

Universal in the Local: Practising the Scholarship of Engagement

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The 'Scholarship of Engagement' is a burgeoning genre of scholarship exemplified in community-based pedagogic models used in schools of landscape architecture. This form of scholarship employs engagement with the multi-faceted particulars of local places and people, through which it can inform globally relevant principles and strategies.

THE PAPER DESCRIBES attributes of the Scholarship of Engagement, which supports integrated teaching, research and service in landscape architecture and provides an example of the 'universal in the local'. It suggests that the framework for scholarship assessment developed by the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching is effectual in promoting scholarship in the design studio where it incorporates the components of: clear goals and problem definition; preparation, through literature and research; methods, including community participation, place analyses, case study research and analysis, and solution testing through design; assessment of results; effective presentation of results; and reflective critique by the students, community and faculty.

The Scholarship of Engagement model frames the structure and description of community design-studio work undertaken to help a small Alaskan town confront the impending influx and impacts of large chain stores, a problem communities are increasingly facing. In such an engaged scholarship approach, the hierarchical values of cosmopolitan versus local are realigned, and faculty and students collaborate with community partners - whether global or local - to solve pressing issues. Can this integrated model of public scholarship be legitimised, supported, and extended?