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AREAS OF STUDY PERTINENT TO INTERIOR DESIGNERS
BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH TWENTY-SEVEN
INTERIOR DESIGNERS PRACTICING IN
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

by

Lucy Ramsey Hoffman

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina.

also extended to Mr. Jane E. Crow, Miss Louise Love, and Dr. Lawrence J. Sorohan for their assistance as members of the thesis committee.

The writer is indebted to the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators interviewed whose suggestions made this thesis possible.

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Interior design is a fourth and a short course while one-fourth had no formal training. Length of experience in the field ranged from two months to forty-three years. Only five designers were affiliated with professional design organizations. The type of responsibilities and kind of work done by these interior designers varied widely.

History was mentioned most frequently as the course from which students were most helpful on the job. Textiles and fabrics were mentioned most often as the areas designers wished they had had more opportunity to study. Design elements were mentioned by over one-half of the respondents as the most important items to be taught in design. Designers mentioned most often the lack of knowledge in textiles and fabrics as a deficiency of recent students and graduates in interior design. Combined lectures and laboratory was

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Areas of study that practicing interior designers consider important might be a logical beginning in determining the changing needs for curriculums. The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to identify the education and experience of practicing interior designers and decorators, (2) to determine the types of work engaged in by these interior designers, and (3) to identify the knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators believed to be most pertinent for future interior designers.

One-half of the designers had formal training in interior design, a fourth had a short course while one-fourth had no formal training. Length of experience in the field ranged from two months to forty-three years. Only five designers were affiliated with professional design organizations. The type of responsibilities and kind of work done by these interior designers varied widely.

History was mentioned most frequently as the course from past schooling most helpful on the job. Textiles and fabrics were mentioned most often as the area designers wished they had had more opportunity to study. Design elements were mentioned by over one half of the respondents as the most important ideas to be taught in design. Designers mentioned most often the lack of knowledge in textiles and fabrics as a deficiency of recent students and graduates in interior design. Combination lecture and laboratory was

mentioned most frequently as the best method for teaching design. Most respondents believed that creativity is an inborn ability that must be nurtured and developed.

English, business administration, mathematics, and social sciences were the non-design courses mentioned by respondents as important to be taught in interior design programs.

In general, all twenty-four concepts used in this study were rated high by the designers. Those receiving the highest mean ratings were concepts concerning design elements, circulation, color, scale and proportion, history, creative design, and home furnishings. Only one concept was rated below average.

Chi-square tests revealed that neither educational training nor years of experience were significantly related to the ratings given the concepts. The mean ratings of all concepts, except three, were significant at the one per cent (.01) level of significance.

While the designers in this study have given some suggestions regarding the future education of interior designers, they alone do not have the answer. Instructors in educational institutions and students in interior design may also have contributions which can be used to examine the constantly changing needs for educational staff and curriculum.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE, AND DEFINITIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the Interior Design profession in 18th century England, the boundaries for practicing have been ill defined. It was first established as a branch of architecture and later became identified with the craftsmanship of great furniture designers and manufacturers. Although interior design today still has some link with architecture and furniture craftsmen, it is considered an independent profession with emphasis on residential and commercial contract work.

Many early interior designers and decorators had no formal education in design. Some began as drapery salesmen, some as upholsters, and some were homemakers with a reputation of "good taste" and sewing ability. As friends and customers continued to seek advice, the title of "decorator" was adopted and they were in business. Those designers and decorators with training in the field acquired it by serving an apprenticeship with a professional.

"Total design" was the philosophy during this period. This meant that the inside of a building, like the outside, was the business of the architect who designed it. Therefore,

what formal design education there was, was concentrated in an architectural context.

As the interior design profession grew and developed, the demand for better educational preparation was recognized. Technical design schools replaced the master-apprentice plan as a means of educating interior designers. Later the interior design curriculum was developed in colleges and universities.

In 1931, there were practically no courses in colleges and universities available to students wishing to become an interior designer. Today, there are more than 100 colleges, universities, and technical schools offering degrees, certificates, and specialized courses on the subject. (28)

With the rapid expansion, interior design became a part of architecture, art, and home economics programs. The diverse backgrounds of instructors created widely different emphasis on the types of knowledge and skills taught. As a result, there were many conflicting ideas regarding the curriculum that could best serve to develop qualified interior designers.

Today, interior designers and decorators face new responsibilities and challenges generated by a rapid changing world. The increased prosperity enjoyed by people has created a demand for goods and services greater than ever before. Continuous advancement in technical skills and the discovery of new and improved materials are also a part of the changing world. This is an age of specialization, and

interior design is no exception. Today's interior designers and decorators are expected to be specialists. As specialists, they must attain a fundamental knowledge and understanding of their own profession as well as a working knowledge of the professions of their collaborators.

Both professionals in the field and instructors in the classroom question the adequacy of present curricula in fulfilling current and future needs. Thus, the education of today's interior designers and decorators is undergoing a critical re-examination.

II. PURPOSE

The professionals practicing in the field should be one source of gaining helpful information in solving the problem of how to improve and update the education of interior designers. With this in mind the writer undertook this study. The purpose was threefold:

1. to identify the education and experience of practicing interior designers and decorators
2. to determine the types of work engaged in by these interior designers and decorators
3. to identify the knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators believe to be most pertinent for future interior designers

Due to the limitations of time and funds, this study was confined to interior designers and decorators in the Greensboro, North Carolina area.

III. DEFINITIONS

Throughout this investigation designer, decorator, and interior designer and decorator will be utilized as synonymous terms and defined as any person employed with either title, who has the responsibility to design, plan, or furnish interiors of homes and/or commercial structures.

For the purpose of this study a concept will be defined as "a suggested meaning which has been detached from the many specific situations giving rise to it and provided with a name." (3:154)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Until recently, very little has been written regarding the education of interior designers. The last few years, professionals and instructors in the field have shown concern about the curriculums and staff now being used and what is really needed. This concern resulted in several articles expressing viewpoints and recommendations on the subject. It also focused the spot light on education at recent meetings of professional design organizations. Three elements seem to be most important when discussing interior design education. First, there is the need to establish an understanding of basic design. From this background, the fundamentals of interior design are better understood. The second element is focused on the schools offering interior design programs. The faculty, the curriculum, and the students all play a part in the success of each program. The third element of importance is the professional organizations. Composed of professionals practicing in the field, these organizations have a vital role in helping to improve and update the education of future professionals.

I. DESIGN AS A BASIS FOR INTERIOR DESIGN

According to the Oxford dictionary, design means: "A plan or scheme conceived in the mind, of something to be done; the preliminary conception of an idea, purpose, aim, intention, adaptation of means to an end." (7:490)

Webster defined design as "A mental project or scheme in which means to an end are laid down; an outline or sketch in preparation for creating." (10:611)

In the Dictionary of the Arts, design is defined as "the basic pattern or device of any work of art. The arrangement of color, light or line....." (12:213)

Ely Kahn related design to the skeleton of an animal to clarify his definition. Just as the skeleton is the basis of a complex coordination of muscles, nerves, organs, and sinews which function harmonously as life, so an idea is a skeleton which depends on amplification by a system of coordinated elements. This system Kahn termed design. He also pointed out that to most people design connotes drawing, a decorative scheme, a design for a fabric, or the design of a building where ornamentation is all important, but that the true design is underneath in the plan of construction and logical analysis of the component parts. (6)

"Design is the result of a conceptual approach and process," (16:28) stated Harold Cohen, chairman, of the Design Department at Southern Illinois University. It comes from man's discovery and comprehension of the existence of

general principles frequently recurrent within his universe. Cohen maintained that materials are only the products and vehicles of the designers thoughts not the catalyst of the thoughts themselves. (16)

Isabel Snelgrove stated that design is an orderly arrangement of lines, shapes, and colors. These are the elements of design, or the materials with which the designer builds his design. Lines, to the mathematician, are merely mental concepts, but to the designer they are the framework of his design. They may show a decorative outline, indicate rhythm, indicate direction, or define the boundaries of shapes. Lines may constitute an entire design. In all cases the lines are there, influencing and determining the quality of the design. Shapes are the spaces in the design that are defined by the lines. These shapes have various proportions and relationships to each other and to the whole design. Color is the means of making visible the lines and shapes in the design. (9)

In Problems of Design, George Nelson stated that "functional sufficiency is no guarantee of good design. It is merely the floor below which a design cannot go without failing to serve its purpose." (8:9) For a design to emerge there must exist a definite situation which presents a need. He pointed out, however, that there is no necessary connection between the type of need and the quality of design. Each design is a separate unity, created in response to the clarity of thinking brought to bear on each problem.

Nelson believed that a design, like a word or a symbol, is a means of communication. (8)

Likewise, Marian Dower agreed that design is a means of communication. It can express a thought, a feeling, and greatest of all give enjoyment. In The Story of Design Downer also stated that "Design is the expressive shaping of countours and the decorative spacing of an area into parts." (5:2)

According to Joseph Chase, design is the creating of relationships. He stated that good design never comes by chance. It is the result of trained intelligence. Good design entails more than a fairly good understanding of composition. It requires much labor and studio work. Chase also maintained that success in design is largely dependent upon creative ability. (14)

According to Donald Anderson, design problems cannot be solved in a vacuum. The environment which the design will become a part of must be considered. He defined design as a process for accomplishing some end. (1)

Sherrill Whiton expressed essentially the same ideas regarding design in his book The Elements of Interior Design and Decorating. He stated that design is an orderly arrangement of lines, forms, masses, color, textures, and light, forming a unified composition. There are no hard and fast rules for combining these elements, but custom and habit have established certain principles such as unity, balance, rhythm, proportion, harmony, and emphasis which, when applied

to the elements produce effects that give a degree of satisfaction that people call beauty. Interest in design is attained by introducing contrast and movement; too much or too little may create dullness or confusion. It is the function of the designer to properly use these design elements and principles to achieve the effect he desires. Design is design no matter what aspect a student may pursue. Proper use and proportion of design elements and principles is the basis of all good design. (11)

Victoria Ball gave three purposes for designing; (1) practical use, (2) communications, and (3) enhancement by intensifying perceptual enjoyment. She further added that a good interior designer does more than create beautiful interiors. He must be a good psychologist - to analyze problems in any given situation, a producing artist - knowing where to obtain and how to manipulate his media in order to get beautiful results, a salesman - aware of the best buys, a banker - providing long term plans, and a friend - willing to expend more than he is paid for his service. (2)

Contract's introduction to a special study on design education pointed out that interior designers are no longer arrangers of furniture and fabrics. The last twenty-five years have seen the field of interiors develop from one of decoration to one of design, which explores the highly technical areas. Designers are space planners, money savers, image makers, and decision influencers. (18)

A Print panel discussion on "Design Education Today" revealed that design agencies and businesses are demanding far more than the basic requirements from students. They are demanding ideas and concepts. (25)

Olga Gueft, editor of Interiors, has stated that the stormiest stages in the development of any profession occurs when the knowledge and skills required become so advanced that past methods of training become the exception rather than the rule. At that point, revisions must occur to provide more realistic preparation for future professionals. A major responsibility for making such revisions are in the hands of the educational institutions offering the professional programs. (20)

