

Landscape Architecture Outcomes Assessment

Spring Final
June 12, 2006
CTLT

Executive Summary

- To assess program learning outcomes, seven faculty from Landscape Architecture reviewed senior capstone poster presentations from 16 students
- Student posters were assessed on seven dimensions included in the appendix (see appendix A).
- One emphasis of this report focuses on the agreement of faculty raters—inter-rater reliability—as the indicator of building a common consensus on the embedded and explicit goals of the program. The Validity of the assessment is presumed to be best reflected by the agreement of the experts in the WSU Landscape Architecture program. It is understood that experts often disagree, so the pilot targets agreement of 75% or better as adequate.

Key Findings

1. Overall, students performed best demonstrating their ability to identify and characterize the complex nature of problems and questions. Their ability to communicate and to articulate their understanding in the theoretical and historical context of the profession was also demonstrated.
2. The relatively weaker performance areas included students' abilities to identify, collect and analyze the pertinent information (Information Fluency) and to justify and defend their designs and solutions in the appropriate context (Specialty and Self & Society).
3. Similarly, rater consensus was most problematic in the areas of information fluency and in the assessment of students' defense.
4. Rater consensus was highest in the areas of problem and question identification and theoretical and historical context.
5. As expected, some faculty were more frequently in agreement with the group than others, and one recommendation that follows is to establish an assessment team responsible for negotiating reliability with faculty in the program. It is important to note that assessment at this level and in the context of the Landscape program is NOT (and should not be) the same as grading. It is the programs' and the faculties prerogative to weigh the assessment in different ways (some faculty may elect to grade harder than others).

Recommended Next Steps

1. Clarify a standard relative to professional competence and what that level should mean for graduates from Washington State University
2. To accomplish number one, to validate the criteria and assessment process, and, more importantly, to build community, continue to invite and engage professionals in reviewing the rubric and, when appropriate, to use the rubric to review samples of students' work.
3. Provide students with the rubric and increase or benchmark the number of opportunities students perform tasks that are assessed in alignment with one or more dimensions of the rubric.
4. Continue to encourage students to assess their own and each others' work using the rubric and systematically gather feedback to verify their understanding of the criteria implicit and explicit in the rubric.
5. Explore strategies for streamlining the assessment process. Strong inter-rater reliability, illustrated in this pilot, might support the use of fewer faculty ratings of each poster. For instance, you might calibrate your group ratings together on two or three posters, and then divide the rating process so that each poster is reviewed by two faculty, a third expert rater if required to assess divergent ratings.

**Inter-Rater Reliability
(Faculty Agreement Assessing Student Work)**

Table 1: Percentage of Ratings With Less Than One Point Discrepancy From Mean Rating

Student	Dimensions						
	Human/Land	Theory/Hist	Appr Process	Info Analy	Alt Solutions	Defense	Communicate
Wilson, Julie	100	100	100	100	83	100	100
Martell, Kerstin	100	100	60	100	60	100	100
Dahl, George	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Bauer, Tim	100	100	100	83	83	100	100
Waggoner, Melissa	83	50	50	66	66	50	50
Imoto, Shintaro	71	86	71	57	86	86	71
Andreotti, Michael	83	83	66	100	83	50	83
Beattie, Wynn	83	83	66	66	83	83	66
Efendic, Eldad	60	60	80	0	60	40	100
Olson, Matt	100	83	83	66	66	66	83
Baily, Bryan	80	60	60	80	80	80	100
McKee, Hayley	60	80	60	40	80	80	80
Freyburg, Nick	100	100	100	71	86	57	42
Bemis, Brendan	100	66	100	83	100	40	83
Weston, David	42	57	83	57	71	71	71
McBride, Jason	80	100	60	80	80	80	80
Average	83.88	81.75	77.44	71.81	79.19	73.94	81.81

