

ABSTRACT

This paper compares Chinese and American introductory landscape architecture studios at Huazhong University of Science & Technology, China and the University of Washington, USA. The authors, two Chinese and one American, co-taught studios as visiting scholars at these institutions over a three-year period. We highlight the influences of physical environments and socio-cultural contexts on studio pedagogy in each country and compare and contrast the curricula, pedagogical methods and learning objectives of introductory design studios in these two institutions. Student work from Chinese and American studios is used to illustrate the main conclusions of the study and in-class student reflections and reflections of Chinese students two years after completing a co-taught introductory studio provided insight into the motives, attitudes of mind, and practices of Chinese students. Large increases in the numbers of Chinese graduate and undergraduate students attending American universities make it increasingly important to understand the differing pedagogical practices and goals of American and Chinese institutions and how these are manifested in teaching methods, styles and curricula. The paper draws general conclusions about the similarities and differences between Chinese and American first year design studio pedagogy.