II. THE SCHOOLS - FACULTY, CURRICULUM, AND STUDENTS

In an interview for Interiors, Harold Leeds of Pratt Institute and James Howell of Parsons expressed the opinion that the caliber of the staff is the one most significant factor in design education and that courses alone mean nothing. The work of the students are the only proof that counts. (19)

Olga Gueft agreed that the qualifications of the staff are of prime importance and as a rule the best schools are staffed by designers who practice in the field. (20)

Likewise, Mitzi Morris agreed that faculty members actively involved in the design field bring an accurate picture of the outside world as well as bring a sense of its excitement into the classroom. (24)

In the interview for Interiors, Harold Leeds further stated that "all controversies about educating interior designers are really disagreements in defining the interior designer and in spelling out his role." (19:162) The architects, with whom the interior designers were originally associated, and the architectural schools are presently caught up in problems concerning an environment much too vast to encompass the intimate relationships between human beings and the space in which he lives and works. Leeds predicted that interior design would gradually take over most of the responsibilities for human environment on the intimate scale. Therefore, interior designers must be capable of specifying and seeing through the construction of small buildings as well as the elements of interiors. (19)

In an article, "Design Education In Transition", Kenneth Scheid in pointing out that existing design programs need to be examined thoroughly stated that: (1) The older arts and crafts once at the heart of the design discipline have become inadequate alone to meet the newer problems. (2) New problems require designers also acquire knowledge from studies in areas such as communications, education, advertisement, human factors engineering, modern technology, and social sciences. (3) Designers can draw upon a wide range of social management and physical science to aid in defining the dimensions of design problems and to suggest solutions. (4) Interior design is shifting from the arts to social and managerial sciences, not to the exclusion of the

earlier craftsmanship and arts, but to a re-balancing that will cause these new sciences to form one important segment of interior design education. (5) Requirements of professional practice now being created will demand this educational rebalancing if a young person entering the field become the design leaders in a changing world. (6) Schools will shift from the isolated schools of design to universities in which the resources that exist in other disciplinary areas will be brought to bear on the education of designers. (7) Designers who are prepared simply in the conventional arts will not be equipped to meet the new responsibilities. Scheid also indicated concern that an art-centered approach has continued to dominate most design programs but that art faculties do not have an avid interest in research or graduate studies. He believed that continuation of this approach would contribute to weakening the analytical capacities of the students. (26)

Some of the wide variety of responsibilities in interior design require close collaboration with other specialists which necessitates designers to function as part of a team. Forest Wilson believed in order to have effective team work the interior design student must have a working knowledge and understand the contribution of his own profession as well as those of his collaborators. The diverse backgrounds of interior design students, usually embodies almost no mathematical or technical elements. Wilson maintained that a program based on design as well as mathematics and

technical training would arm the student with some design flexibility in collaborating with other specialists. (27)

Emphasizing the preparation of contract designers, Lawrence Lerner offered a ten point critical overview of deficiencies in today's educational programs as he sees them. (22:72-77)

1. Practical aspects ignored by schools:
Philosophy of who a designer is is treated too lightly. His place in society, his responsibility to himself, and his profession also treated too lightly. Too many fundamental skills, and procedures mandatory in any field are mistakenly taken for granted by both teachers and students. Schools accentuate the visual too heavily. Mechanic and managerial aspects are pushed aside.
2. Developmental stage inadequately emphasized:
Students must be able to sketch, sculpt, paint, model or build.
3. Lighting neglected:
A basic understanding will give the designer the ability to do a more creditable job of specialized lighting. Light is the most powerful three dimensional element that a designer should have at his beck and call.
4. Construction techniques:
Students know little of the capacities, performance, costs, and ability to estimate time, and materials of construction items. They lack education in field supervision.
5. Sources and supplies:
Recent graduates are too unfamiliar with source materials, fabrics, leather, plastics, carpet, woods etc. They must know where and how he can see and acquire samples, catalogues, and price lists as well as becoming familiar with lead time involved in delivery.
6. Place on a team:
The speciality of interior design in handling the inside of buildings can and does exist separate from practice of the architect.

7. Psychology of presentation:
Recent graduates lack the sensitivity regarding the presentation to the client. Psychology of presentation is an indispensable subject in the curriculum of design schools. This is communication between client and designer. Rendering is an aspect of presentation inadequately emphasized both in school and in the field. Recent graduates lack rapport between designer and client.
8. Ways of business:
Recent graduates lack understanding the profession as a business.
9. Working with other specialist:
Interior designers should have fundamental knowledge of terms of various professions so that he can approach his colleague with realistic problems. He should be enlightened in skills for better communication.
10. Superficiality:
Young designers are too little aware of the changing world beyond his drawing board. Changing politically, economically, socially, industrially, and technologically.

In an article for Contract, John Anderson described some of the wide variety of approaches in interior design curricula today. Using both factual and appraisal comments Anderson illustrated the following programs of schools offering interior design. (14) (1) Pratt Institute, New York- This school offers a four year course planned to train students for professional careers as interior designers. The curriculum is thought to be as closely attuned to the actual requirements of the professional work as any other school in the country. The bulk of problems presented to the students are commercial interiors - not residential. Pratt emphasizes space planning, and organization of space for a specific purpose. The over all objective of the school is to develop the students' creativity and self-sufficiency rather than to

teach standard solutions. Design problems are scheduled and constructed so as to discourage students from reapplying solutions and devices from one problem to another. The first year problems begin with planning small single spaces - a maximum of 250 feet. Second year problems are more complex and demand more creativity from the students. At this time, students also begin to research problems. Third and fourth year problems are constructed to simulate specific operational conditions of an interior, so that the student begins to program and develop a space as a real-life and functioning thing. There is also more emphasis on materials, detailing, and lighting. Business procedures are studied and analyzed. One fourth of all credits accumulated by each student for graduation must be in academic subjects other than design.

(2) Parsons School of Design, New York - Design professors at Parsons have recently revamped their three year course to supplant its traditionally oriented curriculum with serious training in basic design and a growing emphasis on function and performance in contract interiors. Their basic concept of interior design is one of planning spaces suited to needs, ideals, and culture. The education of the designer includes scientific, psychological, and visual facts so his design decisions are formed upon knowledge rather than on whims or personal taste. It is the basic intention of Parsons to strengthen teaching in design fundamentals in the first year, trying to get factual education early, so students can apply this and develop creativity through experience as the

complexity of design problems increase. The basic philosophy of the administrators at Parsons indicates that they believe interior design education must be flexible enough to accommodate differences in the students' objectives and potentialities. (3) Art Center School, Los Angeles, California - The Art Center offers a four year course devoted entirely to training commercial contract designers. Their main emphasis is on space planning and researching all interior design problems. The faculty consists of one full time professor and eight part-time critics. The critics divide their teaching time equally with their practice in the profession. It is the philosophy of the Center that the faculty divide their time between professional practice and classes to keep teaching in tune with the time, creating a real and concrete atmosphere for the students. Problems are based on actual spaces in existing or about-to-be-built buildings. At least two weeks are given students to conduct interviews, study the function and purpose of the interior and develop the concepts before beginning the actual design. Upon completion of the problem each student presents his solution with the critics acting as clients. Students are graded on their design and on verbal effectiveness. (4) Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island - The interior design course at Rhode Island is taught in an architectural context. It is a four year course called interior architecture. The first year, all students are required to take the fundamental courses. The second year, students concentrate

on architecture and basic design. The last two years, interior architecture courses are stressed. Seniors are required to complete a "degree project" selected by the student and department faculty. These projects are intended to test students' creative ability and include an examination of social, cultural, and economic aspects. (5) University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio - One of the few schools offering a five year program is the University of Cincinnati. This program is basically a cooperative work-study plan that provides ten or eleven week work periods alternating with comparable periods of study. This is viewed as a realistic test of career interests and aptitudes. Students are subsidized for their work. Studio courses focus mainly on commercial contract design, although this is not the extent of the students' classroom training. They are also required to complete the general academic courses in economics, psychology, sociology, and marketing. (6) University Home Economics and Art Departments - The interior design major is a fairly new program in most state universities and curricula are still in the early stages of development. The greatest advantage that universities have over the design schools is the wide range of opportunities for non-design courses that contribute to a broader knowledge and a more diverse background with which to solve design problems.

An investigation of several universities offering an interior design program revealed that the main difference

between the university programs in interior design and those in design schools was the general academic requirements for the university degree. In comparing the curricula of the art major in interior design and the home economics major in interior design, the main difference was the core courses required of home economics majors.

In dissenting comments on Contract's special study on design education, Marvin Affrime questioned the basic intent of the study. "How can we achieve curriculums which will enable the designer to assume a full range of responsibilities in a profession that is intermeshed with the vital business affairs and operations of our society?" (13:73) Affrime believed that such a curriculum could not and probably should not be developed. What should be expected of schools offering an interior design program was the question which Affrime attempted to answer in his article. He stated that intelligent planning of design education must be based on thorough and objective studies of how the design field functions and how the best work is being produced. He believed that some qualities and abilities of designers are inborn while others are matters of attitude and outlook. He believed that the challenge to schools offering a design program should be to encourage and feed the students' attitudes and to sharpen his mechanical abilities. Affrime concluded by adding that the greater problem for education seemed to be the apparent disagreement of the designers in the field on what they want. (13)

According to Olga Gueft "the educational route or routes to the field of interior design are ill-defined." (20:163) Even when the skills essential to the graduate, and the courses leading to those skills have been arrived at or described, drawing is the only tangible contribution that can be sized up in a student's work. Gueft further stated that drawing can and should be thoroughly taught. It is the fastest, most direct, most economical means of communications at the designer's disposal. Gueft believed that the basic principle which should be used to appraise all courses, curricula, and schools is that the technical, practical, and commercial aspects of the profession are relatively ephemeral and can be counted on to undergo several changes during the course of a career. The basic skills - mastery of two and three dimensional design, the ability to visualize, the understanding of scale, and reading blueprints - are the foundation on which everything else can be built. They will survive changes in taste, construction systems, and opportunities. (20)

Opposed to stressing technical skills, Charles Heilemann stated that "schools should recognize the limits set by time and stress 'principles' first and technical operations second." (21:53), because the student thoroughly educated in basic design will make use of that education in light of any changes which may occur. (21)

Stanley Barrows, professor at Parsons School of Design, believed it is important for schools to make sure that they

do not lose sight of their chief purpose in teaching basic design principles, because "as specialization increases, the danger of over-specialization in education in narrowed fields, and in areas not basically concerned with design, may arise." (15:53)

Mitzi Morris, personnel director for a design agency in New York, expressed her viewpoints of recent design graduates by stating that "by and large graduates in design are not qualified to meet the exacting demands and competitive standards prevalent today. Relatively few graduates have a clear understanding of what awaits them in the real professional world - where jobs are, what jobs consist of, what jobs pay." (24:26) She further indicated that students are sloppy with their work, showing a lack of pride; their portfolios reveal a superficial approach to design problems; they are not vitally interested, lack intellectual curiosity, and are unaware that beyond the narrow art of design lies a vast wealth of ideas and information which would make them better communicators. In addition to these deficiencies, Morris stated that today's graduates lack necessary mature attitudes to enable proper evaluation of their first job opportunities and seem unhappy if prospective jobs do not permit them to act as full fledged designers the first day. Morris placed blame for these deficiencies entirely on the schools educating designers. (24)

