

# Two Models of Land Use Education Pedagogy

Paper prepared for presentation at the  
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Land Use: A Transatlantic, Multidisciplinary and  
Comparative Approach.

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LAND POLICY  
INSTITUTE

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# Purposes of Presentation:

Point out the importance of land use and the roles of universities in land use education.

Discuss land use education gaps and their impacts.

Elaborate on education at university practitioner level.

Describe two unique educational programs at Michigan State University (MSU) to close those gaps.

- An on-line academic course.
- An on-line series of course modules for lay planners.

# Outline of Presentation:

Discuss the importance of land use education and of closing gaps in land use education.

Discuss gap-filling for education of professionals and for lay planner training.

Discuss integrative nature of planning versus planning education.

Discuss two models for education.

Discuss two on-line courses: scope, structure, technology, costs, impacts.

Conclusions.

# ■ Definition: Pedagogy

The strategies, techniques, and approaches that teachers can use to facilitate learning.

Source: Faculty and TA Development, The Ohio State University

# Basic Precepts

- Land use issues are among the most important issues that face society.
- The importance of land use cuts across countries, states, regions and communities.
- Nowhere else does land touch people's lives as intensively as in Europe and North America.
- People in these parts of the world deal with land use issues on a continued daily basis.
- Congested routes to work, constraints on housing location relative to other activities, air and water quality, and the safety of children going to school.



# Basic Precepts (continued)

- However, there is limited understanding of the land use decision-making process:
  - It is a multi-discipline area.
  - Many decision-makers lack training, background, or knowledge to make sound decisions.
  - Few future decision-makers come through universities.
  - Most emerge from learning traditions that do not provide integrated opportunities.



## □ Limited Exposure to Land Use at University:

Prior exposure is likely from one course, with a singular/specific topic.

Scarce opportunities for students to mingle with professionals who deal with land use issues daily.

Few opportunities to work on “real life” problems, preparing them for professional life in land use.

Need better synchronized and integrated information: the depth and breadth of knowledge needed to become functional professionals.



# ■ **Planning is Integrative - Planning Education is Not.**

**Planners:** Represent a professional group, trained at universities in the rudiments, formalities, theories and practices of planning, zoning and land use management.

**Universities:** Traditional role of research and teaching. When universities work in isolation, they can lose track of the scope of the problems they purport to solve with research, or train professionals to deal with.

# Strategic Management Issues

Globalization and internet.

Efficient and high quality health care and business.

Quality of life and disease control.

Global business.

Economic stability and procedures.

Quality of life.

Strategic Growth.

## ■ Universities can provide:

Integrated educational opportunities that utilize the land use arena as a foundational resource for students.

Students would learn about both:

- Key land use topics.
- How practices associated with these topics interrelate in supporting a sustainable society.



# Key Land Use Topics:

## Strategic Analysis:

Vision, identification of assets, innovative mindset, analysis, location inclusiveness, people analysis, promotion attraction, immigration.

## Regionalism:

Form to rural, continuing, legacy issues, brownfield sharing resources, development, urban cooperation, diversity, amenities, transportation. avoiding duplication

## Health:

Active living, obesity, air and water quality, Access vs. mobility, and mental health. improvements, new construction, congestion

## Inter-governmental:

Connections, greenways, recreation, access, quality, habitat, quality of life, endangered species.

## Natural resources:

Proper, sports fields, hunting, fishing, bird watching, or services, schools, lot tourism, wilderness, size vs. structure value,

## Rural:

shared revenues

## Recreation:

Greenfield development, sprawl, open space, rural sharing services, joint amenities, preservation. planning, sharing

## Agriculture:

resources  
Right-to-farm, farmland preservation, local markets.

## Foundation for needed action:

Theory and research-based knowledge

+  
Contact with practicing professionals

=  
Informed policy-makers as they  
maneuver the frameworks of:

Home rule

Growth

NIMBYism

Regionalism

Agriculture

Transportation

Economic Development

Green Infrastructure

Talent Attraction

New Economy

# ■ Gaps in Land Use Education:

Few opportunities for discourse among key players.

