

EXPLORATORY BUILDING: A MAKERS APPROACH TO LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION

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1 ABSTRACT

The authors argue that Design-Build has been an innovative and effective method of implementing landscape architecture studios where designs are both designed and built, and students learn by thinking, reflecting, and doing. We suggest using the term Exploratory Building (EB) to better describe the academic learning model that encourages student exploration and discovery of innovative ways of designing, making, and problem solving. Its strengths include a symbiotic relationship between the acts of design and building, tangible community service, created assets, professional skill development, and ease of transition from academia to practice. Many faculty believe EB is a difficult model to implement and incorporate in their curricula. Understanding the many challenges and significant efforts required, we use decades shared experience and literature to offer strategies to develop and manage EB programs and reduce resistance to the expansion of this model within the Landscape Architecture pedagogy. We argue that the challenges of funding, time demands, liability, and the application of EB to recognition and promotion can be addressed. What remains, a critical area of further research and documentation, is to improve upon and address the pedagogical advantages that students perceive to result from this learning model. The modest number of experienced faculty and programs continually implementing EB suggests a rigorous assessment of landscape architecture EB programs is critical to document the value, or the lack of, that students place upon the EB model, and to encourage additional LA faculty to develop EB programs in their respective institutions.

1.1 Keywords:

Design-build, pedagogy, service-learning, experiential

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