From Polytechnic to University:

Inculcating the Sense of the Built Heritage in our Youths

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From Polytechnic to University

- Learning from Best Practices
- Polytechnic: Urban Environment and Society
    - UES: Crafting the Curriculum
    - UES: Strategies
    - UES: Responses
- University: Singapore Urban History and Architecture
    - SSD: Strategies
    - SSD: Responses

Learning from best practices

- National Trust of Australia - Victoria

  "We actively seek to raise the profile of landscape values in Victoria and support measures to identify, protect, appreciate and enhance existing landscapes and interpret their meanings to the general community."

NATIONAL TRUST

http://www.nattrust.com.au/advocacy/victorian_landscapes

Learning from best practices

- Heritage buildings and landscapes

- Natural and cultural landscapes

- The Burra Charter's definition of cultural significance: "places of aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations"

- The Heritage Council of Victoria uses 8 criteria to assess cultural significance, 5 are important to landscapes (Criteria A, C, E, G and H)

http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf

Polytechnic

- Lecturer for Diploma of Landscape Architecture, Division of Architecture, School of the Built Environment, Singapore Polytechnic from 2007 to 2009
- Urban Environment and Society (UES)
  - Year 3 Module as part of an integrated curriculum
  - all modules feed to the design project for that year
  - Builds upon the theoretical base of year 2 History and Theory of Landscape Architecture Module

UES: Crafting the Curriculum

- Expanded the aims for the module
  - Increase awareness and knowledge of Singapore's past and its direct link to the built environment: architecture, landscapes and urban spaces
- Increased Comprehensiveness
  - Pre-colonial to post-nationalist
  - New concepts: collective memory, authenticity, sense of place, sensitivity to cultural context, heritage
- Increased Clarity
  - Focus on social and cultural issues of design and historical context
- Broaden strategies to help students apply concepts to project work
  - Research, reading, writing and analytical skills

UES: Crafting the Curriculum

- Expanded the aims of the module with modified objectives:

"Provide a practice-oriented landscape architecture training that develops students with the relevant discipline knowledge and skills to apply into projects"

1. Investigative: To provide research skills in students to learn about the history and geography of a given site prior to site planning and design

2. Content: To develop in students the knowledge of how historical, social, economic, cultural and political factors shapes the urban and landscape form, function and character with an emphasis on the Singapore context

3. Application: To provide the principles and guidelines in heritage, conservation and preservation of natural and built sites

UES: Crafting the Curriculum

- New Topic: Local Urban Landscapes and Public Open Spaces in the Singapore Context

- General Learning Outcomes
    1. Understand the historical background of human settlement
    2. Understand the process of development and control
    3. Understand the theoretical base and philosophy behind urban and landscape design
    4. Understand the theory behind particular landscapes

UES: Strategies

- Learn about social research techniques
  - Learn to formulate a social survey for a site
  - Using published sources to find out the history of a site: social, cultural, official, economic
  - Data analysis
- Academic papers on Singapore's spaces
  - Ooi Geok Ling & Victor Savage
  - Reflection
- Urban character study
- Visit to Chinatown and reflection
- Blog and Wiki
- Essay
  - progressive assessments

UES: Responses

Question: Write your thoughts about today's lecture in your blog. Have you lived in a *kampung*? If so, do you miss it? If not, do you wonder what it would be like?

- "From the lecture, it has helped me recap on the history that we had learnt in secondary school"

- "I'm surprised after the end of this lecture to find out that Singapore had such a long history and has been "taken over" by so many kings before being colonised by the British"

- "I still can't see clearly the purpose of this lecture as pplied to our project…I don't really understand the objectives yet"

UES: Responses

- "If I am given the chance to stay in the kampong, I will definitely give it a try!"

- "I do miss those days where I get to stay in the kampong"

- "To me, kampong life is slow-paced, trouble-free, an interactive space and also, offers a nice environment/ surroundings"

- "Back in the "kampung ages", I felt that it is rather safe unless you have someone after your throat. The harmony of the community binds every villager together"

- Photographs of grandmother's kampong house in Malaysia.

