Chapter 17
www.theglobalstudio.com: Towards a new design education paradigm?

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Contemporary theory on teaching and research argues for inclusive scholarly knowledge –building communities. By this it is meant,

> a vision of higher education institutions as places where academics work collaboratively in partnership with students as members of inclusive scholarly knowledge building communities; where teaching and research are integrated, and where both students and academics are engaged in the challenging process of coming to understand the world through systematic investigation and collaborative decision making in the light of evidence (Brew, 2006, p. 3).

Thus begins Angela Brew's recent book on research and teaching. Her rationale for this position has various threads to it. Here I focus on two of those threads, and weave these into a narrative about teaching and learning in an international setting. Both threads rely on the capacity for critical thinking that the integration of research and teaching enables, and promote an argument for research to be intrinsic to tertiary education at all levels. The first thread is that an educated (or thinking) population is essential to a well functioning participatory democracy. Second, the contemporary world is 'super-complex' (Barnett, 2003a) and ever changing; thus it is impossible to prepare students for a future that is yet to take shape. Students, therefore, need to be equipped with the skills of critical and imaginative thinking that research affords and that will allow them to engage with this super complex world. To Brew the binary split between teaching (knowledge transmission- to students) and research (knowledge generation- to peers) is anathema, and grounded in now antiquated models of teacher rather than student focused approaches to learning (Brew, 2006, p. 18). She argues that research led teaching and the building of inclusive scholarly communities must be part of undergraduate as well as graduate education.

In this chapter I recount an attempt to create an inclusive scholarly knowledge building community of undergraduate and graduate students in fields related to the built environment. The term city building professionals is used to denote the necessary interdisciplinarity implied by the many components to city building .The approach involves an intensive research and design experience for city building students with academics and professionals, and aims to promote participatory democracy (and social justice) and the development of critical and imaginative thinking. The vehicle described here is an international community-based action research project called Global Studio, now in its third year of operation. What distinguishes Global Studio from other forms of international design education is its interdisciplinary approach, its multi-university participants, and its commitment to serving the redistributive social policy ends of the United Nations Millennium Project and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals and http://www.unmillenniumproject.org).

Global Studio builds on the concept of the design professional as enabler (one who works 'with' rather than 'for'), and communities as active agents of change. The Global Studio educational strategy is a situated approach based on dialogue and 'learning by doing.' Its focus is site specific, involves participatory planning and design processes

with socially excluded or disadvantaged communities, and the creation of useful outcomes. Results from two case studies described below indicate that Global Studio offers a powerful paradigm for the education of professional global citizens through mutual learning and best practice knowledge transfer, as well as the opportunity to create international networks of academics, professionals and students. In turn, these approaches can be applied in participants' own educational or professional practices.

Background

Global Studio brings together teaching and research in a form of problematisation (and praxis) theorised by educators Paulo Freire (1974) and Henry Giroux (1983, 1988). It is enriched by Schön's 'reflection in action' (1983, 1988) and Snodgrass and Coyne's (1997, 2006) theories of design as a hermeneutical practice. Global Studio draws on the work and experience of various built environment theorists and practitioners, and NGO's, as it seeks to build a design education and research paradigm suited to contemporary urban challenges. These include Dutton (1991), Friedman (1995) Serageldin (1997), Groat and Ahrentzen (1996, 1997), Hamdi and Goethert (1997), Sandercock (1998) Sanoff (2000), Wampler, (2001), Bell (2004), Palleroni & Eichbaum Merkelbach (2004), Sinclair and Stohr (2006) but also Rural Studio at Auburn University (Dean, 2002), Assai (http://www.assai.com.au), Architecture for Humanity http://www.architectureforhumanity.org), the Design Collaborative at Detroit Mercy College (http://architecture.udmercy.edu/dcdc.htm) and Slum Dwellers International (http://wwwsdinet.org). Global Studio heeds the critique of architectural education by Boyer and Mittgang (1996), which argues that education needs to be more connected with society, and acknowledges the successful practices of community design academics and practitioners.