Esmond Shaw quoted Aristotle to make his point that interior design is still an apprenticeship profession;

"To be an able man in any profession, three things are necessary: nature, study, and practice. By nature - he meant a talent, the inherent ability of the person; by practice - he meant apprenticeship to a profession and then working in the profession." (25:46)

Charles Heilemann stated that schools must recognize the fact that they can not turn out a finished product ready to work perfectly, but that they deliver the graduating student to the professionals of his field for further training. (21)

In a panel discussion for Print, it was concluded that one person can not train another person to think. All the schools can do is expose the student to as rigorous a mental discipline as they possible can, and hope that out of such education will come people who will be prepared to cope with the situations that arise in the everyday world of business and professions. (25)

Olga Gueft believed that between the two extremes of rock foundation and frills, there lies a desirable body of learning. It can, to some degree be covered in classroom courses, but ideally it should be a lifetime interest. (20)

III. THE PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The concern for adequate preparation of future professionals is not new to interior designers and decorators. In 1933, William Kimbel told AID (American Institute of Interior Designers) members, "This problem of education is

actually the foundation of our future as professional designers.....all of our problems resolve themselves into whether or not we are fully trained and prepared to render a real service to the community." (29)

Both professional organizations - The American Institute of Interior Designers (AID), and The National Society of Interior Designers (NSID) - have active programs to help raise the standards of education in their profession. (17)

The National Committee on Education of AID is working to develop higher standards of instruction offered in colleges and technical schools specializing in interior design. (17)

NSID sponsors an Educational Foundation which is devoted exclusively to educational promotion; its primary concern is supporting the education and training of future professional interior designers through student scholarships and student chapters in colleges, universities, and technical schools. (17)

The organization considered most active in design education today is the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC), a relatively new organization made up of persons engaged in directing or teaching in professional interior design programs of colleges, universities, and art schools. The purposes of this organization are to develop and improve interior design education and to establish and strengthen communications between individuals, educational institutions, and organizations concerned with interior design. (17)

The 1965 Spring meeting of IDEC was devoted to the interior design curriculum. The purpose was to explore how the education of interior designers might be strengthened, improved, and better coordinated with the needs of the profession. A polling of members indicated that the majority of interior design graduates were entering three major areas; (1) architectural firms, (2) commercial contract work, and (3) residential interior design. (23)

Earlier in the year, IDEC conducted a survey of thirty leading schools offering an interior design major. The results as published in Contract indicated: (14)

1. Interior design curriculums are too short. They should be five years.
2. Commercial interiors are receiving increasing attention as against residential.
3. Schools are inadequately staffed and overcrowded. Laboratory facilities are meager or nonexistent. However, there were indications of staff being expanded with the growing demand for practicing professionals as teachers.
4. There were no systematized standards or objectives among schools.
5. Students were given little or no instruction in the facts of the business and institutional world.

Robert J. Stevens, past president of IDEC attributes some of the chaotic condition among interior design schools to be the broad gap between what schools are offering and what the profession requires. (14)

IDEC members have stated that a well rounded program should include some forms of education in the liberal arts, but conceded that only a five year program could encompass

all of the various courses necessary to graduate a qualified designer ready to enter the profession. Suggestions were also made concerning scholarships to subsidize young graduates while going through an apprenticeship period and establishment of stronger links with businesses for a subsidized work program in co-operation with the schools.

A review of the literature has revealed wide differences in the education of today's interior designers. In an effort to gain information relative to improving and updating the academic preparation of future interior designers, the following study was undertaken.

The study was conducted in the following manner: Data were obtained by personal interviews with all available interior designers and decorators in Greensboro, North Carolina. In an effort to compile a complete list of all practicing interior designers and decorators, the following sources were used: Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, classified advertising, direct telephone contact with retail stores, university personnel in this field, and word of mouth. A final list of thirty names was obtained. Prior to beginning interviews, the writer sent a letter of introduction to each firm employing the designers whose names appeared on the final list. (A copy of this letter may be found in Appendix A.) An interview schedule was designed and used for recording the interviews. It was pre-tested with four interior designers outside the Greensboro area. This pilot study

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

This study was designed to gain information regarding the views of practicing interior designers and decorators on the education of future interior designers. Other information which might influence the designers' views such as educational preparation, years of experience, and type of work engaged in, was also included in the study. Data were obtained by personal interviews with all available interior designers and decorators in Greensboro, North Carolina.

In an effort to compile a complete list of all practicing interior designers and decorators, the following sources were used: Chamber of Commerce, Better Business Bureau, classified advertising, direct telephone contact with retail stores, university personnel in this field, and word of mouth. A final list of thirty names was obtained.

Prior to beginning interviews, the writer sent a letter of introduction to each firm employing the designers whose names appeared on the final list. A copy of this letter may be found in Appendix A.

An interview schedule was designed and used for recording the interviews. It was pretested with four interior designers outside the Greensboro area. This pilot study

was done to familiarize the interviewer with the procedure, to estimate the amount of time needed for the interview, and to test the schedule for clarity and suitability to purpose. The final interview required 20-30 minutes to be completed. A sample of the final schedule prepared and used may be found in Appendix B.

The first portion of the interview schedule requested information on the educational background, professional affiliations, and years of experience of the designers. Questions regarding educational background were divided into two categories; (1) general education, and (2) specific education in interior design. General education included high school graduation, background in the related areas of art and home economics, and college work in areas other than interior design. Information regarding specific education in interior design was categorized by three different types of training programs; those in (1) four year colleges and universities, (2) technical design schools, and (3) correspondence short courses. Membership in professional organizations were checked next on the schedule.

The experience of interior designers and decorators was identified in two parts; (1) total number of years practiced in the profession, and (2) full-time or part-time employment. If employed only part-time, designers were asked to estimate the percentage of time spent on other responsibilities. Relative amounts of residential or commercial contract services were also indicated in this section.

The second major portion of the interview schedule concerned the type of responsibilities and kinds of work done by interior designers and decorators. Some questions were designed to inquire about the technical skills most used in the field. Others were designed to gain information regarding the selection and presentation of recommended design solutions to clients. Open-end questions were used to inquire about the responsibilities of the designer in the designing, construction, and installation of draperies.

The remainder of the interview schedule focused on securing the views of practicing interior designers and decorators on the educational preparation of future interior designers. Open-end questions were used to inquire about areas of past schooling that had proven most beneficial to practicing in the field. A similar question asked which area designers regreted not having an opportunity to study. Designers were asked what they believed to be the most important ideas to be taught in design, and how these ideas might best be taught. Those having the experience of working with recent interior design graduates or students were asked about important ideas they believed these designers had failed to grasp. The final question concerned how one learns to be creative.

The second method used for securing views of practicing interior designers on the educational preparation of future interior designers concerned twenty-four concepts believed to be important in interior design. These concepts were

developed through the collaboration of the writer and thesis advisor. Designers were asked to rate the degree of importance of each concept on a rating scale from one to five. Number one indicated most important and number five least important. A mean rating was also calculated for each concept along with the level of significance.

Data from the interviews were descriptively analyzed. Total frequencies were tabulated and percentages were determined. When applicable, Chi-square tests were used to determine the significance of comparisons.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

It seemed reasonable that professionals practicing in the field of interior design would have some information helpful in solving the problem of how to improve and update the education of future professionals. Therefore, interior designers and decorators in Greensboro, North Carolina were given the opportunity to express their views on the education of future interior designers. From a list of thirty designers, twenty-seven were personally interviewed. One designer was in Europe and two refused.

Since the educational preparation, and the years of experience of the interior designers might be related to their philosophy of education, this information was included in the interview and is described here first. Later in the study some of the more pertinent educational data were related to the designers thoughts regarding basic concepts.

Likewise, since the type of responsibilities and the kinds of work which the designers had had in their experience might be related to the kind of education the designers would indicate as being desirable, these relationships were included.

The final section describes the knowledge and skills that practicing interior designers and decorators believed to be important in the education of future interior designers.

I. EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE OF PRACTICING INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND DECORATORS

Of the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators interviewed in this study, 70.3 per cent had some training in interior design (Table 1). Training for 22.2 per cent of the designers was obtained through colleges or universities. Four of these received degrees in interior design through Art Departments, while two received degrees through Home Economics. An equal percentage of the designers interviewed received training from technical design schools. The interior design programs within these schools varied from three to four years.

Over one fourth of the designers obtained their training through correspondence short courses (Table 1). The average length of such courses for the designers in this study was eight months.

Almost 30.0 per cent of the designers in this study had no formal training in interior design (Table 1). Two of these designers had some college education in areas outside interior design. Three had attended workshops sponsored by the companies with which they worked. The workshops lasted only three days and the majority of time was spent on color and basic solutions for decorating problems. One designer

began as a secretary and another as a department store sales-clerk. The eighth designer of this group began practicing in 1923 at which time the master-apprentice plan was about the only way an interior designer or decorator could enter the trade. She considered herself a "self-educated decorator" but conceded that a broad education today is mandatory for young people entering the field.

TABLE 1

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION OF TWENTY-SEVEN
INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND DECORATORS*

Type of Educational Preparation	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Graduate in Interior Design		
College or University	6	22.2
Technical Design School	6	22.2
Short Course	7	25.9
No formal training in interior design	8	29.6
TOTAL	27	100.0

*Practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

The years of experience of interior designers interviewed in this study ranged from two months to forty-three years. The mean was 13.8 years (Table 2). Of the twenty-seven designers interviewed, 22.2 per cent had four years or less of experience. Over one fourth had practiced five to ten years. The largest percentage appeared in the range of twenty or more years of experience. This range, however,

has a span of twenty-three years as compared to the five year span in the other ranges. Thus, the greatest number of practicing interior designers interviewed in this study had five to ten years experience.

TABLE 2
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN INTERIOR DESIGN*

Years Experience	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
0 - 4	6	22.2
5 - 9	7	25.9
10 - 14	2	7.4
15 - 19	4	14.8
20 or more	8	29.6
TOTAL	27	100.0
RANGE	2 months to 43 years	
MEAN	13.8 years	

*For twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Interior designing and decorating was full-time employment for 81.5 per cent of the designers in this study, three of these had additional responsibilities as partners in their business firms. The remainder of the designers considered designing as only part-time employment. Four spent the majority of their time in sales, while the other spent approximately one fourth of her time as a homemaker and mother.

Only five of the twenty-seven designers interviewed, or 18.5 per cent, were affiliated with a professional design

organization (Table 3). Three were members of the American Institute of Interior Designers (AID). One was a member of the National Society of Interior Designers (NSID) which was a continuation of student membership in the organization while attending school. One designer was a member of the Institute of British Decorators (IBD). This designer was not originally from Europe and has not been a member of an American interior design organization.