UES: Effectiveness of strategies

- Understanding of historical and socio-cultural context was demonstrated in their design project work

- Students were given time to learn to paraphrase, cite and edit their writing hence better essays

- Increase in pass rate and there is a systemic jump to a grade up: over 20% increase in A and distinction from previous year
    - "well-developed understanding of the history, cultural and social aspects of Singapore"
    - new topics "helped to bridge the students' understanding of history and society on urban and open spaces in Singapore" and "understand the complexity of the site that they have been given for their design studios"

UES: Journal Paper

- Compared student's responses to cooperative learning activities introduced in the class
    - Certain activities preferred over others
    - No significant difference between e-learning activities versus Kagan's Cooperative Learning activities – both can improve motivation and engagement to learning
- Triangulate with a comparison of results
    - Two batches of students from the same module
    - The same batch for different but linked modules from year 2 to year 3
- Compared student's responses to cooperative learning activities introduced in the class
    - Both statistically significant
    - One reason could be that cooperative learning was able to engage students better and increase their motivation

Abdul Hamid, A.R. (2009). To Teach or Not To Teach, That is the Question. In: Journal of Teaching Practice [online]

University

- Teaching Assistant for the Year 2/3 module for the Bachelor of Arts in Architecture (Honours), Department of Architecture, SDE, NUS
- SSD: Singapore Urban History and Architecture
- Module Lecturers: Prof Johannes Widodo, Dr Lai Chee Kien and Dr Imran bin Tajudeen

SSD: Strategies

- Lectures are aligned with assignments in order to achieve learning outcomes
- Conceptual frameworks
- Critical approach to understanding historical data and writings about history
- Critical approach to acquiring historical data
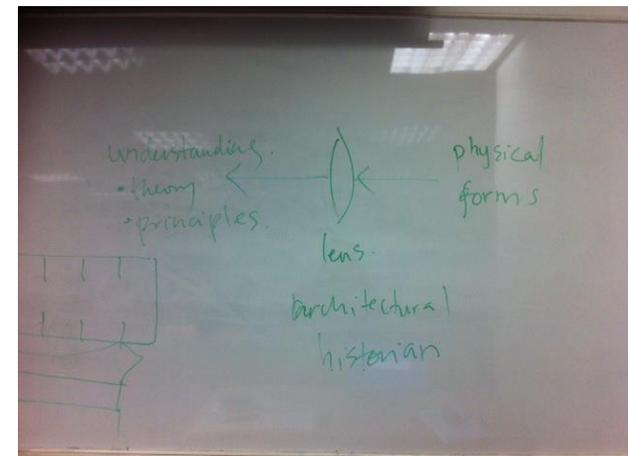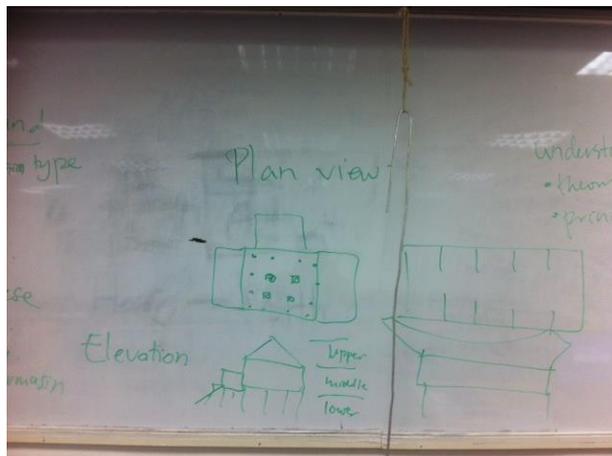
SSD: Strategies

- Assignment: retracing changes through old images
  - Visual-historical reconstruction
  - Transformations
  - Contemporary setting
- Assignment: using another media to document the story of a former school and its buildings
  - Architectural characteristics and features
  - Modifications
  - Character of spaces then and now
  - Interview present and former (if posssible) occupants

SSD: Responses

- Mixed responses
  - Challenging module for some due to it being a cross-faculty and sometimes exchange students from other countries: gaps in skills, knowledge and familiarity
  - Appreciate the depth and breadth that the module brings into the understanding of architecture and heritage
- Questions
  - How history is linked to architecture – especially for architectural students
  - The conceptual underpinnings used to frame each topic – for all students
  - Understanding built forms and functions – especially for non architectural students

SSD: Responses

- Presentations from 2 students
  - Faculty of Arts and Social Science, Geography Major, Singaporean
  - School of Design and Environment, Architecture Exchange Student from Newcastle, UK