

# Writing Literacy to Accelerate Student's Interior Design Innovations for New Normal

Irena Vanessa Gunawan

irena.vgf@art.maranatha.edu

Faculty of Arts and Designs – Maranatha Christian University

**Abstract.** The Covid 19 Pandemy has impact nearly all aspects of life, including education. While social interaction are being limited and most of activities are done from home, interior designers are still have to do their main job, which is to create a built environment according to current human needs. The availability of internet as a source of vast information help designers to keep up to date with the the newest issues. Writing literacy become imperative as designers need to constantly create design solutions based on multidisiplin researches. However writing literacy needs to form as a habit since the undergraduate curriculum. This paper discuss the undergraduate students design process which very dependent on writing literacy as a part of design method. The result of this paper are expected to be a reference for teaching and learning approach of similar courses.

**Keyword:** Innovations; Interior Design; New Normal; Writing Literacy

## 1 Introduction

Interior designers work to create built environments that facilitates human activity such as living, working, studying, recreation, etc. It is an interior designers main role to have awareness to what is needed to be accomodates into the design. As it is a response to the needs, either it is cultural, functional, aesthetical etc. Not only because we spend our lives mostly indoors “it is due to the fact that interiors surround us. We do not merely pass them on the street; we inhabit them.. we become its content” [1]

Himpunan Desainer Interior Indonesia (HDII) or The Associaton of Indonesian Interior Designer is a professional organisation of Indonesian Interior Designer. It is a member of Interaction Federation of Interior Designer/Architects (IFI) in 1985, therefore HDII referring to IFI as in defining a professional interior architect/ designer which are stated in [www.ifeworld.org](http://www.ifeworld.org) as qualified, by education, experience and applied skills, accept the following responsibilities:

- a. Identify, research and creatively solve problems pertaining to the function and quality of the interior environment
- b. Perform services relating to interior spaces including programming, design analysis, space planning, aesthetics and inspection of work on site, using specialized knowledge of interior construction, building systems and components, building regulations, equipment, materials and furnishings
- c. Prepare schematics, drawings and documents relating to the design of interior space in order to enhance the quality of life and protect the health, safety, welfare and environment of the public

As stated above it is clear that an interior designer needs to enhance the quality of human life and in the process needs to identify, research and creatively solve problems. Designers

mostly communicate through visual media and find it difficult to verbalize design as design process is intuitive and non-conscious. However, Robert Haddad in his journal emphasize on the fact that current clients also demand for a well researched designer [2], to ensure the success of the design outcomes. Hence writing literacy is a must and should be installed as a habit for interior design students.

The development of technology, internet and social media contribute to the escalation of changes in human activity which impact the change of human culture. For example: The latest is the appearing of online driver service applications which indulge public with personal services range from car driver, food buying and delivery service, groceries shopping, etc. The application is very successful because it helped many people finding job or additional income. Hence, many interior buildings is replanned to specially cater the online drivers. [3]. This changes, forced lecturers to adjust studio or project task and specifications. Formal interior design references book and researches has yet to catch up, hence students are guided to do independent research based on blogs, article or visual information to define the reference to which they develop their design.

Another sudden change in human's activity is the appearance of Covid 19 pandemy which change the way people live, work and interact with each other. Interior design could not be change in a fast manner. Change in interior have a costly implications as it related to change in interior elements like furniture, surfaces, sirulation, etc. Pandemy also force people to work in online manner, which limits movement to minimize human interactions.

This condition also poses a chalenge to the students as part of their reference collecting process is to do comparative study. However the pandemy limits their surveying activities, while at the same time they have to be able to design according to the "New Normal" habit which eventually leads to change in culture. On the positive side this condition allows adaptation in which students needs to hone their writing literacy as a reference to create a design that better answer problems.

## **2 Writing Literacy in Student Design Thinking for New Normal Design Ideation**

As indicated by the course name, in Trend and Material Management Course students are taught how an architect and interior designer, designed something that becomes a trend or architectural/ interior design style. Students are also given a task practice a general design thinking process, which includes analytic and creative process, to present innovation design concept for New Normal.

This course is also part of the Kampus Merdeka – Merdeka Belajar (Independent Campus – Independent Learning) program which is followed by students from other universities in other cities who are interested in taking this course. Hence the writing literacy is also important to achieve a uniform approach in developing design as different cities with different development might not have the same of interior design development which are challenging for comparative study.

Students are given three stages to work on their writing literacy process which includes looking for both academic and non-academic resources like online paper research, online books, online articles, online products information from certain brand, etc (students are encouraged to reference articles which include author name and publication date).

The three stages are:

- a. Researching on former design that address society needs (especially past design that answer pandemic or health problem)

- b. Researching multidiscipline invention both knowledge or product regarding to Covid 19 prevention or pandemic related issues (for example school or work from home activities problems)
  - c. Researching ideas or product that could be used to create Innovation Design Concept for New Normal
- In all three stages students are asked to share their writing and designing process in Google Slide as a process to inspire each other.

