

Journey or Destination? Effective student learning in transport planning

Abstract

Transport planning is an integral part of most Australian planning programs. This paper summarises research conducted at Griffith University in 2009 on teaching and learning in transport planning education. A detailed examination of learning objectives is used to frame the problem, drawn from course outlines in Australian and US planning programs. Where once transport planning education was narrowly focused on predicting and planning for roadway capacity, the subject now encompasses a wider set of problems including sustainability, equity, neighbourhood amenity and health (Handy et al. 2002:piii). Learning objectives therefore include: understandings of planning theory, and how these relate to transportation planning; understandings of key concepts in transportation and land use planning; practical skills in capturing information on travel behaviour, in analysing that data, and in modelling and simulation to predict transport futures; and, other educational goals, including academic writing, statistical skill development, and presentation skills. The paper explores how these learning objectives can best be met, using examples provided by Frank (2002), Flyvberg (2001), Van Zuelen (2000) and Rose (2006). Recent changes to the Griffith University course in line with these approaches are then examined in detail, noting both their advantages and their significant limitations.

Jason PRIOR and Steve HARFIELD

Capitalist democracies and societal planning: Tracing legitimation

Abstract

Howsoever we choose to define the nature, scope and aims of social planning, it is inevitable that we will draw attention, whether explicitly or tacitly, to the multi-faceted and often contradictory *values* that it represents; to the various *knowledge sources* that frame and inform it; and to the shifting and often oppositional *economic and political ideologies* that have underpinned its emergence throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. Each of these meta-factors, both independently and in inescapable concert with the others, plays an ongoing role in establishing the *intentions* of social planning; in delineating its *areas of concern and the extent of its intervention*; and in *legitimizing its interactions* with individual communities and with society in general.

As part of a larger study currently being conducted by the authors into the conjoined issues of the philosophical basis of, and thus the legitimation of, social planning, the current paper briefly explores the last of these factors, and examines the critical role of economic and political ideologies in shaping approaches to social policy and social planning. Drawing on archival material across a range of published British, American and Australian sources the paper traces the ways in which capitalism in its various emerging forms – from ‘unfettered capitalism’ based on free-market fundamentalism through to ‘organized capitalism’ (Hilferding & Bottomore 1981) and ‘social capitalism’ (Coorey & Totaro 2009) – has provided a frame for social intervention.

Jason PRIOR and Steve HARFIELD

Applied social knowledge and social planning: Tracing legitimation 2

Abstract

Throughout the 20th century knowledges of various types have played a key role in the legitimation of social planning. For a considerable portion of this time the belief that knowledge developed within the social sciences could be applied to deal effectively with social issues was widely accepted, and the idea of social planning based on the supposedly hard dispassionate facts provided by a rigorous social science analysis gained in authority. Such ascendancy was drastically curtailed in the later decades of the 20th century, to be replaced, in part, by the emergence of the authority of knowledge derived from empirical research, in particular empirical data derived from participative engagement.

Part of an ongoing research project investigating the philosophical bases of, and thus tracing the means of legitimation of, social planning, the current paper focuses on what sources of knowledge have been taken to have given authority to, and thus justified, social planning intervention. Drawing upon a range of published sources, the paper examines the role of the social sciences in planning, from its early and somewhat naïve beginnings anchored in the belief in a supposedly objective and value-free intervention, via its promotion of the significant contributions of the expert planner, and thence to its later commitment to more pluralistic forms of participant and experiential knowledge, with the role of the planner being as the facilitator and manager of such processes.

Hamish G RENNIE and Ali MEMON

'The' Re-presented Core of New Zealand Professional Planning Education in 2009

Abstract

The New Zealand Planning Institute (NZPI) accredits a number of specific New Zealand planning programmes offered by some New Zealand universities as meeting the academic requirements for their graduates to enter the Institute as graduate members. The programmes are reviewed every five years to assess their appropriateness for continued accreditation. A set of core planning knowledge and skill is set out in the NZPI education policy against which part of the assessment is conducted. This approach could be expected to result in a standard core to the planning programmes offered by New Zealand universities and a close match between the NZPI core knowledge and skill set and that offered by universities. However, planning programmes also have to meet the requirements of academic disciplines at university level. There are inherent tensions between the academy and the profession. The NZPI has announced a review of its education policy. As part of the input to that review, this paper explores and discusses the current core of New Zealand's accredited planning programmes based on a comparison of the prescriptions of the accredited programmes.