  Global Studio's philosophical position also draws on debates about the internationalisation of tertiary education in a post 9/11 climate (Kennedy and Weiner, 2003; Kritz, 2006) and the very practical objectives of the Millennium Development Goals to end poverty by 2015 (Sachs, 2005). While Kritz broadly outlines a future landscape for international education, Kennedy and Weiner pose challenging questions about the new attitudes needed in educating for sustainable globalisation post 9/11. That most institutions want their students to have an international experience could, in their view, reproduce the problems of itself.

> We need education about 'real-world perceptions, perceptions that we would not like to hear,' That means our engagements in the professions, and in higher education more generally, cannot focus on those who most resemble us, or those who most apparently share our values, interests, and professional expectations. …. While China might be on the top of most professional school lists, some critical world regions rarely leap to the top of any profession's list of priorities, and are therefore unlikely to shape their global awareness. ….. We need to assure the diversity of higher education's internationalism. ….While there have been many important projects in the health sciences and in other professions dedicated to the address of needs in publics abroad, this identification with publics abroad has not been a core element organising curricula, research priorities, or institutional visions. This is the next challenge. As one university leader has said, the new internationalism for the twenty-first century will certainly have to consider the extent to which we are going to take on identification with people outside our own borders. (Kennedy and Weiner, 2003)

Effective identification with people 'unlike us' and outside our borders can only take place where there is open and equal dialogue. Thus any philosophical position must be firmly embedded in participatory, capacity and capability building processes. This approach is central to the Millennium Project Task Force for Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers' report, *A Home in the City* (Garau, Sclar & Carolini, 2005) and informs Global Studio. Thus, Global Studio might be said to be reactive and proactive - reactive in that it joins academic work to the globally endorsed agenda to implement the Millennium Development Goals, and proactive in that it seeks to influence the education of city building professionals in local, national and international settings.

The role of participation in design and planning deserves special mention as it raises basic issues of knowledge and power. Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) identified the possible modes of citizen involvement in decision making, ranging from tokenistic in-puts through to true empowerment of citizen participants. Participation often falls short of empowerment, nowhere more graphically and succinctly represented than in slogans painted on walls in Paris in May 1968 – the year before Arnstein's article: *je participe, tu participes, il participe, nous participons, vous participez, ils profitent*. (I, you, he/she, you, we participate, they profit). In contrast, Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach (2000) shifts the emphasis in the participation discourse firmly into the concept of participation as empowerment. Global Studio is a work in progress, and the intention is that it continues to grow through 2020 (the implementation period of the MDGs) building capability and capacity in universities, the professions and communities. Global Studio has been innovative in its insistence that people must be at the centre of their own development, and this applies equally to the 'researchers' (students, academics, practitioners, case study communities) as it does to the global urban poor. In other words it takes up Nussbaum's concept of building capability, and asks, 'what are participants capable of doing?'

The origins of Global Studio

Global Studio emerged out of my involvement in a UN Millennium Project Task Force from 2002-2004, and previous research on educating architects for globalisation. This in turn evolved from concerns in research and teaching about the importance of cross-cultural understanding involving issues such as gender, identity, class and ethnicity as well as the politics of space in the discipline of architecture. Conceptually, Global Studio fills a perceived research and teaching gap, and the perceived need for an international community of city building students, academics and professionals to make their skills available to improving the lives of the urban poor.

In 2002 I was researching globalisation and architectural education. The project was prompted by 9/11, and complemented previous research on values in architectural education (Rubbo, 2001). In the aftermath of 9/11 the challenge, or so it seemed to me, was to think about how education could provide graduates with a global perspective that would help them participate in the making of a safer and more informed world - regardless of the area of specialisation. Cultural understanding in the broadest sense would be a vital component, as would be a grasp of the phenomenon of globalisation.

