

# DELIBERATIVE EDUCATION/ COMMUNICATIVE PLANNING

## Social Learning for Community, Environment and Planning

Dennis Ryan and Christopher Campbell

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All academic fields are challenged by contemporary urban change including globalization, social polarization, rampant consumer capitalism and diminution of nature and place. In response, the university is called to move to a new paradigm of engagement where learning is simultaneously acting in the world and where the scholarship of teaching is valued equally with scholarship of research. The AAHE subdivides this model into 3 areas - engaged pedagogy, community based research, and collaborative practice – but all are fundamentally about educational practices that address real world problems and create involved and committed citizens. Engagement is a familiar concept in the design and planning disciplines and it is a term often associated with the studio and applied learning dimensions of education in these fields. But too often the educational experience is limited to one to more episodes of community – connectedness to provide hands-on learning and insights. Yet good planning and design is fundamentally a transdisciplinary and dialogical praxis. It calls for close listening and social learning across a range of related disciplines, vivid participation and critical consciousness, trust, creativity and innovation, and thoroughly reflective practice. This is best learned in an educational context equally interdisciplinary, collaborative, and dialogic. Traditional contexts in design and planning education often teach the principles for engagement and participation – and then foster their application in work with the community. But the context itself is neither richly trans-disciplinary nor collaborative in its practices. In other words, what we teach is often not reflected in how we construct our teaching and learning environments. We say one thing and do or live quite another. Community and Environmental Planning (CEP), an award-winning, University of Washington interdisciplinary program is an experiment in undergraduate education and a practicum in democracy and planning itself. CEP manifests John Dewey's dictum: "Education is not preparation for life. Education is life itself." In CEP, education is lived, not taken nor received. It is something actively made - fully struggled with and accomplished in community with

others. In CEP, education is deliberative and planning is a verb. In this paper we describe CEP's deliberative principles and associated practices including 1) building and using social capital and the reflective practice of we, 2) making teaching/learning public and connected in the world, 3) constructing a hegemony of optimism and self-directed learning, and 4) citizenship and community as CEP verbs.