TABLE 3
AFFILIATION WITH PROFESSIONAL INTERIOR DESIGN ORGANIZATIONS*

Organizations	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
American Institute of Interior Designers	3	11.1
National Society of Interior Designers	1	3.7
Institute of British Decorators	1	3.7
No affiliation	22	81.5
TOTAL	27	100.0

*Of twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

One designer, not included in the five affiliated with professional design organizations, indicated that the firm for which she worked was a member of AID. Four others indicated they had been former members, but due to the extremely expensive membership dues had discontinued their

affiliation. Others believed that the organizations offered little that would be helpful to them in their work and that the organizations required a great deal of "free" time that designers and decorators did not have. It should be noted that some of the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators interviewed in this study would not meet the educational requirements or the experience required to become members of a professional design organization. Support by professionals practicing in the field is the only way professional organizations can function successfully. Perhaps designers should ask themselves what the real purpose of their organizations should be if it is to be a functioning organization for the betterment of the profession.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK ENGAGED IN BY INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND DECORATORS

Interior designers and decorators in this study were asked to estimate the relative amount of time spent on commercial contract and/or residential services. Seventy per cent were exclusively, or almost exclusively, residential interior designers. A fourth indicated that 25.0 per cent of their time was spent in commercial contract work and 75.0 percent in residential. Only one of the twenty-seven was exclusively a commercial contract designer (Table 4).

An average of 88.0 per cent of services of designers interviewed in this study was residential. Twelve per cent was commercial contract work.

TABLE 4

RELATIVE AMOUNTS OF COMMERCIAL AND/OR
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN SERVICES*

Services	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Commercial contract only	1	3.7
25% commercial contract and 75% residential	7	25.9
Exclusively or almost exclusively residential	19	70.4
TOTAL	27	100.0

*Offered by twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

All interior designers and decorators in this study offered consultation services. Six indicated however, that their consultation services were for purchasing clients only. Only one or two seemed enthusiastic about offering consultation services by the hour. Since most designers work on a commission or percentage basis, consultation with non-purchasing customers is not very profitable.

Table 5 shows other types of services performed by the interior designers and decorators. Scaled floor plans were used by 77.8 per cent in planning and executing an interior. Only 22.2 per cent used wall elevations or perspectives. Many designers indicated that wall elevations and perspectives took too much time. Others believed that such renderings were for commercial contract work rather than residential.

A review of the educational preparation of the designers interviewed might indicate that many of them lack the know-how to be able to render either elevations or perspectives. Five of the designers interviewed pointed out that quick sketches were much more valuable than time consuming renderings. The one commercial contract designer interviewed mentioned that almost all of his renderings were done by a commercial artist or interior designer specializing in technical renderings. He gave two reasons for this; (1) the presentation must be convincing enough to get the contract, and (2) it saves much of his time.

TABLE 5

TYPE OF SERVICES PERFORMED BY TWENTY-SEVEN
INTERIOR DESIGNERS AND DECORATORS*

Services	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Scaled Floor Plans	21	77.8
Wall Elevations	6	22.2
Perspectives	6	22.2
Specification of materials and measurements	23	85.2
Suggest physical changes in structures	23	85.2
Supervise physical changes	14	51.9

*Practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Further investigation concerning services revealed that 85.2 per cent of the designers interviewed specify materials and take measurements for executing interiors (Table 5).

An equal percentage suggest physical changes in houses and other buildings. Some do planning for complete remodeling of a structure, while others suggest only the removal or addition of architectural features that would improve the interior decor. Over one half of the designers interviewed directly supervised sub-contractors employed to make such physical changes. All of the designers offering suggestions for physical changes were responsible for preparing the specification sheet for the changes. This sheet included measurements, designs, and materials to be used by the contractor or other employee doing the work. In three instances designers prepared the specification sheets leaving the responsibility of employing a contractor to the client. A few designers consulted with clients on the designing, construction, and decorating of new structures.

Resources most used by designers in this study for the selection of materials and furnishings used in design solutions were from samples, stock, and catalogues (Table 6). Store samples and stock were used in selecting 92.6 per cent of the draperies and 96.3 per cent of the floor coverings. Wall coverings, accessories, and furniture were mostly selected, 85.2 to 88.9 per cent, from samples or stock in the store. (Table 6).

Over eighty per cent of the furniture was selected largely from catalogues. (Table 6). Two designers indicated that approximately eighty per cent of all furniture they specified was selected from catalogues even though there was

a good stock kept in the store. Over one half of the wall coverings were chosen from catalogues, while only one third of the floor coverings and draperies were selected in this manner (Table 6).

TABLE 6

RESOURCES USED IN SELECTING MATERIALS AND
FURNISHINGS FOR DESIGN SOLUTIONS*

Possibilities	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Select from samples or stock		
Wall coverings	23	85.2
Floor coverings	26	96.3
Draperies	25	92.6
Furniture	24	88.9
Accessories	23	85.2
Select from catalogues		
Wall coverings	16	59.3
Floor coverings	8	29.5
Draperies	9	33.3
Furniture	22	81.5
Accessories	9	33.3

*According to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Five of the designers interviewed in this study had no furniture stock. One designer depended entirely on catalogues for all materials and furnishings. Another designer specialized in designing reproductions of period furniture, which except for small stock, was constructed from the designer's blueprint. The majority of the designers, however, used all three resources in their selection of materials and furnishings for their design solutions.

According to the designers, accessories were the most difficult of all furnishing items to find. Many designers and decorators indicated they preferred selecting accessories from stock since it was sometimes deceiving to visualize certain accessories as pictured in catalogues.

Five designers in this study made use of markets, showrooms, and other retail stores for the purpose of selecting materials and furnishings. In most cases when selections were made in this manner the client accompanied the designer.

Of the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators in this study 48.0 per cent preferred their offices for presenting recommended design solutions to the clients. When alternate selections were necessary the samples, catalogues, and stock were readily at hand. However, upon request of the client, presentation was made in the home. Recommendations presented in the home were preferred by 51.0 per cent. Their reasons were that the client could more easily relate the recommendations to the real surroundings.

Many designers and decorators mentioned that they spent much time in the home or commercial structure prior to making any recommendations. This time was used to get acquainted with the client, his habits and activities, obtain color preferences, measurements, inventory furnishings, and observe what predetermined structural features might be encountered. The length of time spent on the preliminary investigation before making recommendations to the client usually depended on the size of the job. Several designers

mentioned that they liked to work with a given budget, however, the size of budget had no relation to the length of time spent on the job.

Most of the designers presented a single solution to design problems to their clients. It was found that 66.7 per cent of the designers preferred recommending only one solution with some alternate possibilities. One third of the designers presented two or three completely different solutions for the client to make a choice (Table 7).

TABLE 7
SINGLE OR ALTERNATE DESIGN SOLUTIONS
PRESENTED TO CLIENTS*

Possibilities	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
One recommendation with alternate possibilities	18	66.7
Choice of 2 or 3 recommendations	9	33.3
TOTAL	27	100.0

*By twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Most of the designers felt that too many recommendations only confused the client. Others indicated that a designer presenting several solutions reflected insecurity about his knowledge of what is best for the particular situation.

Custom draperies were designed by 81.5 per cent of the designers interviewed in this study. The rest either used stock draperies or did not handle drapery problems.

Store employees constructed 63.0 per cent of the draperies while 22.2 per cent were constructed by sub-contractors (Table 8). The installation was generally handled by store employees.

TABLE 8

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, AND INSTALLATION
OF DRAPERIES FOR INTERIORS*

Person Responsible	Drapery			
	Construction		Installation	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Store employee	17	63.0	19	66.7
Sub-contractor	6	22.2	3	11.1
Client			1	3.7

*Of twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

The number of store employees hired for construction or installation for interiors varied from one seamstress to a complete workroom operation staffed with several seamstresses, carpet mechanics and upholsterers.

In instances where sub-contractors constructed the draperies, the designer was responsible for the design as well as the specifications of measurements and materials. In some cases the contractor stocked fabrics and hardware.

Otherwise, designers were responsible for purchasing such items elsewhere.

Selection of drapery hardware was a part of the responsibility of 85.0 per cent of the designers interviewed. Two-thirds of the draperies and hardware were installed by store employees. Only 11.1 per cent were installed by subcontractors. In one instance, installation was the client's responsibility. Nearly all of the designers and decorators indicated that they preferred being present when mechanics installed any part of an interior. No matter how many outside specialists were employed to install an interior, the designer or decorator alone was responsible for seeing that his specifications were carried out correctly.

III. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS PERTINENT TO THE EDUCATION OF FUTURE INTERIOR DESIGNERS

A. Course Work Related to Interior Design

The knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators considered important for future interior designers, included in the final portion of the interview schedule, was divided into two parts. The first part was six open-end questions generally pertaining to traditional types of course work.

Response to the question concerning courses in past schooling which had proven to be most helpful in the field was limited necessarily, to the nineteen interior designers and decorators who had had some formal training in interior

design. Of the nineteen, 94.7 per cent responded. Almost all of these mentioned two particular areas of course work.

History was mentioned by 42.1 per cent of the designers as the most helpful course (Table 9). The designers did not state whether they meant history per se or History of Art, History of Architecture, or History of Furniture. However, since over 70.0 per cent of the designers in this study were residential designers, their answers may reflect that knowledge of period furnishings tend to be important.

TABLE 9

COURSES FROM SCHOOLING MENTIONED AS MOST HELPFUL*

Courses	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
History	8	42.1
Design Elements (1 or more)	5	26.3
Textiles and Fabrics	5	26.3
Rendering	4	21.1
Psychology	2	10.5
Fine Arts	2	10.5
Marketing	2	10.5
Lighting	1	5.3
Business Law	1	5.3
English	1	5.3
All courses equally helpful	2	10.5

*According to nineteen Interior Designers and Decorators with training in Interior Design, practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

One or more of the design elements were mentioned as important by 26.3 per cent of the practicing designers responding (Table 9). Color was indicated specifically as the

most important element. Textiles and fabrics were also mentioned by more than one-fourth of those interviewed as making an important contribution to their work. Rendering was mentioned as important by 21.1 per cent of those responding to the question (Table 9). This included such techniques as mechanical drawing of scaled floor plans, wall elevations, and perspectives as well as the skills of painting and presentation. Psychology, fine arts, and marketing were each mentioned by 10.5 per cent of the designers, while lighting, business law, and English were mentioned one time each (Table 9).

Two designers, 10.5 per cent, indicated that all of their course work had contributed equally during their experience (Table 9). An investigation of the source of their educational preparation revealed that both designers were graduates of technical design schools with a three year concentrated course in interior design.

The question concerning courses that interior designers think would be beneficial in their work but regret not having was answered by eleven of the nineteen, 40.0 per cent, of the respondents with educational preparation in interior design. A tabulation of the responses revealed that three designers regreted their limited opportunity to study textiles and fabrics (Table 10). Architectural design, mathematics, and marketing sources were each mentioned by two designers. The remainder of the responses were each mentioned one time.

They were psychology, history, furniture construction, practical instruction in measurements and estimates, and quick sketches.

