August 27, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

We are excited to share with you this documentation of the third annual Design Futures Public Interest Design (PID) Student Leadership Forum. In these pages you will find the names and faces of the extraordinary students and teachers that gathered at the University of Kansas in Lawrence from May 29th to June 2nd 2015. You will also find descriptions of the workshops and field trips that made up the forum and a summary of the student and faculty experiences collated from the surveys we distribute after the forum is finished. We hope that collectively, this content conveys the sense of enthusiasm to develop new skills, the commitment to the advancement of designing for equity in our society, the rigorous focus on outcomes and impacts, the opportunities for personal and professional growth, and the enrichment of meeting new people and sharing ideas important to each of us, that marked the five days we all spent together.

As coordinators of the forum our guiding principles remain unchanged— striving to build the next generation of leadership in the emergent PID field; continuing to diversify the ecosystem of PID in terms of discipline, background, race, gender, and scale; elevating the rigor and critical capacity of PID curricula; and curating a national network of thought leadership drawn from contributing universities and practitioner faculty committed to the advancement of the field.

We did, however, do some things differently at our third annual forum. In the previous two forums we have reached out to PID practitioners from the academic, non-profit, and for-profit sectors with direct requests for their participation as Design Futures faculty. This worked tremendously well and allowed us to test a range of classroom/workshop formats and to ensure we were able to cover the core material we felt was essential to the development of the next generation of PID leaders. To make sure Design Futures continued to expand its spectrum of thought leadership from different disciplines and backgrounds contributing to PID while retaining much of what was special about past forums, we announced an open request for workshop proposals last winter. We received many more excellent workshop proposals than we could accommodate in the five day Forum and had great difficulty ultimately selecting the workshop line up you will read about here. Several of those emerging leaders with promising proposals not selected were still invited to attend Design Futures as contributing faculty, and made significant contributions in other ways. We feel strongly that the workshop hosts and other contributing faculty in attendance created a supportive space for all participants to learn collectively and grow their leadership skills individually.
We also welcomed four new member schools to the forum this year. University of Virginia, University of Calgary, University of Georgia, and Washington University in St Louis all participated in the forum for the first time. They joined seven returning member schools—University of Kansas, University of Texas, Tulane University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Utah, University of Detroit Mercy, and University of Minnesota—to bring together over 70 exemplary students and 25 faculty representing 18 different disciplines! It is truly a thrill to be in the presence of such a collective spirit.

Now, with fifteen committed member universities, over 20 workshops created, 22 degree programs contributing, 45 academic and practitioner faculty participating and 163 student alumni over the three years of Design Futures Forums, the program’s impact is already more than we could have dreamed. This would not have happened without the unwavering support of the host institutions, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Autodesk Foundation, and Enterprise Community Partners, to whom we are eternally grateful. As the organizing team, we are humbled to be a part of such an inspiring community of students, thought leaders, universities, and funders. We have already met to renew our collective commitment to constant growth and improvement of the Forum, and to begin planning in earnest for Design Futures 4th annual Student Leadership Forum at the University of Virginia next summer. Please visit the website http://dfstudentforum.org/ for the latest on upcoming events.

With thanks,

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MAY 29
12:00pm - 2:00pm  Check In at Marvin Hall, KU Campus
2:30pm - 4:30pm  Introductions
5:30pm  Opening Reception with lecture by David Perkes at Lawrence Arts Center (during Busker festival)

MAY 30
8:30am  Breakfast
9:00am  Morning Workshops:
        Leading with your personal Self
        OKGO: How to Get Started
12:00pm  Lunch
1:30pm - 4:30pm  Afternoon Workshops:
        The Potential of Earthen Architecture
        Mission-based Fundraising

MAY 31
8:30am  Breakfast
9:00am  Morning Workshops:
        Community Organizing Principles, Precedents, and Tools for Community-engaged Designers
        makeCalgary Equitable Training Session + Charrette
12:00pm  Lunch
1:30pm - 4:30pm  Afternoon Workshops:
        Finding and Forging Successful Community Partnerships
        Designing with Community Creates Positive Social Change: Tools for Empowerment
June 1

7:30am - 8:00am  Breakfast
9:00am  Morning Workshops:
          Design at the Civic Scale
          Finance: Turning Vacancy into Opportunity
          Human Centered Design
12:00pm  Bus over to BNIM - Bancroft School Project
12:30pm  Lunch and listen to round-table discussion of makers
          (incl Bob Berkebile/BNIM), other maker/shakers, and
          community Folks
2:30pm - 4:00pm  Tours of school building, grounds and resulting adjacent
                  projects (Make-It-Right and Historic Green houses)
4:30pm - 5:30pm  Bus ride back to AIA office/Crossroads District
5:30pm - 8:00pm  Party! speakers, live band, food trucks, moCOLAB exhibit
8:00pm - 9:00pm  Ride back to Lawrence on the busses

JUNE 2

8:30am  Breakfast
9:00am  Student Organized Pecha Kucha
10:30am  Final Reflection
DAN PITERA: LEADING WITH YOUR PERSONAL SELF

She is a born leader… When we hear or use a phrase like this, we suggest that there is a predetermined set of personal traits that make up a successful leader and if some people do not have those traits they might as well settle for being very good followers. This workshop will establish the position that though leadership is intensely personal, there is no recipe of characteristics that make an authentic leader.

