

Learning Through Lived Places: Community Engagement and Reflexive Education in an Urban Planning Studio

Lasse Koefoed

Associate Professor, Department of People and Technology, Roskilde University, Denmark

Abstract

This paper presents experiences from an innovative teaching experiment in Nakskov, Denmark, where students, local residents, and educators collaborated in a two-day urban planning studio. Instead of focusing only on traditional site analysis, students interviewed residents and used disposable cameras to capture everyday life in the town. The resulting photo-essays were exhibited locally, creating dialogue between students and community members and opening new ways of seeing the city. The study shows how experiential and community-based learning methods can strengthen student motivation, support critical reflection, and connect academic training with real world challenges. The approach demonstrates that when education moves outside the classroom and into local communities, it not only enriches student learning but also contributes to public debate and local identity. Lessons from this case suggest how cross-disciplinary and participatory learning formats can be applied in other contexts of higher education.