Thus, the project posed the following questions:
- What opportunities exist in architecture schools to gain a global perspective, or to learn about globalisation? (internet search)

- What do today's architecture students need to learn to be tomorrow's global citizens, and how might they best acquire the knowledge? (focus groups and email)

Around equal numbers of male and female students at the University of Michigan and the University of Sydney responded to the latter question, and a focus group was also held with academic staff (or faculty) at the University of Michigan. With regard to question one, school mission statements around the world generally did not emphasise a global perspective in their curricula, although many wanted their students to have an international experience. With regard to question two, students were unanimous in their desire to learn about the processes of globalisation. 'We want to know the good and the bad'. Put another way, they wanted to know about 'globalisation from below' (often referred to as sustainable globalisation) and 'globalisation from above' (often referred to as neo liberal globalisation) (Falk, 2000). At the Universities of Michigan and Sydney, the majority of students in the focus groups said they would prefer to learn experientially, but acknowledged the need for formal study (seminars and lecture courses) as well. With respect to cross-cultural understanding, they did not think that cultural knowledge necessarily had to be gained overseas; it could also be gained through greater appreciation of the diversity in the student body (currently insufficiently appreciated in their view) and the diversity that was present in local communities. Many were interested in becoming 'citizen scholars' as Grund et al put it and wanted to 'discover their scholarly identity and decide where and how to contribute their expertise to the community in which they live' (Grund, Chertwitz & Darwin, 2001).

The conclusions of this research were that architectural education needed to better connect with its own diverse community, and that the university needed to be more open to local, national and international (non-academic) communities. What is new about these findings is the degree of interest and the importance that students attached to contact with external communities and the desire for their own difference to be recognised. Among the many virtues of architectural education Boyer and Mittgang (1996) also identified its hermetic nature in their important study commissioned by the Carnegie Institute:

> Architecture education is really about fostering the learning habits needed for the discovery, integration and application and sharing of knowledge over a lifetime. *Along with the vast potential, however, what this also points up is the architecture community's long history of failure to* connect *itself firmly to the larger concerns confronting families businesses, schools, communities and societies*…Unless those connections can be more clearly established in schools and public discourse architecture will remain omnipresent yet under appreciated and shrouded in mystery. *Architecture students and faculty at many schools seem isolated, socially and intellectually, from the mainstream of campus life* (Boyer & Mittgang, 1996, p. xv, xvi italics added).

Thus, the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals and the work of the Task Force provided an opportunity to address professional education and sustainable globalisation, and to consider how an effective, inclusive scholarly knowledge building community with intellectual, policy, professional and practical benefits could be constructed.

By and large, and relative to the scope of the need, architect and planners tended to be inadequately prepared or unable to work effectively with the urban poor in urban development. This was a message delivered to the Task Force by its urban poor representatives, which is not a surprising one. It is no secret that architects participate in only creating about 1% of the world's building culture (Davis, 1999), and that architecture has in the main been an elite profession serving an elite (Stevens, 1998). Nor is the rate of urban population growth and the increase in the numbers of the urban poor a secret. At present one billion people live in slums including 56 million in developed countries and if nothing is done this number is likely to grow to two billion by 2020. Indeed the world is at an historic tipping point as cities are where most people will soon live. Income disparities and social tensions encourage the growth of the 'divided city' a phenomenon that is not limited to developing countries and which can be identified in many Western, including Australian, cities. There are, therefore, pressing challenges and opportunities for the city building professions.

City building and improving people's lives are complex cross-sectoral and political issues, and require a multi-sectoral and interdisciplinary approach. One aspect that can be addressed by universities is the development of capable, reflective and effective design and planning professionals. Garau et al write in the Task Force's report, *A Home in the City*,

> The physical form of cities and the value added through the design of public space, community public buildings, and the landscape in cities and transport corridors is a concern in realising target 11…. Professionals must come down from the veranda as Bronislaw Malinowski famously urged of anthropologists and into the hut, the tent and the slum to find ways in which their own skills can be of assistance…. Many students and young professionals have a genuine interest in helping address the challenges facing the urban poor, not only because of the architectural or planning challenges but also because the cities of low-income countries are some of the most dynamic and interesting sites for new thinking and ideas. Confronting these complexities calls for the most creative minds (Garau et al. 2005, p. 94-96; Rubbo, Gurran, Taussig & Hall, 2003, p. 21-42)

Garau *et al* (2005, p. 94) also advocate that 'architects, engineers and other professionals need to be trained to help find solutions' and propose that educational and professional development in support of new forms of partnerships between communities, local governments, and professionals may benefit from a range of initiatives including: learning from communities; encouraging information exchanges by professionals, students and communities in multidisciplinary settings; liaising with organisations and institutions dedicated to improving the lives of the urban poor and to realising alternative professional visions.