Paul McFARLAND, Wendy BECK and Robyn BARTEL

PIA AND NZ ACCREDITATION AND BENCHMARKING OF PLANNING COURSES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND – AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SHARED BENEFITS FOR ALL?

Abstract

A four-year undergraduate degree is the industry standard for an accredited planning degree in Australia and New Zealand. The respective professional bodies (PIA and NZPI) undertake accreditation and the current terms for this are framed broadly. Accreditation provides an external source of general guidance for articulating the general content and learning outcomes associated with a programme, but are not a specification of the detailed curriculum in the subject area. Discipline-level benchmarking, as has been carried out in the UK since 2002, achieves similar outcomes. Benchmarking, however, also offers other benefits, such as allowing programmes to be reviewed and evaluated within an overall framework; opening up discussion and debate about programme design and delivery; and, providing clear and transparent information to students and employers about subject areas and their particular focus and emphasis. Voluntary benchmarking of archaeology degrees has already taken place within Australian universities. The archaeology benchmarking project, involving 19 institutions and 6 professional associations, reports this process as resulting in better education and research programmes for now and into the future. This paper considers the current body of knowledge related to accreditation and benchmarking and examines if and how a benchmarking process could assist planning courses in Australia and New Zealand.

**Tan YIGITCANLAR, Severine MAYERE, Roisin McCARTNEY and
Mohd Zin Mohamed**

**Providing innovative planning education experience: teaching regional
planning in an international context**

Abstract

Rapidly changing economic, social, and environmental conditions have created a need for urban and regional planning practitioners who are resilient, innovative, and able to cope with the increasingly complex and cosmopolitan nature of major metropolitan areas. This need should be reflected in planning education that allows students to experience a diverse range of approaches to problems and challenges, and that exposes students to the diverse array of perspectives on planning issues. This paper investigates the outcomes of a collaborative regional planning exercise organised jointly by planning academics from both Queensland University of Technology and the International Islamic University of Malaysia, and involving planning students from both universities. The regional planning exercise consisted of a regional appraisal and report topics of the area under investigation, Klang Valley – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It culminated with the presentation of regional development strategies for the area, with a field trip to Malaysia being the cornerstone of the project. The collaborative exercise involved a series of workshops and seminars organised locally, in which both Australian and Malaysian planning students participated, as well as meetings with local and federal planning officials, and also a forum for Young Planners of Australian and Malaysian Planning Institutes. The experience attempted to bridge the teaching of theoretical concepts of regional planning and development and the regional, more professional knowledge of planning practice, as it relates to specific political, institutional and cultural contexts. A survey of participating students, from both Queensland University of Technology and the International Islamic University of Malaysia, highlights the benefits of such project in terms of leaning experience and exposure to different cultural contexts.

Claudia BALDWIN and Johanna ROSIER

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Experiential Learning in Preparing Planning Graduates

Abstract

The USC Regional and Urban Planning program coordinates the student's practical experience throughout the four year program, introducing a variety of practical learning experiences with planning practitioners, local developers, community representatives and later in the course, entire communities. Practical applications are an integral part of urban design studio courses, but also Participation and Conflict Resolution and Infrastructure Planning courses to expose students to real life clients and planning challenges. Whether the practical applications are achieving the desired outcomes is yet to be determined.

The aim of this paper is to develop a set of criteria to use in evaluating the effectiveness of practical experiences so that its contribution to core planning knowledge and skills needed by planning graduates can be measured. The timing is important for USC because in 2010, the first group of USC planning students will complete the fourth year studio course, in which a small community is the client. 2010 will also be the first year in which a cohort of students complete all studio and other courses including the practicum. Transparent criteria for evaluation will assist in improving the course and provide evidence for PIA review of accreditation.

This paper suggests a process for evaluating the effectiveness of this approach through use of methods and theory from the discipline of experiential learning.

