

EXPANDING THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

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1 ABSTRACT

With the fall 2020 semester taking place in a virtual environment, two professors, one in landscape architecture and one in ecology, hailing from different universities, came together with an experimental scenario. This study explored how the research seminar and remote teaching can take on a new form of collaboration in the classroom. Building on the two disciplines of the academics, the course provided the students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and establish a broader network outside of their current institution and field of study. Merging the courses at specific times during the semester, fostering discussion and engagement, critiquing design work, and participating with case studies that demonstrated ecological design, informed the work produced in both courses. The students were a mix of graduate landscape architecture, urban planning, and ecological science. At the end of the semester the faculty performed an anonymous survey, inquiring about the perceived benefits and challenges of the overlapping courses. The students responded positively, stating that the course expanded their thinking and was a significant benefit to their studies and perspectives in their fields. Furthermore, the students suggested future course collaborations with disciplines such as, art, architecture, information science, human ecology, indigenous studies, and real estate. Some drawbacks mentioned were, zoom fatigue, difficulty collaborating across multiple time zones, and collaborating in person due to social distancing. This paper focuses on the opportunities and outcomes from the approach, exploring how this overlap could engage more productive, and novel remote learning environment in the future.

1.1 Keywords:

Remote learning, shared teaching, interdisciplinary practice