## 2.1 Researching on Former Architecture and Interior Design that Address Society Needs

Most of interior design students think designer is the same as fashion design. Trend available mostly in color or magazine to reflect the change in society preferences. However in the real world seldom house or offices change their interior elements in regards to trend. Since interior is a place where people live and work for a certain amount of time, hence they tend to choose interior element according to their personal liking. Even in commercial spaces.

Hence in the Trend and Material Management course students are explained that the style in history is actually in answer to the culture needs at the time whether it is religion or culture.

The students are given task to do online research and to find interior or architecture related designs that is intended to address pandemic, health or life quality issues in the past time. The students then discuss several findings which related to the spread of tuberculosis pandemic in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. History stated that Modernist or Modern Movement is influenced by architect/designer address to tuberculosis issues at the time [4]. Alvar Aalto and Le Corbusier are famous architects who design both buildings, interior design elements includes furniture with initial intention to address the increasing of health quality but also becomes iconic design of the modern day.



**Picture 1.** Alvar Aalto's Paimio Chair (1930's), which were invented to ease the seating activities of tuberculosis patients become one of design icon. The chair is made with wood bending technology (source: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/92879>)

Some of house products which we take for granted like white kitchen tiles is developed to help prevent the spread of infection so dirt or germs could easily be spotted and cleaned. Even the house designed at the time includes sleeping porches for people to be exposed to the sunlight which could kill viruses, the creation of closets to organize clothes and goods better and to help clean the room easier, and the availability of powder room for to be used by guest and separate them to use family bathroom and spread germs. [5].

With this findings students having and insight of how former designers are able to create a creative design that becomes a trend based on their professional effort in increasing life quality.

## **2.2 Researching Multidiscipline Inventions**

Design Inspirations is done through researching inventions that already being developed such as the developing of Ultraviolet Box to conserve respirators that is being re-use by healthcare worker in India do to shortness of personal protective equipment (PPE) [6]

Interior product manufacturers itself already developed several office products that address long distancing and the spread of germs in the workplace [7]. Food and Beverage industries also installed acrylic table shields to protect customers eating in eateries amongst other safety regulation. [8] The aesthetic aspect of course becomes a design challenge. The students use this as a reference for their idea conceptual development.

Some students also paying attention to the work/school from home activities [9]. As working or studying at home which mingle with household activities and ambience could affect the focus and attitude needed for working or studying. Designers has putting effort in keeping wellness also have to be considered by balance studying or working at home with by sports activities which could still be incorporated indoors [10]

## **2.3 Researching ideas or product that could be use to create Innovation Design Concept for New Normal**

Students develop conceptual design along by researching available products or knowledge. Research has shown that corona virus could live around 3 hours in air although it weakened it's capability to infect. It could also live for 3 days in surfaces like plastic and steel but it last no more than 24 hours on card boxes [11] which being an important consideration since people on homestays interacts more with card boxes while handling food or goods sending to their homes.

Some of the their findings are incorporate into the design innovations are the evidence that natural UVC light from the sun could kill corona virus and man made UVC light could be used to disinfect surfaces, air and liquids [12], A box could be formed with timer based UV light exposure to disinfects goods inside. [13]

Antibacterial High Pressure Laminated Product [14] could be used to line furniture surfaces. Nanotech technology also being developed to impregnate textile with zinc, silver and graphite which are viral inhibitor. Textile it is going to be used for mask and robes [15], but of course could be expand to be installed on other interior elements. While the use of constructed barrier in form of transparent acrylic window is a preferable choice as it still enable visual and safety better than using breakable glass. [16]

As for work or school from home activities, several students do research on tools or equipment to develop equipments especially for children who needs a creative studying tools to support their various activity [17] while on the same time considering safety [18].

## **3 Conceptual Design Development**

Students summarize their findings in writing and write their conceptual idea while generating the design in visual presentations. The design itself could also be upscaling existing ideas or product either with a more complete capabilities or better aesthetic. Their ideas resulted in three design categorize which are: disinfectant facilities, public facilities and work/school from home facilities. Some of the conceptual ideas are shown as follow.



**Picture 2 - 4.** Disinfectant Equipments: UV box to disinfect delivery packages (conceptual design by Andre Christian Wydiadhana), Mobile Phone and Watch disinfectan box which also incorporate wireless charger for mobile phone (conceptual design by Andy Lunarto), New Normal Mat (conceptual design by Albert Nathaniel



**Picture 5 - 7.** Public Equipments: Public Seat and Bag Disinfectan (conceptual design by Surya Dharma Winata), New Normal Cinema Seat (conceptual design by Siti Hidayatul Mukharima), New Normal Office Table Design (conceptual design by Trifandy)



**Picture 8 & 9.** Work/ School From Home Facilities: Multipurpose Kids Learning Table (conceptual design by Veronica Anastasha), Push Pull Whiteboard (conceptual design by Tasha Velasca)

The conceptual ideas are being disseminated by students in ASEDAS 2021, International Digital Art Exhibition, a curated virtual exhibition. The dissemination is hoped to give inspirations to others and escalate the development of interior design elements in New

Normal. At the time of this writing there are no information yet of which conceptual design are accepted

## 4 Conclusion

Writing literacy are needed by interior designer in a world where human activities and culture are changing faster. Interior designer has to embrace multidiscipline knowledge more than ever and design thinking based on writing literacy becomes imperative and has to be practiced since undergraduate education.