Trevor BUDGE and Andrew BUTT

The Shock of the New: Experimenting with Innovative Methods to Teach Core Curriculum

Abstract

The Bachelor of Urban, Rural and Environmental Planning course commenced in 2007 and the new Master of Community Planning and Development this year. A strong feature of the program has been to use innovative methods to enable staff and students to relate to a diverse and complex agenda of items and to increase students job ready status. Five methods used in the last twelve months are presented, discussed and evaluated. They have embraced subjects and learning material delivered solely through field visits, the construction of group wikis as an interactive learning tool, development of a planned residential development in conjunction with practicing planners, engineers and landscape architects, a simulated community development program where the assessment relied upon emails generated by students undertaking specific roles and the preparation of an economic development strategy using field work and a classroom charrette. Each of these methods has drawn upon relevant technology, the increasing propensity for planners to be strategic coordinators of information, has sought to more closely replicate 'live' work situations and the realities of operating to tight deadlines.

Julie DAVIDSON

**Integrating climate change adaptation into planning education:
the UTAS experience**

Abstract

In 2007, the Australian Greenhouse Office (now the Department of Climate Change) commissioned a scoping study to investigate the training and development needs of built environment professionals in relation to climate change adaptation. Subsequently the Department called for proposals to be funded to build understanding and skills for climate change adaptation and to help mainstream climate change adaptation into planning education. This paper reports on the University of Tasmania's experience in developing climate change adaptation planning curriculum materials and integrating these into existing planning coursework structures. The paper includes an outline of the approaches used to determine requirements for coursework materials and expectations of planning graduates concerning appropriate knowledge, competencies and planning tools; thoughts on a relevant pedagogy; considerations involved in integrating materials into existing coursework; quality assurance processes; and discussion of flexible delivery approaches.

Jago DODSON and Neil SIPE

Securing suburbia: Oil vulnerability, planning practice and Australian cities

Abstract

This paper investigates oil vulnerability in Australian cities and the implications of this problem for Australian urban planning and planning elsewhere. The paper has four objectives. First, the paper investigates the changing global petroleum supply context and potential future supply trajectories. Second, the paper uses the notion of 'oil vulnerability' to investigate how such a changing global petroleum context might impact on cities and suburbs, with a focus on the Australia setting. Third, the paper examines current Australian planning practice to test whether metropolitan plans are addressing global petroleum supply questions. The paper concludes by setting out the planning research and practice challenges and responsibilities for urban scholars and educators, both in Australia and elsewhere, in responding to the changing global petroleum context through engagement with pedagogy, policy and public debate.

Jenny GEORGE

Customizing work-integrated learning to meet the needs of post-graduate planning students.

Abstract

Broadly recognized as an important learning tool across all tertiary education (Gray 2001) our research into the role of work-integrated learning in post-graduate planning education has recognized that post-graduate students identified flexibility needed in its application. This is largely due to the broad range and diversity of students in post-graduate studies when including age, work experience, previous education and cultural backgrounds. Feedback from current and past students of our planning program were consistent with the views in the literature regarding the value of work-integrated learning in offering an 'authentic learning environment' for a preparing a competent workforce (Delahaye and Choy 2007; Deissinger and Hellwi 2005) and bridging the gap often criticized in planning education between theory and practice (Freestone et al 2006). However our research showed that students preferred flexibility and options in learning approaches (ranging from campus based group-work, role-plays and case studies to field trips, client consultancy projects and work-placements) offering an ability to tailor to individual needs. Structured and well-supported work-placement units are needed for young and inexperienced new professionals while well-experienced professionals found such options unnecessary and even time-wasting. This paper recommends a customized individual approach to learning, attainable through a flexibility built into post-graduate planning programs and offers further insights into successful work-integrated learning with implications for employers and PIA.

Jenny GEORGE and Richard HORSFIELD

Comprehensive student profiling in the PIA accreditation process offers exciting new insights and strategic direction.