Student experience limited to few communities.

Insular channels of information.

Available yet underutilized technology.

Student teams in online courses at Duke University are already submitting their works as YouTube presentations. (MSUVU-DAT, 2007)

*“Not all accredited schools teach the same courses or emphasize the same subjects—in fact, the differences between the schools appeal to different student interests.”* (ASCP, 2006)

No capstone course in land use tying examination of land use trends, issues, and policies to people making land use decisions.

Students offered few leadership skill development opportunities.  
(Birch 2001.) (Baum 1997.)

Citizen planners, serving as local leaders, are also activists with little to no training in land use issues or exposure to experts and visionaries; yet, they move ahead with land use change decisions –often on a large scale.

# Importance of Closing the Gaps

As a result of gaps in land use education, communication gaps exist between professional planners and local planning officials with whom they must partner (Warbach 2004).

The land use practice community lacks effective, knowledgeable leaders.

## ■ If Gaps Continue Unfilled:

Continued **unsustainable** land use development.

**Failure** to capitalize on land assets, reach prosperity.

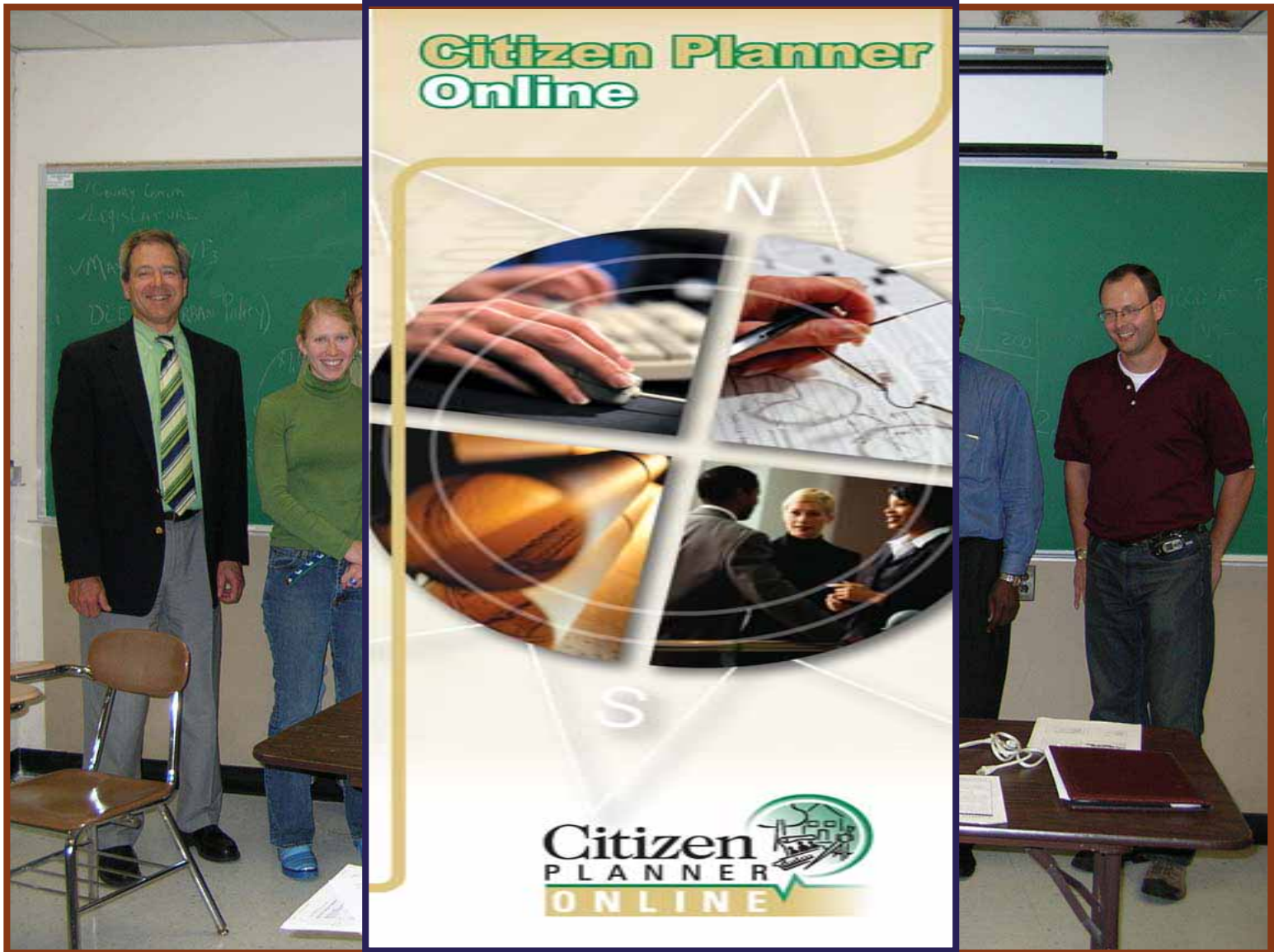
**Failure** to protect land based industries from the conversion of resource-rich lands to development.

