

**ethics and sustainability
in design education**

may 15–16, 2010_toledo, ohio

sat. roundtable notes

table four:

jonathon russell_ *the scalability of sustainability*

big/small

Can a global “toolkit of best practices and methods for integrating sustainability into design programs all over the world”¹ work as well at a 1500 student rural state university as it would at a 30,000 student urban institution?

Are the efforts of organizations like the AIGA and Designers Accord taking small & rural colleges and universities into consideration while drafting curriculums? Will the programs developed by these organizations benefit small and large, urban and rural institutions equally? Will adjustments need to be made? Only one community of less than 25,000 people was represented at the Global Summit on Design Education & Sustainability.

Let’s address topics such as limited resources and access in small markets, the challenges of being separated from urban centers, the use of technology in aiding and advancing the discussion on sustainability and the challenges of teaching students to be aware of global efforts in sustainability and how to apply those efforts on a local scale.

¹ From the overview of the Designers accord Global Summit on Design Education & Sustainability, 2009

Jonathon has taught at schools where students come from rural communities and plan on returning to them—how do we introduce them to sustainability on a worldwide scale?

Geographic vs. mental isolation; this generation satisfied with staying put and not exploring.

“Project Alabama” engage women in local community to make clothes—excellent website. Inspired classroom project to develop website and place within the larger context of the worldwide web (i.e., who will they link it with?)

Global vs. Local mindset

Smaller communities often overlooked by design conferences/ underrepresented. Best resources often offered in bigger cities.

Idea for next AIGA conference: show slide at opening event illustrating where participants come from, how many in comparison to population of cities/size of design program.

The Design Altruism Project: talking the talk but not walking the walk; helping students make the leap into unknown territory—empowerment.

Fresh Ground Grant in Canada gives research opportunities to applicants regardless of profession/background. Developed Fishnet Project teaching awareness of plight of the Great Lakes to school children. Each class assigned a species of fish—feel ownership with it. Culmination at Harborfront Center (Toronto). Fabric cutouts of each fish hung in gallery (over 1200 fish).
Bottomline: bringing people together.

Project idea: set radius of certain area, compare represented demographics within radius (i.e., wealthy vs. impoverished.)

Getting backing from government, local businesses and organizations to support community building projects.

Scale of inquiry—analyzing small to big groups.

Creating report of current location of alumni helps students see the possibilities of their future both geographically and professionally. Also, helps connect students with alumni for help with job searching and breaking into a new community.

Pacific Lutheran University students share their experiences as graphic design students at a liberal arts school; emphasis on internships and study abroad. Need to break down stereotypes that large corporations are nasty and inaccessible—you never know what they might be open to.

AIGA conference future topic: design in rural/smaller communities? Compared to larger communities.

Can use conceptual models originally used for global scale on a much smaller scale.

Analyzing a small space—being intimate with one thing.
Art-making process used in a practical way example: activity where you pull 2 random things out of a hat and somehow connect them.

Center for Urban Pedagogy—partnering designers with advocacy groups

Information is powerful way of making change. Need to share case studies from smaller communities; reading about large scale projects in larger. Communities sometimes hard to imagine doing on a smaller scale—need to help people realize that this is possible!

Intimate relationships help foster growth; diagramming a community serves different functions: develops a narrative, records data. Need to tap the hidden culture underlying our communities.



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