CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD:
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Place Based Pedagogy: Re-thinking Transformative Learning

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• Abstract (300 words):
Informal and formal action led learning across community, practice and education can lead to the development of social capital which enhances the vitality, vibrancy and wellbeing of a place. A place based pedagogy that supports increased academic achievement with “the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach.” (Sobel, 2004, p. 7). It fosters the opportunity for transformative learning for students and the community where “the notion that one’s frame of reference becomes more “inclusive, differentiating, permeable...critically reflective of assumptions, emotionally capable of change, and integrative of experience.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 19).

This experiential approach benefits both learner and community; adding social & economic value, enhanced citizenship and challenging a traditional approach to place based transformation. The value of learning undertakes a holistic transdisciplinary model beyond that of current methods of collaboration and can encourage a new way of thinking within government.
Transformation is not only the physical change when a project is undertaken but that within an individual as a part of social transformation where “learning does not mean simply receiving and understanding transmitted knowledge; it also means mobilizing the inner resources of individuals who are in the process of constructing their selves” (Belanger 2016, P35).

Transdisciplinary working prior to employment shapes the placemaking career of the future, tackling complex issues and builds a community of trust. Early evidence indicates students are more equipped with skills sustained beyond existing academic programmes and barriers between practitioners and community are reduced.

Through a case study approach of sustainable city exploration in Scotland, evidence is demonstrating the value of social and educational capital by facilitating transdisciplinary conversations within a place, tackling the complex range of issues inherent in urban areas.


• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

**Kirsty Macari** studied Town & Regional Planning at the University of Dundee and whilst in practice gained her PgD Urban Design at Edinburgh College of Art. A journey over 14 years in diverse roles across local government in both Urban Planning and Economic Development has led Kirsty to practice based academia.

She is currently a Lecturer in Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Dundee and a Director in private practice. She has maintained an evolving interest across the function of planning and the relationship of urbanism and placemaking and explores this through the lens of education and place based pedagogy. Kirsty regularly leads on both undergraduate and postgraduate taught modules within the School of Social Sciences.

Kirsty is a Board Member of Architecture & Design Scotland, an appointed Academician with the Academy of Urbanism and passionate urbanist who believes in transformative and collaborative approaches to support the wellbeing of people and places. She has delivered papers and workshops to a wide variety of audiences across the UK, USA, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Kirsty is a member of the Royal Town Planning
Institute’s General Assembly and Scottish Executive Committee. She is also a member of their Planning and Accreditation Panel.

**Helen O’Connor** studied Architecture at the University of Dundee and began teaching part-time in the school shortly after achieving her Part 3 qualification. She combined teaching with practice (Architectural and Exhibition Design) for several years before taking a full-time position with the University in 1999.

Helen focuses on architecture studio teaching, and has designed and taught modules at all levels of the course, including leading a masters studio in material culture and practice. She also lectures and runs short projects on this aspect of architectural theory and practice in the undergraduate course. Helen has developed, and is now leading the jointly accredited (ARB and RTPI) Masters in Architecture with Urban Planning.

In parallel with her work in material culture and interdisciplinary practice between fine art and architecture, Helen has a strong interest in Architectural Pedagogy, regularly attending and presenting papers to national conferences which explore aspects of studio practice.

She has acted as external examiner at Portsmouth, Birmingham City, Liverpool John Moores and Greenwich schools of Architecture in the past, and is currently appointed to this role at the Grenfell Baines School (UCLan) and the Glasgow School of Art.