**Failure** to allocate land to alternative energy production.

**Failure** to protect air and water resources from degradation.

**Failure** to provide social equity, environmental justice.

# ■ LPI Fills Gaps with Both an Academic Course and a Lay Planner Series of Courses:



## ■ *Academic Training Gaps Filled:*

Learning cuts across boundaries – it is integrative.

Exposure to knowledge of the latest trends.

Facility with mapping and GIS applications.

Courses cross-listed among multiple academic disciplines.

Problem solving: research projects are important.

Courses accessible not only to land use students, but to other students and professionals in the field.

## *Lay Planner* Training Gaps Filled:

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Understanding their legal responsibilities, opportunities, and limitations.

Knowledge of the latest trends.

Understanding what makes communities perform well or not perform well.

Have knowledge of targeted New Economy and Smart and Strategic Growth Strategies.

Understanding how inter-governmental partnership and cooperation provides greater returns.

# Key Elements in the Models for Education: Academic and Lay Planner

Online learning is not the whole picture of newly evolved pedagogy: merely the tool.

Key elements:

- Create opportunities for the student to become an active rather than a passive learner.
- Students work together to solve problems.
- Do the bulk of investigation themselves.
- Work in concert with faculty who serve more as a guide than a sage.

# *Academic Course in Land Use*

The Land Policy Institute provides an academic model for integrated land use education in its blended learning course:

**Smart Growth and Strategic  
Land Use Decision Making  
(ESA 450).**

# ESA 450

## *Smart Growth and Strategic Land Use Decision Making*

- Is designed to be multi-disciplinary.
- Is cross-listed in four departments.
- Has 26 students from a variety of cities, states and countries.
- Enrolls students who come from a wide variety of academic programs.

## ■ *Academic Course: Scope*

The history of land use change and the planning and regulatory structure.

The planning process, trends in land use change.

Role of a leader in land use issues; creating a vision.

Strategic asset identification and regional planning.

Land economics.

Function of policy makers and players in land markets.

Ten tenets of Smart Growth and Best Practices:  
urban, suburban and rural.

## Academic Course: Structure

- Face-to-face sessions supported by online resources, testing, student-to-student and student-to-faculty communications.
- Live sessions with major local and national leaders, practitioners and visionaries.
- Online courses provide direct contact with faculty and are highly interactive.
- Substantial student-to-student and student-to-faculty interaction.
- Semester team research and analysis project using existing data sources, interviews with local officials.



# Academic Course: Technology

Angel online environment from Angel Learning, Inc.  
Students are given access upon enrollment.

Lecture materials online with text including:

Illustrations

PowerPoint

Audio

Video

Links to other

Websites

MP3 and MP4 downloads

Testing in all formats

Grade books

Blogs

Forums

*Wikis*

## Academic Course: Costs

University provides learning environment software for free, including training sessions.

