

## ABSTRACT

## KNOWHERE: FINDING WAYS TO TEACH WAYFINDING SAMANTHA PERKINS

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“Not all those who wander are lost.”—JR Tolkien

While today’s mobile technologies offer the typical traveler multiple ways of finding their destination, sometimes people get lost. When they do, they tend to look for devices, such as signage or directories, that will orient them within their environment and help them find their way.

This is wayfinding. A fantastic tool, wayfinding deals with communicating navigational information to travelers in a clear, concise manner. Because wayfinding addresses the communication of information using graphic elements (typography and symbols), it naturally falls within the realm of graphic design. And because it also deals with ideas of spatial arrangements, architects and interior designers get to weigh in too.

But sometimes problems in clear communication arise, especially when understanding between the design fields breaks down, or when the actual audience is overlooked.

Luckily, we can address these issues early, at the educational level... Assuming we rethink the current wayfinding education model.

Wayfinding education within the traditional models focus on signage placement and layout—again, in the graphic design fields. Here, varying programs teach wayfinding from a layout perspective, focusing on typography and composition alone, rather than the manner in which people move or how the context already provides clues. On the other hand, most interior design and architecture programs ignore the potential of the field entirely.

By rethinking these issues, considering all disciplines of navigation in the process, we can establish a wayfinding education model that seeks to help explain the how and the why behind navigation, regardless of the ultimate where.

But how do we teach behavior and context in the static environment of a standard classroom? We don’t.

Knowhere, an immersive education model designed to teach wayfinding from a more hands-on approach, uses graphic design to establish educational events that communicate ideas of design elements in an immersive context and environment.





Through the use of mobile studio equipment, interactive design, and exhibit design, the Knowhere model pulls students out of their chairs and immerses them in the world of wayfinding in ways that encourage exploration and creative analysis.



Rather than dictate how wayfinding design must change, Knowhere outlines principles designed to assist students in forming their own opinions, design solutions, and methods. Foundational understanding combines with contemporary technologies to enhance educational explorations using both traditional and new media forums.

Ultimately, Knowhere proposes to not only present standard lessons and lectures, but challenge students to investigate and document, to see what's been done, what works and what ultimately might be.