All numbers are presented as percentages

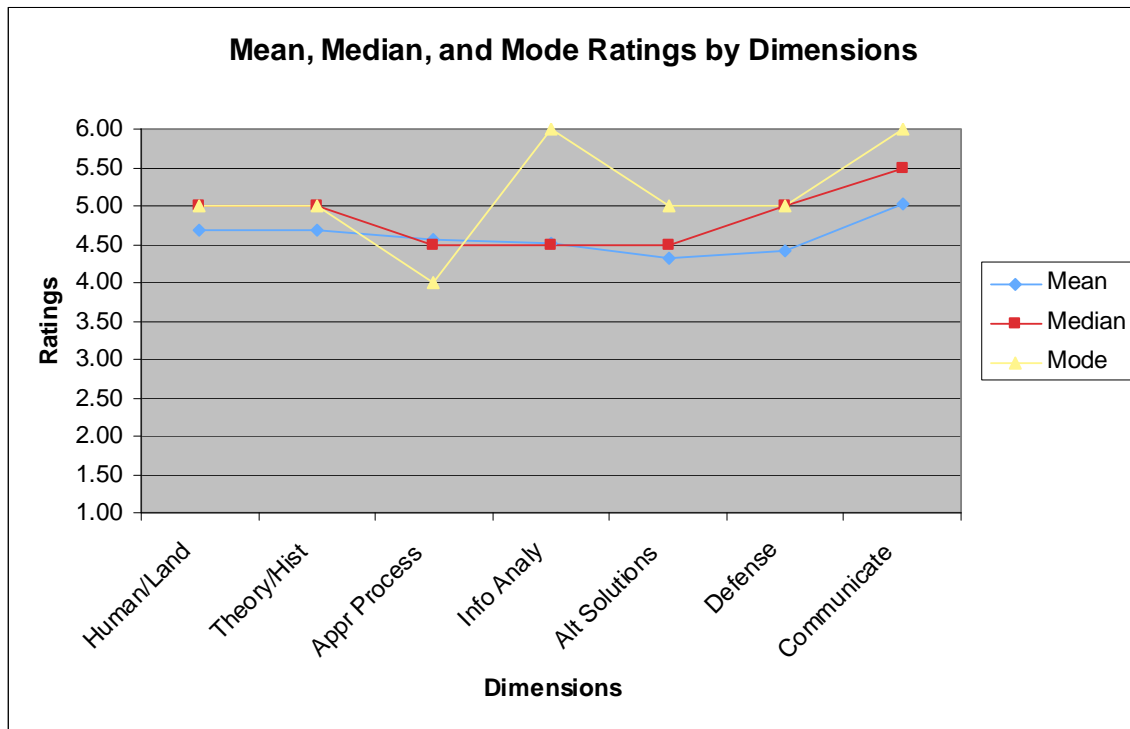
Rater Disagreements with Consensus

Table 2: Number of Discrepancies by Rater

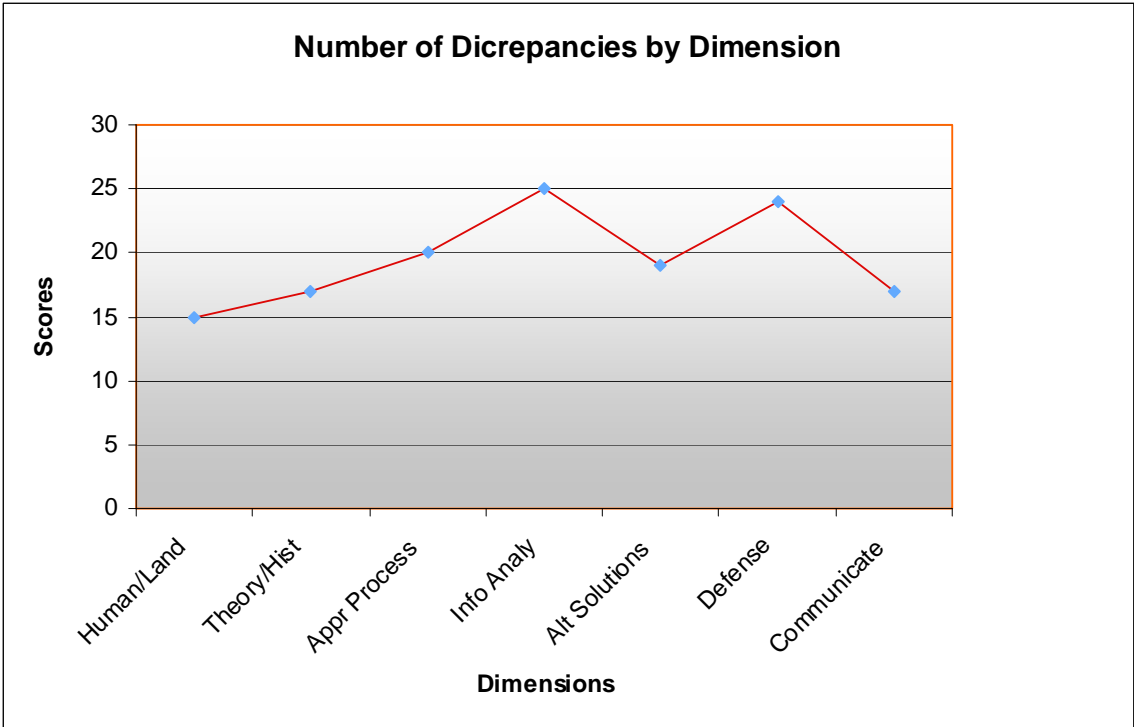
Rater Name	Number of Presentations Rated	Above Mean Discrepancy	Below Mean Discrepancy
Brooks	16	13	8
Diaz-Moore*			
Hendrix	16	11	3
Kaytes	6	0	12
Michael	15	5	9
Scarfo	13	14	15
Snowdon	9	9	24
Struckmeyer*			
Waite	16	8	6

