling the warmth of the sunlight caress your bare feet.

The attention of the kitchen is focused on a horizontal series of four vertical windows with drawn, pale, yellow shades. Peering through the windows, your eyes gaze upon the cool mist that hovers in and around the dark ivy green hedges. Your eye catches a bird, a tiny blue bird, which diverts your attention to its path of flight that ascends over the horizontal series of windows that form into a cathedral ceiling. Solid pine wood with a honey spiced finish encompasses each panel of glass. The ceiling levels off into a smooth textured, alpine white surface with recessed lighting. Directly below the ceiling, you notice the morning newspaper, already placed upon the rectangular solid pine table accompanied by six wooded chairs.

Turning to the right in your usual morning direction, a smile forms as you are greeted by tulips, sunflowers, buttercups, irises and violets that decorate the bay window behind the sink at the far side of the room, Briskly, you walk toward the flowers making one brief stop at the island, picking up the kettle to make your morning coffee. Standing on a small floor rug designed with brilliant jewel toned colors, you stretch out over the porcelain, almond granite sink and lay your kettle under the lofty running faucet. smooth, alpine white ceramic tile countertops, edged with a wooden double chamfer corner, on both sides of the triple bowl sink.

The walls have been painted in white essence, and an everglade green ivy has been stenciled around the top, above the cabinets and below the would molding. A washable, floral wallpaper print displays lovely hues of green, yellow, blue, purple and red; while, it also serves a dual role to separate the wood cabinets and the counter tops. While pressing the knob to turn off the water, you remove the kettle and carefully carry it back to the island...

*Vicki Reeves, student*