

**Hungarian University of Fine Arts
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Fruzsina Augusztinyi

Emotional Spaces

Immersion as a Complex Tool for Skill Development

The Role of Storytelling in the Design of Experiential Spaces for Skill Development

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Theses

- In an immersive (engagement-focused) therapeutic space, the user's experiential engagement is more successful when the designer goes beyond considering the space's function, use, expectations, and preferences prior to the design process and actively participates in the processes and tasks involved in working with the people who require these specific spaces. Building an empathetic connection between designer and the user is crucial when determining design parameters, especially when working with vulnerable individuals.
- When designing Snoezelen spaces and other multisensory environments, it is beneficial to integrate the context-building methods used in analogue immersive space design to foster user engagement. This method delivers a deeper experience and stronger therapeutic effects. This approach not only enriches the space with sensory stimuli but also enhances its meaning and functional role these stimuli serve within the environment. By adapting the space to a broader spectrum of user abilities, it can offer more complex development and therapy, and in some cases, allows both normative and non-normative individuals to connect meaningfully.
- In therapeutic rooms, attention-grabbing tools should be applied thoughtfully, tailored to the specific user group. Additionally, designers must also provide opportunities to disengage from these tools and methods.
- Designing immersive spaces for complex therapeutic skill development differs from interior design, theatrical set design, and performance-space design. As medical

considerations and the need to thoroughly understand target populations with specific spatial requirements take priority, it cannot be categorised as standard immersive spatial design. However, the design process can be assembled by integrating elements from the processes of these individual fields.

- Snoezelen rooms are not primarily designed to place users in context. Due to their therapeutic nature, they facilitate physical sensory experiences through basal stimulation. Using the unique features of analogue immersive spaces, we can deepen the immersiveness of the therapeutic environment. This increases the value of experiential learning, motivation, and focus, even when participants are not fully aware of their own physical and mental state.