Abstract

The Planning Institute Australia's (PIA) re-accreditation process carried out in 2009 represented an important opportunity for the Graduate School of the Environment at Macquarie University to look at the content of its Masters of Environmental Planning program and its relationship to professional planning practice. It also provided an opportunity to examine the profiles of our students (past and present) and ask them about their backgrounds, experiences and aspirations. Thus, a comprehensive effort at student profiling was conducted involving a significant process of data collection and analysis to gather and understand the views and preferences of students. It provided substantial new information on the diversity of student backgrounds and students views of PIA, preferred subjects to study, and methods of teaching. For example results showed that accreditation is considered an important factor in the choices that students make with 78% of current students mentioning PIA's accreditation as an important reason for their selection of the course. This research offers an excellent example of student profiling and program evaluation and the results offer valuable insights for strategic directions in post-graduate planning education with thought provoking implication for PIA.

Nicole GURRAN and Peter PHIBBS

Learning from the Australian Urban Land Use Planning Monitor

Abstract

This paper reports on the implementation of the Australian Land Use Planning Policy Monitor. The Planning Policy Monitor was established in 2007, to develop a database on local statutory plan provisions relating to housing and environmental sustainability. It has several teaching and learning applications. Competency in interpreting, evaluating, and writing land use plans is a fundamental learning objective for students of urban and regional planning. Knowledge of major policy areas and the planning levers for their implementation – regulations for environmental protection or for managing sprawl – must combine with skills in plan writing and interpretation. But developing such knowledge and skills can be tedious and overwhelming for students, because land use plans are complex, heterogeneous, and context specific. This is also a research problem – when plans themselves are so divergent, it is difficult to generalize about their content, let alone their likely or actual impact.

The Planning Policy Monitor acquires plan content information via an internet survey of local statutory provisions. Planning students actively contribute to the data collection process by applying the survey to assigned plans while learning about different ways to implement objectives relating to environmental sustainability, housing choice and affordability, and how to interpret and interrogate different planning instruments purposively. We introduced the Planning Policy Monitor and its potential classroom applications to the ANZAPS conference in 2007. In this paper we present a synopsis of the data collected to date. With reference to a sample of student evaluations, we also discuss the use of the Monitor as a teaching and learning tool.

Steve HARFIELD

Thinking Through Theory: Function, Effect, & Control

Abstract

The idea of 'theory' is a commonplace in most disciplines, not least planning and urban design, and is accepted, apparently self-evidently, as being an important word, signifying the intellectual foundations that underpin thought and action. As such theory would seem to be of central importance to planning practice, and thus, it might be assumed, to planning education. Yet while this may simply be taken as read, our *involvement* with theory, in both practice *and* education, tends to be with our understanding of, acceptance of, and thus commitment to, *particular and specific theories*, based, presumably, on their use value – demonstrable or assumed – to our everyday needs. Pragmatically sound as this may be taken to be, it nevertheless suggests a significant lack of critical engagement with the notion of *theory-in-itself*.

Starting, then, from the simple yet substantially overlooked proposition that talking about *theories* is not the same as talking about *theory*, this paper explores the nature and role(s) of theory with particular reference to planning education and practice. Via the identification of three dualistic tensions underlying and characterizing the functionality of theory – identified here as the explanatory and the predictive; the analytic and the mediatory; and the enabling and the justificatory – the paper interrogates the ways that these functions 'work' in relation to our thinking practices, and thus our use of – and, significantly, our use *by* – theory.

Shaheed KHAN

Promoting Critical Perception of the City through Acquisition of 'Third Place' Neutrality

Abstract

Students can gain valuable knowledge through engagement with real life examples of planning issues and their resolution. This exposure, however, often remains quite limited to that of the urban context within which they are situated. Lessons learnt are often heavily biased by the urban setting and the prevalent cultural values and attitudes and therefore may not readily contribute to producing the self-critical planner who may challenge the *status-quo*.

This paper highlights how exposure to a different urban context through international study tours could help students realise and thereby discount for the biases that may distort their perception of an urban context and its planning issues. It is contended that a firsthand experience of another city supplemented by an acquired cultural sensitivity could help students develop criticality about their own urban context.

The paper reports on findings from a survey of planning students participating in two study tours to Tokyo led by the author in consecutive years, focusing on the shift of students' perceptions about Tokyo and their own city due to tour exposure. For both years, emerging themes from individual responses to questionnaire surveys were further explored in a focus group discussion format. While one study tour group was explicitly asked to assume a position of objective neutrality in line with the 'third place' concept, the other was not. The degree of shift in perceptions of the two study group participants is compared.