In late 2004 I proposed the action research project Global Studio and the forum People Building Better Cities to the Task Force. It was adopted and has been developed by Task Force members with the University of Sydney (Rubbo), Columbia University (Sclar and Carolini) and the University of Rome (Garau) taking the lead. While Global Studio grew out of the Slum Dwellers taskforce it has dropped the term 'slum' and now uses the (still less than) adequate term, 'the bottom 20%', which acknowledges that in any city there is disadvantage and this is not limited to the developing world. The case studies described below work with the 'bottom 20%' in Istanbul and Vancouver. In

2007 Global Studio will work in Johannesburg with township communities in Alexandra and Diepsloot.

From issues to application

Case Study 1: Global Studio Istanbul (GSI) 2005
Global Studio Istanbul brought together more than 100 architecture and planning students, teachers and professionals from over 20 countries to take part in an international design studio and forum for three weeks in mid 2005. Hosted by the Istanbul Technical University, partners included the Universities of Sydney, Rome, Columbia, Middle East Technical and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts. Approximately half of the student participants were from less developed countries. GSI sought to implement some of the Task Force recommendations via an action research studio in Zeyrek, a poor neighbourhood in Istanbul. The projects were presented in a public square outside the local mosque. A short film documented the Global Studio process, including building a playing field with the children as well as the development of architectural and planning ideas for income generation, community gardens and ways in which the neighbourhood could be better integrated into the city. The film was shown in 20 countries by Global Studio participants who gave talks in their universities and communities when they returned home. Three months later and in collaboration with UN Habitat New York, GSI was exhibited in the delegates' area at the UN World Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2005, thus disseminating the results of the project to politicians and policy makers.

   An electronic survey of GSI participants indicated high levels of satisfaction with Global Studio. With more than a 95% return rate, 87% of students and 89% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed (the top two in a five-band scale) they were satisfied with Global Studio. The qualitative feedback from students and academics was positive, but also constructive. For an Australian professor/practitioner one of the notable outcomes was 'Linking students from around the world and giving them time and reason to interact'. For an Indian student 'it was an amazing experience that I will cherish all my life'. Some comments about Global Studio Istanbul follow.

> One of the best things was meeting remarkable people and talking to them about their work and different cultural situations in their home countries, and the PBBC lecture series. (Student, Australia)

> I came back really inspired by the Global Studio, so I went back to the slum that I was working with, and I found out that they have a lot of problems now because they are in a real threat of eviction. So the Global Studio spirit is starting to flourish around here; another thing that I took from our experience was the idea of working together with the community in a small scale but full of meaning and urban action, so I had told the people in the slum about Zeyrek experience, (Student, Argentina)

> I have had the wonderful opportunity of sharing Global Studio with the University of Pretoria and to a smaller group in Johannesburg. I put together a wonderful school talk that surpassed even my closest friends' expectations. A lot of this maturity I owe to Global Studio. It is only when we are put under pressurised conditions that accelerated growth takes place. (Student, South Africa)

I shared my experience with my professors and classmates and of course everyone was amazed about this incredible journey. I asked and was given permission to create my own studio for this summer in alignment to what we learned in Zeyrek. So hooray on our behalf, I will be expanding on what we learned to other students, faculty and staff through presentations, etc. (Student, USA)

…I have been trying to advance the ideas some of which were presented on the research on community participation, etc. …should be brought into the mainstream of our planning and conduct of the architecture education programmes rather [than] being left as a side-line. . This has already begun with changes to the first year course. I spent three weeks in Botswana immediately after Istanbul designing the first year design studio and will be going back tomorrow to look at the work and take it further. Also, formulating further ideas and a programme of co-operative research about sustainable urbanisation in Southern Africa. (Professor, Hong Kong)