TABLE 10

COURSES INTERIOR DESIGNERS THINK WOULD BE BENEFICIAL THAT THEY REGRET NOT HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY*

Responses	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Fabrics and Textiles	3	15.8
Marketing	2	10.5
Architectural design	2	10.5
Mathematics	2	10.5
Marketing sources	2	10.5
Psychology	1	5.3
Construction of furniture	1	5.3
Measurements and estimates	1	5.3
History	1	5.3
Quick sketches	1	5.3
More general education	1	5.3
Had no regrets	5	26.3

*According to nineteen Interior Designers and Decorators with training in Interior Design, practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

One designer interviewed in the study mentioned that he regretted not having the opportunity for more general education courses (Table 10). He believed that designers had much to gain by education in the liberal arts. Over one-fourth of the designers responding to this question had no regrets about their educational preparation and saw no need for improvement through additional course work. Several

designers made the point that experience in the field was the only real teacher.

Of the twenty-seven designers and decorators interviewed, 92.0 per cent responded to the open-end question concerned with what practicing interior designers considered the most important ideas that need to be taught in design. One or more of the design elements (line, form, color, texture, and light) were mentioned by over 50.0 per cent of the respondents as the most important design ideas that need to be taught (Table 11).

TABLE 11

MOST IMPORTANT IDEAS THAT NEED TO BE
TAUGHT IN DESIGN*

Ideas	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Elements of design (1 or more)	14	51.9
Principles of design (1 or more)	12	44.4
Textiles and Fabrics	12	44.4
History	6	22.2
Psychology of people	5	18.5
Salesmanship	2	7.4
Technique	1	3.7
Space planning	1	3.7
Functional aspects of family living	1	3.7
Working with modules	1	3.7
Did not respond	2	7.4

*According to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Mentioned by 44.4 per cent of the designers were one or more of the design principles (balance, rhythm, harmony, proportion, emphasis, and unity). Scale and proportion were

indicated specifically the greatest number of times. Also mentioned by 44.4 per cent of the designers were textiles and fabrics. This included such specifics as fiber characteristics, wearability, and hand for specific purposes. History was mentioned by 22.2 per cent; psychology, 18.5 per cent; and salesmanship 7.4 per cent. Mentioned one time each were such ideas as functional aspects of family living, space planning, techniques, and working with modules (Table 11).

Rather than answering the question, three of the designers gave as a response "the broader the education the better."

Some of the responses to the open-end questions were irrelevant to the original questions. The diverse backgrounds of the designers and decorators interviewed in this study might be assumed as the reason for the breadth of the responses. Also it was observed by the writer that designers with training in interior design tended to take for granted that the basic design elements and principles would be included in any program of interior design. Many times they neglected to mention any of these until the writer had called their attention to such elements or principles after the completion of their open-end response.

Responses to the question designed to inquire about the deficiencies of recent interior design students and graduates were limited to fifteen interior designers having worked with recent interior design students and graduates. They were

asked what some of the important ideas were that these students and graduates of interior design had failed to grasp. Tabulation of the responses revealed most often the lack of knowledge in textiles and fabrics. Over half, 53.3 per cent, of the respondents mentioned this deficiency (Table 12). Specific comments indicated that students could not identify fabrics, did not know enough of the basic fiber characteristics to predict wearability, lacked ability to correlate color and textures of fabrics, and lacked the ability to choose an appropriate fabric for a specific style of furnishings.

TABLE 12

IMPORTANT IDEAS RECENT INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENTS
AND GRADUATES HAVE FAILED TO GRASP*

Responses	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Lack knowledge in textiles and fabrics	8	53.3
Fail to apply schooling to actual experience	3	20.0
Lack of salesmanship	2	13.3
Presentation not convincing	2	13.3
Lack imagination	1	6.7
Do not know marketing sources	1	6.7
Do not understand functional family living	1	6.7
No noted deficiencies	1	6.7

*According to fifteen Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, that have had contact with recent interior design students, March, 1966.

The failure to apply classroom work to actual job situations was mentioned by 20.0 per cent of the respondents (Table 12). Students' lack of salesmanship, and lack of ability to render presentations convincing to clients were mentioned by 13.3 per cent. Mentioned at least one time each were the following: Lack of imagination, inadequate knowledge of marketing sources, and inadequate understanding of functional family living for proper space planning. Only one designer saw no noticeable deficiencies in the recent interior design students and graduates with whom he had worked.

Response relating to ideas on how design can best be taught fell into three categories. The combination lecture and laboratory method was mentioned by 40.7 per cent of the designers as the best means for teaching design (Table 13). These designers felt that studio problems were mandatory for teaching the fundamentals of design, functional space planning, and the techniques of rendering. They also believed that the most meaningful lectures were those that were supplemented with illustrations or laboratory work so that students could instantly associate the lectures with their problems in design.

More practical work experience in the field was mentioned by one-third of the designers (Table 13). Their basic philosophy was that only by working on the job would the application of classroom studies become real. One designer suggested a co-op plan where classroom work would alternate with field experience. There was no regret

expressed by another that a subsidized work program could not be worked out to help students on an extended five year program. Field trips were the third category mentioned by 14.8 per cent of the designers interviewed (Table 13).

TABLE 13
IDEAS ON HOW DESIGN CAN BEST BE TAUGHT*

Findings	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Combination lecture and laboratory	11	40.7
More practical work experience	9	33.3
Field Trips	4	14.8
Did not respond	7	25.9

*According to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

The seven designers that did not answer the question concerning methods of teaching design admitted lack of knowledge about classroom procedures.

"How does one learn to be creative?" was the final open-end question. Responses were grouped into three categories. Of the twenty-seven designers interviewed for this study, 37.0 per cent believed that every individual begins with some natural ability for creativity but it must be nurtured and developed by good teaching (Table 14). Creativity could be taught to anyone according to 22.2 per cent of the designers

interviewed. One designer qualified his belief by explaining that creativity taught to an individual lacking natural ability is often creativity without feeling or expression. Another designer commented that one could only teach what is good and bad.

TABLE 14
HOW ONE LEARNS TO BE CREATIVE*

Findings	Interior Designers	
	Number	Per Cent
Begin with inborn talent - nurtured and developed	10	37.0
Can be taught to anyone	6	22.2
Inborn only	6	22.2
Did not respond	5	18.5

*According to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Of the twenty-seven designers interviewed 22.2 per cent indicated their belief that creativity is exclusively an inborn ability (Table 14). "You either have it or you don't" was the comment of one designer. The remaining 18.5 per cent had no response to the question.

In order to obtain information regarding the importance of course work outside the area of interior design, the respondents were asked to rank ten subject matter areas as important, helpful, and not important (Table 15). The

courses are identified on Table 15 in rank order from highest to lowest in importance.

TABLE 15

COURSES OUTSIDE THE AREA OF INTERIOR DESIGN
RATED AS IMPORTANT, NOT IMPORTANT, OR HELPFUL
IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE INTERIOR DESIGNERS*

Courses	Important		Helpful
	Yes	No	
	Number		
English Comp. & Lit.	24	2	1
Business administration	23	1	3
Mathematics	23	4	0
Social Sciences	20	3	4
Foreign languages	13	10	4
Philosophy	11	15	1
Professional education	7	19	1
Natural Sciences	6	16	5
Music	6	16	5
Drama	4	18	5

*According to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

Twenty-four designers and decorators indicated that English composition and literature were important (Table 15). Many explained that English was indispensable for effective oral and written communication. Business administration was emphasized by twenty-three designers. On the other hand, one designer saw no need for courses in business unless an individual intended going into business for himself.

Mathematics was also rated important by twenty-three designers (Table 15). With the high rating of mathematics, one might wonder what definition the designers were using.

It is quite possible that they were thinking of basic arithmetic rather than higher college mathematics. This is only an assumption since there were no questions concerning the definition during the interviews.

The social sciences were rated important by twenty designers (Table 15). Four indicated these courses would be helpful. A foreign language was mentioned as important by thirteen designers. However, an almost equally large number, ten, indicated they felt a foreign language of no importance in an interior design program. The remaining five courses were checked as important less often. Eleven designers thought philosophy was important, while fifteen indicated it of no importance. Professional education was thought to be important by seven designers who believed that part of their job was to educate the consumer about good design. The natural sciences and music were each rated important by only six designers. Four rated drama as important. Five of the designers and decorators interviewed mentioned that each of these last three subject matter areas would be helpful (Table 15).

B. Findings Concerning the Twenty-four Concepts

During the final portion of the interview, twenty-four concepts believed to be important in interior design were rated by the designers on a scale from one to five. The number one was most important and number five least important. Total ratings were tabulated, mean ratings, and significance

levels were calculated. Table 16 shows the rank order of the concepts as they were rated by the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators interviewed in this study. Due to space limitations on the table, concepts are identified by the number of the concepts as it appeared on the interview schedule along with an abbreviated indication of it's content. A list of the twenty-four original concepts may be found on the interview schedule in Appendix B.

In general, all concepts were rated high. Considering three as average in a rating scale from one to five, only one concept was rated below average with a mean rating of 3.44. This was the concept related to study of foreign languages. In addition, two concepts had mean ratings of more than two, 2.62 and 2.33. These were related to literature, music, and three deminsional design. All others had mean ratings ranging from 1.96 up to 1.03 (Table 16). The highest possible mean rating would be a 1.00 in which case all of the designers would have given a concept the top rating.

Concepts oriented toward basic design and interior design tended to be rated more important than concepts relating to non-design areas (Table 16).

C. Discussion, Interpretations, Comments, and Opinions of the Writer Concerning the Twenty-four Concepts in this Study

In examining some design curriculum, George Nelson questioned the amount of time spent on developing techniques

TABLE 16

RATINGS OF TWENTY-FOUR CONCEPTS BELIEVED TO
BE IMPORTANT IN INTERIOR DESIGN*

Concept Number on Schedule	Concept Abbreviation**	Mean Rating	Level*** of Significance
17	Design Elements	1.03	.01
12	Circulation	1.07	.01
11	Color	1.11	.01
18	Scale and Proportion	1.11	.01
9	History of Art, Furniture, Architecture, & Textiles	1.18	.01
14	Creative Design	1.25	.01
23	Home Furnishings	1.25	.01
10	Lighting Design	1.29	.01
13	Architectural & Interior Design interrelations	1.29	.01
15	Family Living	1.29	.01
16	Rendering	1.33	.01
20	Studio Problems in Interior Design	1.33	.01
8	Human Behavior	1.40	.01
19	Textiles and Fabrics	1.40	.01
6	English	1.44	.01
2	Mathematics	1.48	.01
7	Logic	1.51	.01
3	Business Administration & Economics	1.55	.01
24	A General Education	1.62	.01
1	Physics	1.88	.01
22	2 Dimensional Design	1.96	.01
21	3 Dimensional Design	2.33	n.s.
5	Music and Literature	2.62	.05
4	Foreign Language	3.44	n.s.

*Rated on a scale from one to five with one the most important and five the least important.

**Refer to the interview schedule (Appendix B) for complete concepts as presented for rating to twenty-seven Interior Designers and Decorators practicing in Greensboro, North Carolina, March, 1966.