Estimated real cost for development, training, and graduate assistant about \$60,000.

Strong motive: at MSU the department receives about 70% of online tuition directly –but nothing from classroom courses.

Negotiate to supplement a faculty member's salary for the perceived or actual overload.

Cost for student to take academic online course varies: student's level and whether in-state or out-of-state, or a life-long learner.



# Academic Course: Impacts

- Improved leadership capacity among students.
- Well-rounded understanding of the integrative nature of land use planning.
- Increased comfort in meeting and making presentations to elected and appointed officials, business leaders, nationally recognized visionaries and distinguished academics.

# *Lay Planner Course:* **Citizen Planner Online**

Opportunity for volunteer community leaders to obtain latest technical knowledge/information.

Seven modules with self-paced, independent learning units presenting core elements for planning officials.

Can take any combination of modules and units.

Chance to combine online educational opportunity with instructor-led events.

Continuing education opportunities through Master Citizen Planner and emerging issue sessions.

# *Lay Planner Course: Scope*

Planning official roles and responsibilities.

The zoning process and the phases of the planning process.

Legal foundations of planning and zoning, historic and current court cases.

The Comprehensive Plan: why and how, distinctions of different land use categories.

Zoning tools, techniques, responsibilities, site plan review, PUDs, subdivisions, etc.

The art of community planning.

## ■ *Lay Planner Course: Structure*

The current structure of the Citizen Planner online lay planner modules is:

- Completely self-paced, asynchronous learning, no active involvement of module creators.
- Students may take any combination of modules or units, which can fit the needs and budget of the lay planner.
- Certificates for those who complete modules.

## ■ *Lay Planner Course: Technology*

The technology used in the Citizen Planner online lay planner modules is:

- Professional planners contract to provide content of educational modules.
- University educational consultants assemble material into learning units.
- Also uses the MSU Angel online environment.
- Students go to “ShopMSU” website to enroll and are given access and a password.
- The technology supports text and graphics, and includes tests of proficiency with the material.

## ■ *Lay Planner Course: Costs*

Planning consultant contract for assembly of content.

Contracted services of learning designers.

The total is about \$40,000 per module.

Small cost for maintenance of course online.

The ShopMSU registration process collects small fee.

Shared cost-recovery agreement.

10% of revenues invested in program development.

\$70 for one Citizen Planner online module.

\$350 for core seven-module package.

# ■ Lay Planner Course: Impacts

Citizen Planner Program has trained over 3,000 local officials / community volunteers in Michigan since 2002 in the pre-curser classroom-based programs.

Since online program launched (12/2006) 188 taking online modules or units.

Improved knowledge of land use planning as evidenced by self-evaluation surveys.

Over 100 professional planners contributed, exposing lay students to practitioners directly or indirectly.

Lay planners exposed to wide variety of specific topics:

Designing healthy communities

Conflict management

Urban planning

Low impact design

Manufactured housing

Urbanism

Transportation planning

Water quality

Wetlands

## ■ Conclusions and Lessons for the Future

The online academic course appears to serve as an effective land use educational model.

Uses combination of small group work, collaborative learning, case studies, forums, lectures and discussions to maximize learning, all of which is available to online and classroom students.

Integration of economics, natural and social sciences, policy, design, land, vision and leadership.

## ■ Conclusions and Lessons (continued):

Effective approach to filling gaps in land use education; though difficult to document.

Citizen Planner Online also fills a gap by providing comprehensive, integrative scope of information to help lay planners do their volunteer jobs.

Often, only organized training they have.

Links academic, professional planner with the lay planner where the latter is the primary source of land use decision making.

■ The generational differences should shape the way educators interact with academic and lay planners over the next ten years, involving students of all four generations.

**Mature and Veteran Generation:** Motivated when their experience is respected.

**Baby-boomer Generation:** Motivated when valued.

**Generation X:** Motivated by finding their own way.

**Generation Y:** Motivated by opportunity to work with other bright and creative people.





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