The paper will draw conclusions and offer recommendations regarding the utility of applying the 'third place' concept borrowed from cultural and foreign language learning to the design and execution of international study tours for planning students.

Alan MARCH, Anna HURLIMANN and Jennifer ROBINS

European Education and Australian Urban Planning Accreditation

Abstract

Urban planning is defined in many and diverse ways. In parallel, conceptions of the 'proper' means and substantive focuses for educating professional urban planners are highly variable, while education programs must meet emerging challenges in cities and regions. Accordingly, there is a need to assess the relevance of current models of urban planning education. The Bologna accords, commenced in 1999, have established a range of principles intended to make compatible the various university degrees across Europe. Aspects of the Bologna model have been adopted by some Australian universities, particularly those seeking alignment with vocational post graduate degrees. However Australian urban planning education has traditionally emphasised undergraduate vocational training. The current paper establishes a framework to consider the appropriateness and initial implications of a transition to educating urban planners at post graduate level, comparing Australia with the United Kingdom, the United States of America. In particular, the accreditation criteria of Australian planners are compared with key international cases, and analysed in terms of their conformance to Bologna standards. It is argued that the accreditation of Australian planners does not currently provide adequate direction for professional planning education.

Garry MIDDLE and Tim PERKINS

Determining the relevance and effectiveness of Curtin University and Edith Cowan University's planning course to meet the needs of a modern planning system and students.

Abstract

The planning courses at both Edith Cowan and Curtin received accreditation from Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) in 2009, indicating that they meet the needs of the industry. What is not clear, however, is the degree to which these courses meet the broader needs of a modern planning system and the needs of students. The 2004 PIA report on its national inquiry into planning education and employment (Planning Institute Australia 2004) made several recommendations related to the need for more planners but none on the effectiveness of the planning education itself. This paper reports the results of the first stage of a study into the effectiveness of the two planning courses, which is a survey of current students. Students were asked to rate the importance of the various 'streams' of planning education, their passion for planning, and to identify what are the key attributes of an 'excellent' planner. The streams were drawn from an examination of the courses offered in planning in Australia, the PIA discussion paper on Planning Education (Gurran, Norman, and Gleeson 2008), the National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment (Planning Institute Australia 2004), and the PIA Young Planners survey. The second stage of the study will involve surveying practicing planners in WA.

Danielle PELLERI and Awais PIRACHA

Stepping out: A study of how urban design affects walkability in Sydney

Abstract

Functional walking in most of Sydney's suburbs is a dying art form, where 45% of trips fewer than 2 kilometres are made by car. The use of cars instead of walking to local shops adds nearly 1.9 million tonnes to greenhouse gas emissions and robs local businesses of up to 92 billion dollars every year. As a sustainable form of transport, walking not only improves the environment and the local economy, but also enhances personal health and social interaction. Despite this, walking is such a basic form of human activity that it is often overlooked when planning for transport and is viewed as a second rate form of transport. This paper illustrates how walking for transport can be improved in our communities as it has direct positive links to reducing obesity and improving sustainability. This paper draws upon three contrasting suburban case studies, Epping, Bella Vista and Rouse Hill, in order to investigate how urban design can be used to either encourage or discourage walking. Pedestrian shed mapping, intersection mapping and discussions with the community, local governments and developers provide an insight into the practicalities of walking and suburban design. Finally, recommendations have been formulated as practical and achievable ways to retrofit existing suburbs and solve the walkability crisis across suburbia.

Wendy STEELE

Planning in the public interest: the Darwin agenda and beyond

Abstract

On the 2nd July the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) held its 27th meeting in Darwin. For Australian land-use planners the Darwin communiqué highlights two intertwined initiatives: 1) the integrated assessment processes and coordination arrangements for major infrastructure projects; and 2) the increase of standardised / stand alone code-based assessment and performance measures for housing development assessment (DA). Common to both initiatives is an emphasis on faster, more efficient approvals and the promotion of private sector activity as a means of stimulating economic recovery. The implication is that this is planning in the public interest - 21st century style. This paper highlights the 'evolutionary' agenda of Australian planning in light of these developments and explores the impact of these changes for planning education.