Work Integrated Learning in practice: challenges and opportunities for a quality learning and teaching

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Urban Planning, Design and Regeneration education in most countries has shifted its focus from physical design towards a growing interest in policy and social sciences. Therefore, while graduates should have an integrated and comprehensive vision for the built environment - including sustainability, social equity, and participation, they should also possess the necessary skills and practical experience of the workplaces.

Work-based learning is commonly used to describe programs where students are engaged with workplaces and communities as a formal part of their studies. It has a variety of forms such as fieldwork, internships, and clinical placement. The key concept in such programs is that students cannot learn these skills in formal classrooms. However, the term work-integrated learning is a more recent concept. It emerged in the late 1990s to recognize a different approach where intersection and engagement of theoretical and practice learning, and formal learning and productive work are coming together. While the former can only be implemented in the workplace, the latter can occur in both workplaces or within campus settings that emulate a similar workplace environment.

This paper will demonstrate the experience of the design and delivery of an urban regeneration/placemaking work-integrated learning module (at Curtin University, Perth, Australia). It will review the concept of work-integrated learning. It will discuss the implications and challenges that are associated with the design process and the
interaction among various actors/groups involved in the process including the faculty members, professionals, local authorities, developers as well as local communities. The paper will conclude with the way forward towards better learning and teaching experience and skilful graduates.

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Dr. Al Moataz Hassan holds degrees from Oxford Brookes University and University of Wales, Aberystwyth in the UK. He is an Architect-Planner. He is an Assistant Professor; Policy, Planning and Development Program at Qatar University and Senior Teaching Fellow at UCL-UK (PT). He was a senior Lecturer in planning at Curtin University (Australia), Assistant Professor and the founding Director of the Arch-Eng Graduate Studies at the UAE University and Research Fellow at Oxford Institute for sustainable Development (OISD). He has extensive experience with consultancies and international Agencies including the UNDP (Technical Assistant to the Director of the UNDP funded of Sustainable Development Program) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID). His teaching and research interests include urban Development and Planning, urban sustainability, urban design/ regeneration, environmental Planning and management, EIA, public participation, and curriculum development and program design. Al is also a member of professional organisations including TCPA-UK, DSA-UK and ISOCARP.