

# IMPROVING STUDENT LEARNING THROUGH INTEGRATED PROJECT EXPERIENCES

## **ROTAR, SEAN**

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, srotar@purdue.edu

## **BARBARASH, DAVID**

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, dbarbara@purdue.edu

## **DAHL, BERNIE**

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, bdahl@purdue.edu

## **HILDNER, ANN**

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, ahildner@purdue.edu

### **1 ABSTRACT**

*Design projects draw on a broad range of knowledge and skill areas for successful completion. However, in most landscape architecture curricula the rigid structure of faculty assignments and course descriptions prevent learning outcomes that allow students to experience the impact of multiple skill areas in shaping solutions. Rather, students operate within “silos” of information without adequately drawing the connections between subject areas that are necessary to achieve a systematic design solution. Furthermore, because students don’t consider the ways in which one knowledge area influences the others, and the refinements that result, student design solutions can be one-dimensional.*

*Realizing an opportunity, the faculty of Purdue University’s junior-level courses in design, grading and drainage, plant materials, and construction documents began seeking a single project that would allow the students to integrate material from all of these courses in a single project. This paper describes a project process created by the authors to combat these inherent drawbacks of the traditional curricular structure. Rather than simply using a common site to achieve individual course outcomes, the authors sought a fully integrated experience that would emulate a professional’s process and enrich the end product.*

*The paper will explore the process created and propose opportunities for programs with like curricula structures to implement similar integrated project experiences, and will include preliminary data gathered. Further data and analysis on the results of this particular methodology to follow once a reasonable sample size is collected.*

#### **1.1 Keywords**

studio pedagogy, curriculum, systems approach