Case Study 2: Global Studio Vancouver (GSV) 2006
Global Studio Vancouver was held in June 2006. Hosted by the University of British Columbia, partners included the founding partners plus the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Witwatersrand University, University of Austin, Texas, and Rizvi College, Mumbai. GSV brought together over 80 city building professionals, educators and students from 21 countries to participate in the United Nations World Urban Forum (Sustainable Cities: Turning Ideas into Action) and the Global Studio. The disciplines of architecture, planning, landscape architecture, industrial design and international relations were represented. Working in Vancouver's disadvantaged downtown eastside with five distinct communities, Global Studio participants engaged in participatory planning and design approaches with residents, planners, designers, professionals, and civil society to develop strategies to improve people's lives. The outcomes were a series of multimedia events, and reports that were delivered to the community groups outlining possible futures developed in collaboration with local people, and ways of achieving these futures. GSV outcomes are posted on www.theglobalstudio.com > Johannesburg > PowerPoint.

Global Studio research and teaching approach
Global Studio relies on collaboration and aims to build new partnerships, knowledge and capacity in all participants. Locations have been selected because they offered opportunities to add value to the studio experience. Istanbul was selected because it was the site for the 2005 Union of International Architects Congress at which Global Studio mounted a special session of 25 speakers on People Building Better Cities. Vancouver was selected because it was host to the UN World Urban Forum and GSV participants took part in this.
   The Global Studio approach has the following research and learning steps: understand/read place; listen/learn from community; work with community; generate propositions and discuss with community; create an event; provide a report to the community; suggest how the work may be continued by other; reflect. The following questions are a way to begin to listen/learn from the community.
- What do people like/ dislike about where they live?
- What would improve their lives?

- What physical changes would help improve their lives?
- What is the political, planning and historical context?
- Does the community have a vision for the future?

These questions provide the framework for the participatory process and project research. The questions focus first on non-environmental issues and respond to the MDG's objective of improving people's lives. Answers to the first question often have little to do with the environment. For example, a person's life might be improved if she could get a sewing machine and take in work or cultivate a garden to supplement the household's food (Istanbul), or public toilets and a place where she could meet friends out of the weather (Vancouver). A physical change might be a space where she could use the machine with sufficient light not to damage her eyes in the company of others, a community garden (Istanbul); a new pocket park with plants, toilets and shade structures, or a de-tox facility (Vancouver). For the children in Zeyrek, Istanbul, a playing field was their answer, and over the period of a week children, students, academics, professionals and local government worked together to make one. In this collective endeavour ethnic rivalries were forgotten as land was prepared and the children painted a fifty metre long mural of their vision for Zeyrek. Thus, the approach leads back to the issue of cultural understanding noted above and the involvement of 'people unlike us' that Kennedy and Weiner as well as the MDGs bring to our attention.

GSI revealed the importance of the 'bottom 20%' concept when a Kenyan student commented that what was poor in Istanbul would have not been poor in Nairobi, and an Argentine student asked 'what type of poverty are we talking about?' Other factors came into play in Vancouver's downtown eastside, the poorest postcode in Canada. The 20% embrace opens up areas for systematic design investigation and research in all cities, and enables the long-term educational objectives for the global and local studio concept. Focusing on people's lives allows a holistic approach, requiring across discipline responses. The 20% will vary from place to place but may be related to disadvantage that is social, cultural, economic, environmental, or pertain to gender, ethnicity, special interest groups, natural or man made disasters. This conceptual shift assists in the development of cosmopolitan citizen professionals and scholarly communities equipped with knowledge to work more inclusively at home or abroad. In this both participatory democracy and social justice objectives are served.

