ASSESSING STUDENT LEARNING OF LANDSCAPE PERFORMANCE

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1 ABSTRACT

Utilizing landscape performance as a framework to assess design sustainability continues to be a stronghold in the field. Teaching landscape performance principles is now a requirement for degree programs accredited by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB, 2016), but there is a gap in the literature on assessment of student learning successes and challenges. The purpose of this study was to develop a pre- and post-survey tool to investigate interest, competency, and applicability of landscape performance in the landscape architecture curriculum. The survey was distributed to 35 students in a site design or technical course that included landscape performance learning objectives at the beginning of the fall 2017 academic term, prior to any instruction in landscape performance and at conclusion of the term. Quantitative and qualitative response coding and analysis was conducted over a month and a half following course completion. Students exhibited improvement in multiple dimensions of understanding landscape performance between the pre- and post-course, and students highly valued the landscape performance approach for making evidence-based design decisions. Students also gained in-depth awareness of the importance of organizational resource support and data quality to ensure success of the approach. Remaining challenges that emerged in student reflections include understanding the relationship of landscape performance with site analysis, as well as quantification methods and design creativity. This initial exploration of landscape performance pedagogy provides critical insights for effectively meeting LAAB requirements as well as informing further research needs for student preparedness and landscape performance teaching materials.

1.1 Keywords

Landscape Performance, Student Assessment, Curriculum, Landscape Architecture Pedagogy