***Determined by Chi-square using the formula $\chi^2 = \frac{1}{F} \sum (f_o - \bar{F})^2$
.01 = 13.277, .05 = 9.488.

and understanding of the past. He indicated that too much time was spent on teaching things that could be learned in a hurry. In an effort to speed up these preliminaries, he adopted the efficient high speed production methods of industry to a series of demonstrations and presented them to design classes. Nelson's objective was to show the inter-relationship of areas of knowledge and design that people normally considered quite separate. He felt that through an understanding of these interrelationships learning could take place in less time. (8)

The conceptual approach used in education today is similar to Nelson's philosophy. With the increase in the number of courses and the amount of information in today's curricula, it is increasingly difficult for students to interrelate knowledge and experiences. Concepts synthesize knowledge and make it possible to tie together what might previously have been unrelated facts. This makes it easier for an individual to become acquainted with a field by mastering a relatively few significant ideas rather than a multiplicity of specifics. Through careful examination, some material appears to be obsolete and possibly a different organization might result in a quicker and more efficient mastery of basic ideas. (30)

The concepts which the designers and decorators in this study rated are discussed here in order of their rank, according to mean ratings. Each concept, as originally given in the interview schedule, is underlined for clarity.

1. Designers work with color, form, line, light, and texture in executing solutions to design problems. (Mean Rating 1.03)

The elements mentioned in this concept, in combination with the basic design principles are the foundation of all good design. Students of interior design must be able to recognize and apply these elements in solving design problems. How can this creative coordinating process be learned? Reading from textbooks? Exposure to good designs from the past? Perhaps students will learn only by working with the elements in two and three dimensional design problems. Since there are no hard and fast rules that apply when coordinating design elements, teaching is difficult.

2. Traffic patterns and circulation in a room influences the selection and arrangement of furnishings. (Mean Rating 1.07)

In addition to the design elements space relations and circulation must be considered. The placement of doors, windows, and other architectural features obviously influence both the circulation and furniture arrangement within a room. In addition, the furniture occupying a room has both functional and esthetic consideration as an integral part of the coordination of basic design fundamentals and circulation patterns to achieve the most desirable design solution.

3. Both the decorative and psychological effects of color need to be understood and applied by designers. (Mean Rating 1.11)

Color was rated important both by the responses to open-end questions and as an individual concept. Since color has differing effects on different people could it be that reactions are learned rather than innate? Some of the psychological effects of color have been studied but there is much that is open to question.

The decorative aspect of color seemed to be a more important concern of designers and decorators. Since color has a powerful influence on individuals both esthetically and psychologically, designers must learn to apply it with understanding. Is there one best method for teaching color? One designer maintained that color could not be taught. It is only learned and appreciated by working with it. Perhaps nature would be the best teacher. The most beautiful color combinations appear in nature. Students can observe exquisite colors and color combinations every day just by observing nature. If only one individual could be taught to observe, teaching design would not be such a problem.

4. Design requires a fine sense of relationship of spaces to achieve good proportion. (Mean Rating 1.11)

Scale and proportion were both specifically mentioned a number of times in the responses to the open-end questions. Proportion is usually thought of as space and shape relationships, while the term scale refers to size

relationships between parts or between parts and the whole. Again the question concerning what is the most effective way to teach scale and proportion as well as the other design principles, balance, emphasis, harmony, and rhythm, arises. One means of teaching proportion might be through the use of a mathematical process. Designers could use such mathematical proportions as training for sensitivity of the relationship of the sizes of spaces and the objects within them. One method for students to visualize and evaluate the design principles is through the use of scaled wall elevations and perspectives. While practitioners in this study indicated that proportion was very important, few used scaled wall elevations and perspectives. One might wonder what means they used for evaluating these design principles while solving design problems.

5. History of Art, History of Architecture, History of Furniture, and Textiles Design contribute to today's design solutions. (Mean Rating 1.18)

There is little doubt that many excellent designs were developed in the past, for example by the Greek, Roman, and Oriental cultures. Knowledge of the factors influencing early design and their evaluation in relation to present conditions might enable students to conceptualize their understanding of history and its place in interior design. In cases where interior designers are executing traditional interiors this historic background is vitally important. Here again the question of how best to teach the important

concepts of this vast area of background information, along with a knowledge of where to find any specific details that may be needed in executing a particular job, needs to be explored.

6. Creativity is the capacity to innovate, invent, or reorganize design elements in new ways.
(Mean Rating 1.25)

Creativity is a word used loosely by designers and decorators both in the field and in educational institutions. It might be that creativity relies more on intuition and vision rather than actual scientific applications. Perhaps it only applies to situations involving human factors. While creativity probably cannot be taught, it may be that it can be nurtured. Ways in which creativity can be nurtured is a question which has stumped numerous people in the creative design field for ages.

7. Designers need to understand the construction processes used in furniture, upholstery, and draperies for judging the quality of products, the relationship of quality to price, and for supervising workroom employees. (Mean Rating 1.25)

The constant change in construction equipment and materials make teaching difficult. The basic construction techniques however, have remained much the same through the years and can be taught as a foundation. With the recognition that changes will occur, what are some ways in which students can learn this important background information? One way might be actual construction of sample size items. Perhaps students could have an opportunity to observe present

construction processes in use through factory tours. Familiarity with current publications by the industry may also be helpful. Costs of raw materials, workmanship, design, and assembling are related to the quality of a finished product and its final cost. To understand the integral relationship of these factors is very important to the basic knowledge of the interior designer, but it also enables him to easily interpret quality-price relationship to his client.

8. The Kind and amount of light affects the functional and decorative aspects of a room.
(Mean Rating 1.29)

Light is closely integrated with color. Dramatically and psychologically light and color are two strong influences in decorating. However, the concept above is concerned with light alone. With people spending more time in their homes after sundown rather than during the day, lighting has increased in importance. The lighting in a room or in a structure must be functionally and decoratively combined. Decoratively, light is used to create certain moods or to emphasize certain features. Interior designers may find difficulty in creating a mood successfully unless some knowledge is known of the effect of light on color. A basic understanding of the amount of lighting needed for specific areas and activities is also important to assure that the decorative lighting will also be functional.

Practitioners in the field tend to be more concerned with decorative lighting leaving the functional aspects to

the lighting engineers. In order to have a well integrated interior, the interior designer should also be responsible for interpreting functional lighting needs to the engineers. Designers may be required to work with predetermined structural lighting in executing an interior. Basic knowledge in fundamental lighting requirements will enable him to make recommendations which can improve both the functional and decorative aspects of lighting.

9. Aesthetic interiors require the harmonious integration of furnishings with structural features. (Mean Rating 1.29)

Interior designers may work with predetermined architectural features in new buildings already built or they may help plan new structures during their experience. In either case their ability to coordinate the furnishings with the structural features is important. How can students in interior design learn to integrate furnishings and structural features? Again, the use of scaled floor plans, wall elevations and perspectives can be used to visualize and evaluate. Some design problems in which the architectural structure and features are designed by the students might develop an appreciation of the necessity of coordinating the structure with the furnishings. But, more realistically would be problems based on actual structures or about-to-be-built structures where students are forced to work with predetermined structural features in an effort to create an aesthetic interior.

10. Individual and group needs for adequate space to perform activities are a prime consideration when executing interior designs. (Mean Rating 1.29)

Only design solutions that can accommodate people and their activities can be considered successful. It is not the amount of space, but rather the organization and planning of that space that is important. Before the students can organize and plan spaces adequate to fulfill the needs of the occupants, they must become familiar with space requirements of certain activities and equipment used in the activities. Perhaps students would find the results of research beneficial in this area. As for teaching, again scaled floor plans seem to be the best means to date for students to visualize and evaluate space relationship and sizes.

11. Floor plans, elevations, and perspectives and visual interpretations of a designers' ideas. (Mean Rating 1.33)

Renderings such as mentioned in this concept are the media used to communicate designers' ideas. They are media by which a student can indicate his ideas. They are the media of communication between a designer and his client. Finally, they are important teaching tools whereby students can visualize and evaluate their own designs and the designs of their classmates.

12. Only by designing does a designer learn to coordinate the whole of functional and esthetic elements. (Mean Rating 1.33)

It is difficult to transfer knowledge of the basic design fundamentals to creative design solutions. Students

must practice coordinating the design elements, and principles with materials and structural features in order to visualize the solution to interior design problems. It might be that the best way for students to experience this visual and creative manipulation of design elements, materials, and structural features is through solving studio problems in design.

13. Knowledge of human behavior and personality contributes to the livability of design solutions. (Mean Rating 1.40)

Psychology, the study of human behavior, was mentioned by practitioners in the field in responses to open-end questions as an important area to be considered in the interior designers course work. Since a major portion of the interior designers' responsibilities are designing for people, a basic understanding of their behaviors would be helpful. The more the designer knows about people the greater the possibility for successful design solutions.

14. Designers need an understanding of the handling and draping qualities, the fiber content, the weaves, the finishes and care of fabrics to predict performance. (Mean Rating 1.40)

This concept ranked fourteenth out of twenty-four even though the designers and decorators in this study emphasized the importance of textiles and fabrics first of greatest importance in responses to open-end questions. One designer indicated that it was impossible to keep up with the vast number of fabrics and new fibers on the market.

He pointed out that he took the manufacturers word for the quality, and performance of a fabric. It might be true that the quantity of fabric on the market today make it increasingly difficult for the student to know everything about each textile and to keep abreast of all new fibers. However, students need a basic foundation in textiles and fabrics on which they can build if they are to select household and commercial textiles that will fulfill both their esthetic and functional requirements. How can students best learn textiles? A good starting point might be with a basic knowledge of the four natural fibers. From these develop the characteristics of the basic synthetic fibers. An understanding of the basic weaves is another fundamental. Perhaps the best method of learning the handling quality of fabrics is through experience.

15. Developing abilities to read with discrimination and to write effectively lead to the ability to communicate effectively. (Mean Rating 1.44)

This concept rated high as a non-design concept but was below most of the design oriented concepts. Prior to rating the concepts, the designers rated English as the most important non-design course to interior designers. Designers interpret their design ideas by renderings, but it is also necessary for them to communicate. Oral expression is fundamental when discussing problems, ideas, and solutions with clients. Written expression is vital when writing specifications or communicating with manufacturers.

16. Close estimation of one, two, and three dimensional measurements aid the ability to develop pleasing relationships of sizes and shapes.
(Mean Rating 1.48)

Designers find that mathematics are an aid to their work. It is valuable to be able to measure accurately. Also the ability to estimate with some accuracy can save time, materials, and money. Through mathematics, designers might also better understand the relationship of sizes, shapes, and spaces. Descriptive geometry could be used to aid the designer in creating new line movements and form as well as provide a background for explaining design solutions. It is doubtful that the designers in this study had this advanced type of mathematics in mind when rating this concept.

17. Learning to think through problems by deduction and logic stimulates the ability to solve design problems. (Mean Rating 1.51)

Organization of thought may present a problem to design students when faced with many decisions to make concerning a design solution. It might be that the analytical procedures used in logic and deductive thinking would be helpful to students in thinking through and organizing thought when solving design problems.

18. Practices and procedures, of the business world and knowledge of current demand, supply, price, and cost are basic to persons in marketing.
(Mean Rating 1.55)

Practitioners indicated the importance of business and economics both in responses to open-end questions and in

rating non-design course work. One designer stated that decorators usually had no business ability at all. This statement is doubtful. It might be that such knowledge would be more pertinent to designers going into business for themselves or for those assuming the responsibility of a buyer.