The research described here has been introduced into a graduate level course on Globalisation and Architecture at the University of Sydney. As work on the Millennium Project advanced and Global Studios have taken place, relevant knowledge has been incorporated into the course, and efforts made to take advantage of the experience and knowledge international students have. Further, the research methods have been introduced in a disadvantaged High School in Western Sydney where the first stage has been completed. The high school students were asked the same questions as were used in Vancouver and Istanbul. Using a research design appropriate to the setting, undergraduate students developed guided walks and group activities, including responding to the suggestion 'If I were principal for a day'. The activities yielded useful and often surprising insights into environmental values, and what students think might make the school a better place. The results were presented at the school to teachers and students. The next stage, as with previous Global Studios, is to work with the school community to translate the results to design. Just as in the 20% communities

in Istanbul and Vancouver, there are Western Sydney high school students capable of being agents of their own environmental design development.

Conclusion
Global Studio has a number of short and long-term goals, as well as some strengths and weaknesses. The goals of Global Studio are to promote and facilitate:

- New and transforming knowledge about participatory planning and design
- Interdisciplinary knowledge networks over the life of the project, and knowledge and skills that will be transferred between generations, across borders and cultures, and between universities, professions and communities.
- The normalisation of high quality design and planning for and with the urban poor and the less advantaged.
- A high degree of cultural learning and exchange due to the intensive 'learning by doing' of the studio, and a mix of students and teachers from less developed and developed countries.
- The use and development of increasingly sophisticated information and communication technologies to compliment the face-to-face work of Global Studio.
- The adoption of the Global Studio model by others and the development of local, national and regional global or glocal studios.
- The organic development of research projects and new teaching approaches, generated through participants and the communities they represent.
- An effective contribution by design teaching, research and practice to the Millennium Development Goal, 'ensure environmental sustainability'.
- The introduction of more interdisciplinary seminar and lecture courses in areas of significance to the MDGs.
- The development of the 'citizen scholar' or 'citizen professional'.

A strength and a weakness of the Global Studio model is that no university will have more than a few participants. It is strength in that it permits the formation of extensive international networks for those that attend, and a weakness in that it is hard to argue its cost effectiveness to heads of schools and deans. Thus 'ownership' or institutional buy-in are difficult to harness although the 'trickle down' effect at the University of Sydney has been significant: traveling exhibitions set up by students (see Blanchett & van den Bussche, 2006); the establishment of a Sydney chapter of Architecture for Humanity; well attended public lectures; student and staff professional awards; thesis research projects; successful student grant applications on related topics to professional funding bodies; and a greater interest in architecture as a social art. There is the question of the long-term impact on participants. Will the Global Studio model produce any lasting change? Only longitudinal research will provide the answer. There is also the issue of falsely raising expectations in communities, and the lack of follow through, matters which can be addressed if carefully planned.

Global Studio has taken up the liberatory philosophies of educators such as Freire and Giroux, learned from the reflection in action and hermeneutic analyses of Schön, Snodgrass and Coyne and combined this with a 'globalisation from below' approach in an attempt to create an inclusive knowledge building community that can make a positive contribution to the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals. All cities have their bottom 20% for whom design and planning skills are most often out of reach.

Issues of migration and refugees challenge many cities, and globalisation's social, cultural, technological and economic flows are changing our urban landscapes. Its essential components are a research and curricula commitment to interdisciplinarity, the promotion of cultural understanding, participatory processes and the inclusion of social justice objectives.

Global Studio itself is a reflective practice, and an evolving project. Lessons learned in Istanbul were applied in Vancouver, and further changes will be made in Johannesburg. It will continue to build scholarly and inclusive communities, where teaching, research, action and reflection constitute the project's praxis. While fragile in the ways mentioned and especially with regard to funding there has been no shortage of contenders wanting to host Global Studio, or a regional glocal studio. At time of writing this includes Brazil, Argentina, Papua New Guinea, India and Australia. Planning is presently underway for GS Johannesburg in June 2007. That Global Studio is making some headway in the difficult terrain of international education is indicated by the Rockefeller Foundation invitation to profile the GS model and the South African outcomes at their July 2007 Global Urban Innovation Summit in Bellagio, Italy.

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