



The Research-Design Interaction: Lessons Learned from an Evidence- Based Design Studio

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ABSTRACT:

As evidence-based design (EBD) emerges as a model of design practice, considerable attention has been given to its research component. However, this overshadows another essential component of EBD—the change agent, namely the designer. EBD introduced a new skill set to the practitioner: the ability to interact with scientific evidence. Industry sources suggest adoption of the EBD approach across a large number of design firms. How comfortable are these designers in integrating research with design decision making? Optimizing the interaction between the primary change agent (the designer) and the evidence is crucial to producing the desired outcomes. Preliminary to examining this question, an architectural design studio was used as a surrogate environment to examine how designers interact with evidence. Twelve students enrolled in a healthcare EBD studio during the spring of 2009. A three-phase didactic structure was adopted: knowing a hospital, knowing the evidence, and designing with knowledge and evidence. Products of the studio and questionnaire responses from the students were used as the data for analysis. The data suggest that optimization of the research-design relationship warrants consideration in four domains: (1) a knowledge structure that is easy to comprehend; (2) phase-complemented representation of evidence; (3) access to context and precedence information; and (4) a designer-friendly vocabulary.

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