19. A general education provides the designer with expanded information for solving design problems.
(Mean Rating 1.62)

During the interviews for this study, practitioners mentioned a number of times that a student with greater breadth in general education is better prepared to meet the challenges of the field. Knowledge of particular facts and skills are of little use until they can be tied together to a meaningful nucleus of knowledge. An understanding that all knowledge is general would enable the student to develop a vast core of pertinent information which could be integrated into all design solutions.

20. A general understanding of the properties and laws of matter, sound, heat, light, and electricity provide a background for designers decisions.
(Mean Rating 1.88)

It is difficult for interior designers to solve design problems without the need to refer to some of the properties mentioned in this concept. When specialists are called upon for advice in these areas, the interior designers must be equipped with enough working knowledge to collaborate effectively. A background in the properties of matter,

sound, heat, light, and structures could aid the designer in creating more functional, sound, adaptable design solutions.

21. The organization and coordination of color, form, line, light, and texture on two dimensional flat surfaces contributes to an understanding of basic design. (Mean Rating 1.96)

This concept was one of the two design concepts that was rated low by the interior designers in this study. Questions concerning clarity arose several times during the interviews. In this case, the importance of two dimensional design problems was the question. The questions and the rank suggest that today's decorators apparently lack depth in the basic fundamentals of the field in which they work. This concept concerned the same design elements that the designers rated as an important idea to be taught in design. It might be that they are acquainted with the language only and not a clear understanding of design. Perhaps it is the responsibility of the schools to convey to students the understanding that design is design no matter what media is used.

22. Combining color, form, line, texture, and light in scaled three dimensional models aids the designer in visualizing their relationship. (Mean Rating 2.33)

This was the second design concept that received a low rating. Again the clarity of the concept was questioned by several designers. In addition to two dimensional design problems, the interior design student might have a

better opportunity to visualize and evaluate his work by the use of scaled three dimensional models. Here again the questions and rank of this concept may suggest that today's decorators lack depth in the basic fundamentals of the field in which they work. Perhaps the "decorator" oriented past training is a reason for this apparent lack of understanding the design elements. But, today's designers work in rooms and all rooms are three dimensional. This might indicate that decorators are not really visualizing the relationship of the design elements when solving design problems.

23. An appreciation of literary and music masterpieces foster an appreciation of good design.
(Mean Rating 2.62)

An appreciation of other creative arts such as good literature and music might stimulate students to be more creative in their design solutions. It would seem that these creative arts would also contribute to the designers aesthetic senses.

24. A knowledge of a foreign language adds to the cultural background of a professional person.
(Mean Rating 3.44)

Foreign language was mentioned by half of the designers as important in the rating of non-design course work. Students might become more aware of cultural backgrounds influencing both early and present designs through knowledge

of a foreign language. Self cultural development and appreciation could also be enriched through foreign languages.

On the whole, designers rated these concepts high. Only one was rated below three. It is possible that the designers rated concepts higher or lower in relation to the different amounts of formal training or years of experience in the field. A Chi-square test was used in a comparison between twelve designers with formal training in interior design and fifteen designers with little or no formal training. The test was to determine if there was any significant relation between the two groups in the way they rated certain concepts. Since the ratings of concepts numbered 4,5,21, and 22, showed the greatest variation they were used for testing. To avoid working with very small groups, ratings 1 and 2 were grouped and ratings 3,4, and 5 were grouped. Upon completing calculations it was found that educational background was not significantly related to ratings given by the designers for these concepts.

A Chi-square test was also applied in a comparison of the number of years of experience and the ratings of these four concepts. The results revealed that the number of years of experience was not significantly related to ratings given by the designers for these concepts.

The relative significance of each concept, based on the ratings of the designers in this study, was determined by a Chi-square test. The results indicated that the mean ratings of twenty-one of the twenty-four concepts were

significant at the one per cent (.01) level of significance. One mean rating was significant at the five per cent (.05) level while two mean ratings were found to be not significant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the most chaotic periods in the development of any profession occurs when the knowledge and skills required are greater than can be met by past programs of training for the profession. Today's interior designers and decorators find themselves involved in such a period of development. Both the practitioners in the field and instructors in the classrooms have shown concern about the content of the curricula and about the education of instructors so that interior designers can be adequately trained.

A review of the literature revealed wide differences in the education for interior design today. It also pointed up disagreements between designers in the field regarding what they think should be taught.

Developing a curriculum that can best serve to prepare interior designers qualified to meet the demands and competition of today's professional world is not easy, nor will it be accomplished overnight. This study was undertaken as a step toward a better understanding of the direction that practicing interior designers think future curriculums might take. The study might also serve to strengthen the communication between practicing interior

CHAPTER V

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designers and instructors in educational institutions.

The purpose of the study was threefold; (1) to identify the education and experience of practicing interior designers and decorators, (2) to determine the types of work engaged in by these interior designers included in this study, and (3) to identify the knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators believed to be most pertinent for future interior designers.

Twenty-seven interior designers and decorators in the Greensboro, North Carolina area supplied the data for this study by personal interview. An interview schedule was designed and used for recording the data.

Education and Experience

Tabulation of the data indicated that three-fourths of the designers in this study had training in interior design, while one-fourth had no interior design training. The designers had experience in the field ranging from two months to forty-three years. Only five were affiliated with professional design organizations, while twenty-two were not. Over seventy per cent of the designers interviewed offered exclusively or almost exclusively residential services. Twenty-five per cent offered one-fourth commercial contract and three-fourth residential services, while only one was predominately commercial contract.

Responsibilities and Work

Designers and decorators in this study performed a

variety of tasks such as; consulted with clients; rendered scaled floor plans, wall elevations, and perspectives; specified materials; obtained specific measurements and estimated yardages; and suggested and supervised physical changes in structures. The majority of the designers selected materials and furnishings from samples, stock, and catalogues. One recommendation for each design solution was offered by two-thirds of the designers while one-third gave a choice of two or three completely different solutions. Eighty per cent designed custom draperies. Store employees or sub-contractors constructed and installed the majority of these. In one case the clients were responsible for installation.

Knowledge and Skills

In response to six open-end questions, in which designers expressed their opinions concerning the education of future interior designers, suggestions varied widely. The question concerning courses from past schooling that interior designers had found most helpful was answered by only the nineteen who had had formal training. History was the course from past schooling mentioned most frequently as being most helpful. A surprisingly large number, 42.1 per cent, volunteered history although they did not differentiate between history per se and history of art, history of architecture, or history of furniture. In addition, one or more of the design elements, textiles and fabrics, and

renderings each was mentioned several times as the course from past schooling that had proved most helpful on the job.

The question concerning courses that interior designers think would be helpful, but that they did not have the opportunity to study, were answered by the nineteen who had had training in interior design. Twenty-six per cent had no regrets concerning their past training, which might denote the designers' hesitancy in admitting possible deficiencies in their past training or that due to the time lapse did not accurately recall sources of knowledge. Textiles and fabrics were mentioned most frequently by, 15.8 per cent, as the area the area the designers wished they had had more opportunity to study. In addition, marketing, architectural design, mathematics, and marketing sources each was mentioned two times as an area where more study would have been beneficial.

Designers were asked what the most important ideas were that need to be taught in design. Here the respondents could make responses based on experience as well as past training without acknowledging any deficiency which might stem from lack of training. Only two designers made no response. One or more of the design elements were mentioned by over one half of the designers as important ideas to be taught in design. Design principles and textiles were mentioned by 44.4 per cent as being important to teach. History and psychology of people were mentioned by 22.2 per cent and 18.5 per cent of the designers as important

ideas. These responses were surprising since the question was concerned with ideas to be taught in design.

Another question concerned ideas that recent interior design students and graduates failed to grasp. The responses were necessarily limited to the fifteen designers having contact with recent students and graduates. Over one half of these designers mentioned the lack of knowledge in textiles and fabrics. Also mentioned were deficiencies such as the following: failure of students to apply schooling to actual experience, that is, failure to translate and apply knowledge to their work; lack of salesmanship; and unconvincing presentations.

Concerning ideas on how design can best be taught, combination lecture and laboratory was mentioned most frequently as the best method. Also, more practical work experience was mentioned several times. One might wonder if the designers were thinking of schooling with this response. Over one-fourth offered no response admitting lack of knowledge in classroom procedures. The lack of originality in the responses to this question might be an indication of the influences that past training, instructors, and environment have on opinions.

The final open-end question asked designers how one learns to be creative. The most frequent response was that creativity is an inborn ability that must be nurtured and developed. In addition, several designers thought that creativity could be taught to anyone, while an equal number

believed creativity was totally a natural ability. In no case were any suggestions or indications offered concerning the methods for teaching creativity

English, business administration, mathematics, and social sciences were the non-design courses mentioned by approximately twenty-five per cent of the designers in this study as important to interior design. Foreign language and philosophy were rated by about half as important and by about half as not important. Courses rated as definitely not important were: professional education, natural sciences, music, and drama.

In general, all twenty-four concepts believed to be pertinent to interior design used in this study were rated high. Designers rated the concepts on a scale from one to five with the number one indicating most important and the number five least important. Considering 3.00 as average, only one concept was rated below average. In rank order from high to low, according to mean ratings, are the concepts as they were rated by the twenty-seven interior designers and decorators in this study.

1. Designers work with color, form, line, light, and texture in executing creative solutions to design problems. (Mean Rating 1.03)
2. Traffic patterns and circulation in a room influence the selection and arrangement of furnishings. (Mean Rating 1.07)
3. Both the decorative and the psychological effects of color need to be understood and applied by designers. (Mean Rating 1.11)

4. Design requires a fine sense of relationships of spaces to achieve good proportion. (Mean Rating 1.11)
5. The History of Art, History of Architecture, History of Furniture and Textiles Design contributes to today's design solutions. (Mean Rating 1.18)
6. Creativity is the capacity to innovate, invent, or reorganize design elements in new ways. (Mean Rating 1.25)
7. Designers need to understand the construction processes used in furniture, upholstery, and draperies for judging the quality of products, the relationship of quality to price and for supervising workroom employees. (Mean Rating 1.25)
8. The kind and amount of light effects the functional and decorative aspects of a room. (Mean Rating 1.29)
9. Aesthetic interiors require the harmonious integration of furnishings with structural features. (Mean Rating 1.29)
10. Individual and group needs for adequate space to perform activities are a prime consideration when executing interior designs. (Mean Rating 1.29)
11. Floor plans, elevations, and perspectives are visual interpretations of a designer's ideas. (Mean Rating 1.33)
12. Only by designing does a designer learn to coordinate the whole of functional and esthetic elements. (Mean Rating 1.33)
13. Knowledge of human behavior and personality contributes to the livability of design solutions. (Mean Rating 1.40)
14. Designers need an understanding of the handling and draping qualities, the fiber content, the weaves, the finishes and the care of fabrics to predict performance. (Mean Rating 1.40)
15. Developing abilities to read with discrimination and to write effectively lead to the ability to communicate effectively. (Mean Rating 1.44)
16. Close estimation of one, two, and three dimensional measurements aid the ability to develop pleasing relationships of sizes and shapes. (Mean Rating 1.48)

17. Learning to think through problems by deduction and logic stimulates the ability to solve design problems. (Mean Rating 1.51)
18. Practices and procedures of the business world and knowledge of current demand, supply, price, and cost are basic to persons in marketing. (Mean Rating 1.55)
19. A general education provides the designer with expanded information for solving design problems. (Mean Rating 1.62)
20. A general understanding of the properties and laws of matter, sound, heat, light, and electricity provide a background for designers decisions. (Mean Rating 1.88)
21. The organization and coordination of color, form, line, light, and texture on two dimensional flat surfaces contributes to an understanding of basic design. (Mean Rating 1.96)
22. Combining color, form, line, texture, and light in scaled three dimensional models aids the designer in visualizing their relationship. (Mean Rating 2.33)
23. An appreciation of literary and music masterpieces foster an appreciation of good design. (Mean Rating 2.62)
24. A knowledge of a foreign language adds to the cultural background of a professional person. (Mean Rating 3.44)

The designers and decorators in this study tended to give high ratings to all concepts regardless of the amount of formal training in interior design or the number of years of experience in the field. Since concepts, by definition, encompass a large area of knowledge and skills, it might be expected that practitioners in the field would be familiar with the content of these concepts to some extent. Considering the diverse backgrounds in both formal schooling and in experience of the designers interviewed, one might anticipate greater variation in ratings. However, neither

educational training nor experience were significantly related to the ratings given. But certainly the depth of development and the breadth of understanding of these concepts cannot be the same regardless of depth of schooling or breadth of experience. Surely if experience is the great teacher, designers with experience in the field ranging from two months to forty-three years could not all be saying the same thing.