Usually comparative studies or visual information provide as a main reference for creating a design. However writing literacy could give a better design result, especially under circumstances where rapid changes resulted in a condition where products or ideas might not be created yet. Hence, by doing research in multidiscipline fields students, and eventually interior designer, could gathering information and inspiration that could be use in conceiving innovation ideas as being shown in this course.

The students are able to create conceptual ideas for New Normal interior design elements, especially furniture design, which are being disseminate in International Exhibition to inspire others.

More studies are needed to develop a more practical methodologies to support design process which will resulted in better interior design outcomes.

## References

- [1] Abercrombie, S, "A Philosophy of Interior Design", Routledge, 2018.
- [2] Haddad, R, "Research and Methodology for Interior Designer", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Science* 122, pp. 293-291, 2014.
- [3] Septanto, H, "Ekonomi Kreatif Berbasis TIK ala Gojek dan Grabbike", *Bina Insani ICT Journal*, [S.l.], v. 3, n. 1, p. 213 - 219, June 2016. ISSN 2527-9777.
- [4] Rebecca Gross "How the Tuberculosis Pandemic Helped Shape Modernist Architecture", (2020), URL: <https://www.houzz.com/magazine/how-the-tuberculosis-pandemic-helped-shape-modernist-architecture-stsetivw-vs~134601849>
- [5] Yuko, E. (2020). How Previous Epidemics Impacted Home Design. *Architectural Digest*. Diakses 10 Mei 2021.
- [6] Kumar, P., Chaudhry, D., Parmar, A., Tyagi, D., Manjunath, B. G., & Singh, P. K. "Ultraviolet Box: An Innovative In-house Use of Ultraviolet Irradiation for Conservation of Respirators in COVID-19 Pandemic" *Indian journal of critical care medicine: peer-reviewed, official publication of Indian Society of Critical Care Medicine*, 24(8), 713–715. (2020) <https://doi.org/10.5005/jp-journals-10071-23534>
- [7] Tucker, E., "The Spaces: 6 Products rebooting the office cubicle for the post-pandemic world, Adapting existing space for the 'new normal', <https://thespaces.com/6-products-rebooting-the-office-cubicle-for-the-21st-century/>
- [8] Heng, M., Tay, T.F., & Tan, C. "Coronavirus: Table shields could be used when dining at eateries is allowed" (2020) <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/table-shields-could-be-used-when-dining-at-eateries-is-allowed>
- [9] Chokkattu, J, "Everything You Need to Work From Home Like a Pro", *Wired*, (2021), <https://www.wired.com/story/work-from-home-home-office-gear-guide/>
- [10] Dick-Agnew, D. "Wellness by Design: Disease-Fighting Architecture", *Azure Magazine*, Oct 9, (2015), <https://www.azuremagazine.com/article/wellness-by-design-mass-design-group/>

- [11] Sinha. Amitabh. How long can corona virus live in air, and on steel. (2020), <https://www.google.com/amp/s/indianexpress.com/article/explained/how-long-can-coronavirus-live-in-air-and-on-steel-6327062/lite/>
- [12] Buonanno, M., Welch, D., Shuryak, I. et al. Far-UVC light (222 nm) efficiently and safely inactivates airborne human coronaviruses. *Sci Rep* 10, 10285 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-020-67211-2>
- [13] PT. GeneCraft Labs “ UV clean bench UVT-S-AR”. *Biosan*.(2015) Diakses 10 Mei 2021. <https://www.medicalexpo.com/prod/biosan/product-98373-688405.html>
- [14] Magina S, Santos MD, Ferra J, Cruz P, Portugal I, Evtuguin D. High Pressure Laminates with Antimicrobial Properties. *Materials*. (2016); 9(2):100. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ma9020100>
- [15] Solomon, S”. Israeli startup says its nanotech masks and robes may block coronavirus” (2020), <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-startup-says-its-nanotech-masks-robes-may-block-coronavirus/>
- [16] Connie Cai Ru Gan, Yu-Chi Tseng, Kuan-I Lee “Acrylic window as physical barrier for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) conservation” *Am J Emerg Med*. (2020) Jul; 38(7): 1532–1534. Published online 2020 Apr 18. doi: 10.1016/j.ajem.2020.04.044
- [17] Kidkraft, “Kids Rectangular Activity Table” (2020) URL: <https://www.wayfair.com/baby-kids/pdp/kidkraft-kids-activity-table-kk10008.html>
- [18] Benaya, Raisa “Tips Ahli: 6 Cara Memilih Furnitur yang Aman Untuk Anak” (2018), URL: <https://www.casaindonesia.com/article/read/10/2018/704/Tips-Ahli-6-Cara-Memilih-Furnitur-yang-Aman-Untuk-Anak>