*Rated zero presentations

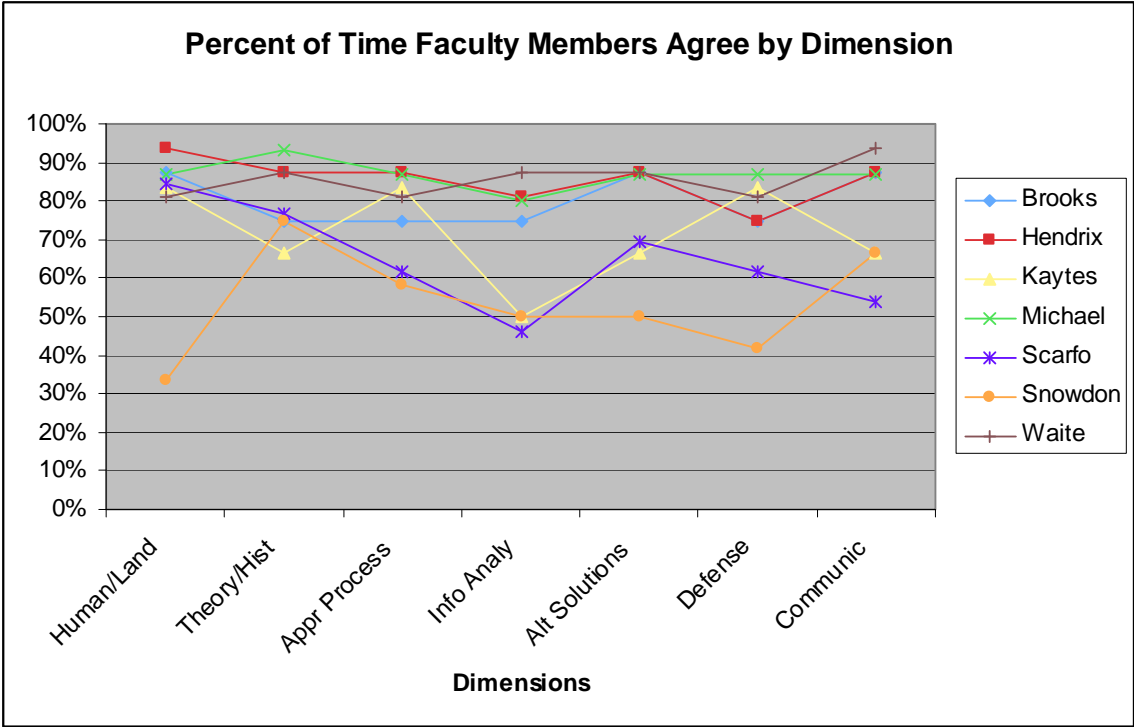
Rating Means, Median, and Mode by Dimension



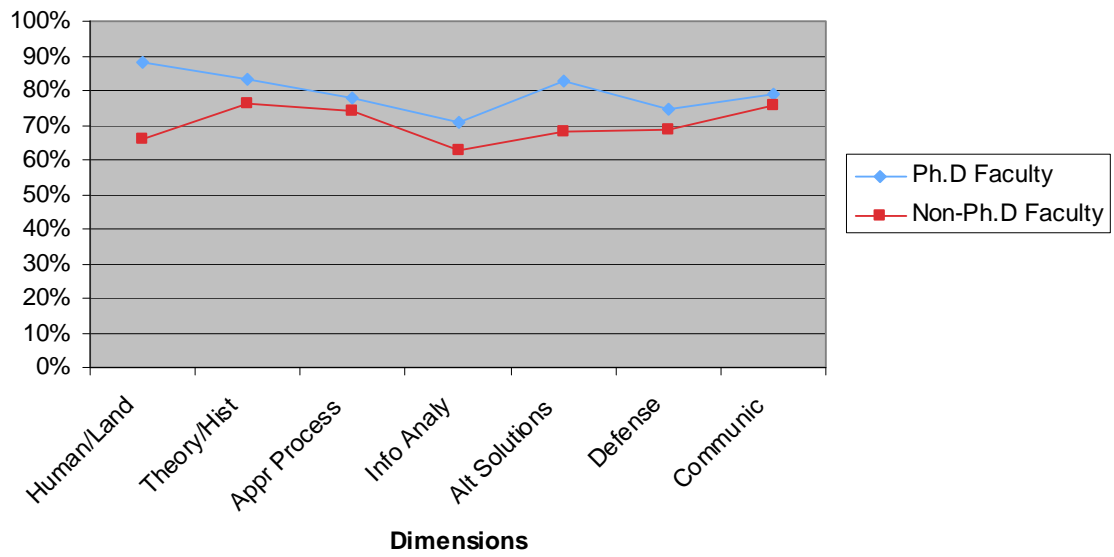
Rating Agreement



Faculty Agreement



Percent of Time Ph.D. versus Non-Ph.D. Faculty Members Agree by Dimension



Appendix

Senior Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and characterize the complex nature of problems and questions associated with human/landscape interactions across a broad range of scales.
2. Articulate an understanding of identified problems and questions within the theoretical and historical context of the profession of landscape architecture.
3. Identify, collect, and analyze necessary information using appropriate technologies and analytical techniques as they relate to the identified problems and questions.
4. Explore and critically analyze alternative design/planning solutions and strategies to the identified problem or question.
5. Justify and defend the proposed design/planning solution within the context of aesthetic, social, political, economic and environmental conditions.
6. Communicate the entire problem solving process or method of inquiry in written, oral, and graphic ways using appropriate media.