Some suggestions stressed by the designers and decorators seemed to be either of minor importance or irrelevant to the field of interior design. Could it be that some do not realize the difference between training for skills and techniques only suitable for one particular kind of job and developing the fundamentals of interior design as a background of general knowledge from which many design problems may be solved?

It is quite possible that many designers interviewed in this study had never really thought of what the profession might need in the future or how the students might best be educated. Perhaps the designers needed more time to think about the questions before responding. It might be that gathering into groups for the discussion of future training for interior designers would have been more beneficial.

While the designers and decorators in this study have given some suggestions and indications regarding the future education of interior designers, they alone do not

have the answer. In addition, the suggestions of instructors in educational institutions offering interior design, the suggestions of students in interior design, and perhaps the suggestions of consumers can also be used to examine the constantly changing needs for educational staff and curricula. However, it is hoped that this study may make a contribution, even though a vast amount of work is still needed to improve and update the education of future interior designers in the effort to provide a program that can best serve to develop qualified interior designers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIXES

December 17, 1961

Interior Designers and Decorators:

By way of introduction, I am a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My major is in Working with emphasis on Interior Design. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree, a student must complete a thesis problem.

I think that the professionals practicing in the field have a great deal to offer educators with regard to what is pertinent for interior designers and decorators entering the field. Therefore, I have chosen for my thesis the educational preparation of the interior designers as reported by practicing interior designers and decorators.

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is:

1. to identify the education and experience of practicing interior designers and decorators
2. to determine the types of work engaged in by interior designers and decorators
3. to designate the knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators believe to be most pertinent for future interior designers

I realize you are very busy, but may I have approximately thirty minutes of your time for a personal interview in order to obtain your contributions and suggestions for the educational improvement of future professionals.

If there is more than one designer or decorator employed, I would like to interview each separately. In order that I may arrange an appointment at your convenience, I will contact you by telephone sometime after the first of the new year.

Looking forward to talking with you, I am

Sincerely yours,

Lucy R. Hoffman
Lucy R. Hoffman
Graduate Assistant

December 17, 1965

Interior Designers and Decorators:

By way of introduction, I am a graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. My major is in Housing with emphasis on Interior Design. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree, a student must complete a thesis problem.

I think that the professionals practicing in the field have a great deal to offer educators with regard to what is pertinent for interior designers and decorators entering the field. Therefore, I have chosen for my thesis the educational preparation of future interior designers as suggested by practitioners in the profession.

The purpose of this study is threefold:

1. to identify the education and experience of practicing interior designers and decorators
2. to determine the types of work engaged in by interior designers and decorators
3. to designate the knowledge and skills practicing interior designers and decorators believe to be most pertinent for future interior designers

I realize you are very busy, but may I have approximately thirty minutes of your time for a personal interview in order to obtain your contribution and suggestions for the educational improvement of future professionals.

If there is more than one designer or decorator employed, I would like to interview each separately. In order that I may arrange an appointment at your convenience, I will contact you by telephone sometime after the first of the new year.

Looking forward to talking with you, I am

Cordially yours,

Lucy R. Hoffman
Lucy R. Hoffman
Graduate Assistant

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NAME _____ TITLE _____

EDUCATIONAL TRAINING

Specialty: _____ Specific: Interior Design

High School Graduate _____ College Graduate (4 yrs.) _____
 No. yrs. beyond H.S. _____ Technical Institute (3 yrs.) _____
 Degree or Cert. _____
 Highest level _____
 Name of School _____
 Degree _____
 Name of School _____
 Length of course _____
 Name of School _____
 Other _____

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

_____ OTHER _____

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Number of years of practice in the profession _____
 at present, full-time _____
 part-time designer or decorator _____
 If part-time, what per cent of your time is spent _____
 in decorative capacity _____
 as a sales person _____
 with educational duties _____
 others _____

What types of services constitute your main volume?

- Residential
- Commercial contracts
- Others _____

RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTERIOR DESIGNER AND DECORATOR

- Consultation _____
- Floor Plans scaled _____
- Wall alterations _____
- Perspective _____
- Specification of materials and measurements _____
- Suggestions for physical changes _____
- Supervision of physical changes _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

NAME _____ TITLE _____

EDUCATIONAL PREPARATION

General: _____ Specific: Interior Design _____
____ High School Graduate _____ College Graduate (4 yrs.)
____ No. Yrs. Beyond H.S. _____ Technical School (3 yrs.)
____ Art _____ Degree or Cert. _____
____ Home Economics _____
____ College Graduate _____ Name of School _____
Degree _____
Name of School _____ Correspondance Courses _____
____ Length of course _____
Name of School _____
Other _____

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

____ AID _____ NSID _____ OTHERS _____

EXPERIENCE

____ Number of years of practice in the profession
____ At present, full-time
____ part-time designer or decorator
____ If part-time, what per cent of your time is spent
____ % in decorator capacity
____ % as a sales person
____ % with secretarial duties
____ % others _____

What types of services constitute your main volume?

____ % Residential
____ % Commercial contract
____ % Others _____

RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN INTERIOR DESIGNER AND DECORATOR

Yes	No
____	____ Consultation _____
____	____ Floor Plans scaled _____
____	____ Wall elevations _____
____	____ Perspectives _____
____	____ Specification of materials and measurements _____
____	____ Suggestions for physical changes _____
____	____ Supervision of physical changes _____

Selection of Furnishings: How do you present selection possibilities to clients?

	Select from samples or stock	Select from catagloues	Markets showrooms or stores	Carry samples into homes
Wall coverings				
Floor coverings				
Draperies				
Furniture				
Accessories				

___ Decorator gives a choice of recommedations with clients' final approval.

___ Decorator gives a single recommendation.

Of the above furnishings mentioned:

What is the most difficult item(s) to find? _____

What item(s) present the most difficulty in gaining client approval? _____

How is the installation and application of wall and floor coverings handled?

Do you design custom draperies and bedspreads? Yes No

Who does the construction - installation

How is the reupholstery of furniture handled for clients?

Do you make the selection of drapery hardware? Yes No

Who installes?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE INTERIOR DESIGNERS EDUCATION

How did you become interested in Interior Decorating?

Where did you begin your decorating experience?(type of store and location)

What courses in your past schooling have proven to be most helpful in your work?

What courses do you think would be beneficial in your work that you most regret not having the opportunity to study?

Do you think designers and decorators need to study:

<input type="checkbox"/> Social Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Administration	<input type="checkbox"/> English Comp. and Lit.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Drama	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	

What do you consider the most important ideas that need to be taught in design?

Have you had contact with recent interior design graduates?
 Yes No

What are some important ideas they have failed to grasp?

Do you have any ideas how design can best be taught?

How does one learn to be creative?

Listed below are some ideas the interviewer believes to be important in interior design. You are to judge the degree of importance based on your experience in the field. Number (1) indicates most important and number (5) is least important on the rating scale. Place a check in the column you think represents the degree of importance each idea has in an interior design curriculum.

	1	2	3	4	5
1. A general understanding of the properties and laws of matter, sound, heat, light, and electricity provide a background for designers decisions.					
2. Close estimation of 1,2, & 3 dimensional measurements aid the ability to develop pleasing relationships of sizes & shapes.					

(con't)

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3. Practices and procedures of the business world and knowledge of current demand, supply, price and cost are basic to persons in marketing. | | | | | |
| 4. A knowledge of a foreign language adds to the cultural background of a professional person. | | | | | |
| 5. An appreciation of literary and music masterpieces foster an appreciation of good design. | | | | | |
| 6. Developing abilities to read with discrimination and to write effectively lead to the ability to communicate effectively. | | | | | |
| 7. Learning to think through problems by deduction and logic stimulates the ability to solve design problems. | | | | | |
| 8. Knowledge of human behavior and personality contributes to the livability of design solutions. | | | | | |
| 9. The history of Art, history of Architecture, history of Furniture and Textiles design contributes to today's design solutions. | | | | | |
| 10. The kind and amount of light affects the functional and decorative aspects of a room. | | | | | |
| 11. Both the decorative and the psychological effects of color need to be understood and applied by designers. | | | | | |
| 12. Traffic patterns and circulation in a room influence the selection and arrangement of furnishings. | | | | | |
| 13. Aesthetic interiors require the harmonious integration of furnishings with structural features. | | | | | |
| 14. Creativity is the capacity to innovate, invent, or reorganize design elements in new ways. | | | | | |

(con't)

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15. Individual and group needs for adequate space to perform activities are a prime consideration when executing interior design. | | | | | |
| 16. Floor plans, elevations, and perspectives are visual interpretations of a designers' ideas. | | | | | |
| 17. Designers work with color, form, line, light, and texture in executing creative solutions to design problems. | | | | | |
| 18. Design requires a fine sense of relationships of spaces to achieve good proportion. | | | | | |
| 19. Designers need an understanding of the handling and draping qualities, the fiber content, the weaves, the finishes & the care of fabrics to predict performance. | | | | | |
| 20. Only by designing does a designer learn to coordinate the whole of functional & esthetic elements. | | | | | |
| 21. Combining color, form, line, texture, and light in scaled three dimensional models aids the designer in visualizing their relationship. | | | | | |
| 22. The organization & coordination of color, form, line, texture & light on two dimensional flat surfaces contributes to an understanding of basic design. | | | | | |
| 23. Designers need to understand the construction processes used in furniture, upholstery & draperies for judging the quality of products, the relationship of quality to price & the supervising of workroom employees. | | | | | |
| 24. A general education provides the designer with expanded information for solving design problems. | | | | | |