



'We have everything we need and nothing more, and somehow that makes everything simpler'

When Melissa Zerbin, '13 BA, Kenton Zerbin, '09, BEd, '11 Dip(Ed), and their cat moved into a 34.18-square-metre home on a farmer's field near Edmonton two years ago, she said she was going to hate it for three months. "And then I'd make my assessment on

whether I was going to keep hating it," she told Kenton.

But she loves their house. The couple designed every square centimetre—all 341,800 of them—from the solar panels on the roof to an extra-wide interior so they don't have to "shimmy past each other." They sleep in the loft above the kitchen and overnight guests stay in the smaller loft above the bathroom. There's a couch and a fold-out table for games nights with (no more than five) friends. "We use up a lot of storage with our board game collection," Melissa admits.

There can be tension over who gets to sleep on which side of the bed, but there's nowhere to storm off to. "My wife and I work hard on our interpersonal skills and we don't get into many arguments," Kenton says. They just figure things out, like Melissa's growing wardrobe. Doing her master's in occupational

therapy, she needed spiffier clothes for practicums. So Kenton rolls up his clothes and stores them in a hollow in the bathroom wall, near the drying rack, washing machine, shower (they truck in water) and composting toilet (not as bad as you may think.)

Kenton gives workshops about tiny houses and the Zerbins are thrilled with their small environmental and financial footprints.

and rent their spot by undertaking some significant yearly farm chores.) More municipalities are making room in their bylaws for tiny houses as more people invest the \$40,000 to \$120,000 it takes to build one. "It feels like a shoe that fits," Melissa says of their home. Speaking of shoes, those not in season live in the shed.

-JENNIFER ALLFORD, '84 BA



INNER SPACE

An interdisciplinary centre allows you to virtually venture where you couldn't before

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A

three-dimensional space based on a flat illustration, especially when the space is microscopic—think the inside of a cell. Cognitive Projections aims to change all that. It's an interdisciplinary lab that uses virtual and augmented reality in teaching and learning. Now you can put on a headset and take a virtual tour inside a cell, even manipulating the Golgi bodies and mitochondria if you like.

"This technology is driven by gamers," says Nathanial Maeda, '12 BSc(MechEng), '18 PhD, director of operations. The centre has programming expertise, an artist on staff and access to digital 3D libraries.

Zoom out: students can perform their first head-and-neck dissections virtually, getting an in-depth understanding of the bones, the various tissues and their functions before they ever get close to a cadaveric dissection.

Zoom out further: students can practise clinical skills on virtual patients, so by the time they meet a real one, they have exercised that muscle well. "Currently, examiners end up testing students' ability to stay cool," Maeda says. "VR practice can remove anxiety from the equation so it's students' clinical knowledge that is getting tested."

Now make that space bigger: an immersive VR experience inside a roomsized cube allows patients working with experts at the Institute for Stuttering Treatment and Research to practise speaking in front of virtual crowds. Maeda plans for the centre to work with veterans with PTSD to provide immersive therapy to help them master their trigger experiences.

"We have content experts from across campus and we're hoping to garner industry partners," says Maeda. "There are so many possibilities." -MIFI PURVIS, '93 BA

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