

Landscapes in the Minds

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One year has passed and the Department of Landscape Architecture continues to emphasize on student's intellectual growth by through travel, observation and design exercises. In line with the landscape architects' philosophy as "a steward of the land", all the creative exercises assigned also stress the importance of sustainable development. However, sustainable development is a jargon bearing multiple meanings to different people. Therefore, we would like our students to bear 'sustainability' in their minds when developing landscape whether it pertains natural environment, culture or behaviour.

In teaching and learning for students in the first year, we understand that we are dealing with beginners who have yet to grasp the design language alas expressing the design itself. Therefore, the teaching objective is to introduce students to design principles and elements in what we termed "exploration of design principles". Consequently, throughout the year, students have to produce simple drawings or sculptures to demonstrate their understanding about these design principles. For their final project, the first year students were asked to design a backdrop for an amphitheatre. Whilst the subject matter is an amphitheatre, the emphasis is actually on the design process. To develop students' sensitivity towards the environment, they were asked to use or man-made recycled materials or to relate their concept with nature.

For their second year, students conducted site planning of a particular campus. Prior the site planning, the students conducted a thorough site analysis by examining the use of existing spaces, slopes, topography and wildlife. Students explored various creative planning works and designed landscapes with sensitivity to the site. Their inspired concepts would lead them to design a sustainable campus.