

## JOEL POLSKY PRIZE

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### Project Description:

People innately need to connect with nature. Active and passive connections to nature are beneficial to human health. Biophilic design offers a type of “neurological nourishment” in applying nature to the built environment and offers health benefits which require organized complexity, like nature offers. Stephen Kellert proposed a list of biophilic attributes (2008) which he used to develop the Biophilic Design Matrix (BDM) to operationalize biophilic design for interior designers in 24 different spaces. The study further refined BDM through a participatory design that used designer's feedback, including a request for online access. The revision process included a systematic instrument development with cognitive interviews of expert interior designers. Cognitive interviews offer proven benefits for instrument development and aid validity and reliability, incorporating user needs to fine-tune the language, avoid jargon, improve ease of use, and then further test with 24 designers. Each designer completed a pre- and post-questionnaire surrounding their use of the BDM. The results show the revised BDM has strong reliability ( $\alpha = .94$ ). Designers' knowledge about biophilic design increased after use, with one designer responding that the BDM “is a valuable reference tool as we approach wellness goals of the space.” It was further tested with students in a studio course who increased their knowledge, confidence, and perceptions of the importance of biophilic design. The outcomes show that the designer driven tool is not a checklist but a language useful throughout the design process, and an educational aid.