Learning Objectives:

- Define the transforming nature of leadership and the designer’s unique role as a design thinker in the leadership ecology.
- Define personal core values, develop a working personal vision statement and connect it to the systems of leadership.
- Define and illustrate three modes of knowledge sharing: inform, feedback and exchange.
- Understand and acknowledge the reciprocity of leadership.

JENNIFER MAYFIELD + ISAAC COHEN: OK, GO: ENTERING A PLACE / GETTING CONVERSATION STARTED / IDENTIFYING NEED / SCALING WORK

How do you begin thoughtful work in a place you are not familiar with? How do you start and sustain conversation that will reveal opportunities that design can effectively address? How do you scale a design solution for maximum impact? This workshop will draw on buildingcommunityWORKSHOP’s work and workshop participants’ experience to develop and discuss deployable strategies for an essential but often difficult part of a public design process: beginning.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will be able to think more sensitively about their relationship to a place or a people that they are beginning work with.
- Participants will learn strategies for getting everyone at the table and leading an open conversation.
- Participants will be able to develop tools that will help widen conversation to identify + capture big picture needs, while honing in on a specific design opportunity.
- Participants will be able to critically think of design solutions at varied scales based on the available capacity, resources and skills of themselves and the community.
WORKSHOPS

CHAD KRAUS: THE POTENTIAL OF EARTHEN ARCHITECTURE

Throughout human history earthen architecture has served to empower communities to build their own environments with their own hands. This workshop will include a lecture on the emancipatory potential of earthen architecture, examples of rammed earth construction, followed by a hands on demonstration on rammed earth. Participants would be able to ram their own rammed earth blocks and learn about the process of transforming the soil.

Learning Objectives:
- Learn the history and application of earthen architecture as an emancipatory tool.
- Learn how rammed earth has been used in contemporary architecture projects.
- Learn the process of creating a rammed earth block.

JESS GARZ + CHELINA ODBERT: MISSION-BASED FUNDRAISING

Instead of waiting until the bitter end, we’re going to talk about money first! This workshop will take on a hybrid form; part lecture, part seminar and part hands-on workshop. Participants will learn about different organizational typologies, sources and uses of money, and we’ll do our best to demystify the world of mission-based fundraising.

Learning Objectives:
- Students learn about real-world examples of how a non-profit design and planning studio fund its work in low income communities in the US and abroad.
- Students learn about different types of organizations and sectors in which applied design work is relevant (e.g. community health, infrastructure development, parks and rec)
- Students will learn what a non-profit organizational budget looks like, and how to use it as a creative tool. (income and expense sides).
THERESA HWANG + KIARA NEGEL: COMMUNITY ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES, PRECEDENTS, AND TOOLS FOR COMMUNITY-ENGAGED DESIGNERS

This workshop will share traditions of movement building and community organizing as well as facilitation tools to support effective multi-stakeholder engagement in design process. We will discuss issues of outreach, facilitation, and how to organize communities. We will share powerful precedents that intersect social justice and cultural work and discuss how this can inform our design practices. We will work on tangible tools that you can implement in the field.

Learning Objectives:

- Develop a framework analysis of issues of equity and social justice in design process, projects, and outcomes.
- Gain tools to support facilitating equitable design process and results
- Have the opportunity to practice applying tools and frameworks to emerging and relevant work in the field.

JAMES ROJAS + GREGORY MORROW: MAKECALGARY EQUITABLE TRAINING SESSION + CHARRETTE

This workshop will train students in a unique method of community-engaged design using a case in Calgary. Following a brief introduction to Place It! and makeCalgary, student leaders will participate in a 3-part workshop/charrette that is 100% participatory, entertaining, engaging (and even fun!). The Place It!/makeCalgary approach pioneers a new urban planning and public engagement tool that combines art and play.

Learning Objectives:

- To encourage community members to open up individually about their spatial experiences.
- To encourage community members to work collectively to design an ideal space.
- To build upon these exercises to think critically about issues facing their community.
- To negotiate spatially towards a shared vision of a community space.
- To reflect upon this interactive process as a tool for empowering communities.
WORKSHOPS

CHRISTINE GASPAR + DYLAN HOUSE: FINDING AND FORGING SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

This workshop will help students understand how to effectively identify project needs and successfully develop collaborations with community-based partners. CUP, Hester Street Collaborative, and the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center will share case studies from their own work using the “resource ally” model in which their work is driven by the needs of community partners.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn to identify authentic, community-driven need for social impact design projects.
- Understand how to analyze the landscape of the issue you are working on/interested in.
- Explore what effective partnerships looks like, who needs to be involved and what roles they play.
- Explore what it means to be a “resource ally” and how to assess the impact or success of a project.
JAMIE BLOSSER + PETER AESCHBACHER: DESIGNING WITH COMMUNITY CREATES POSITIVE SOCIAL CHANGE: TOOLS FOR EMPOWERMENT

During the workshop, participants will be introduced to a range of tools, methods, and exemplars common in the practice of public interest design, including those connected to complementary fields such as social science research or community development. They will be asked to critically consider the ways in which community-engaged design can be an empowering tool for marginalized communities, having long term implications beyond a particular project to communities having a stronger stake in other grass roots actions that benefit them.

Learning Objectives:

- Gain breadth and depth of knowledge about tools, methods, and exemplars involved in community engagement.
- Learn about “Participatory Action Research,” a social science method, and how its characteristics may serve a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of public interest design.
- Better understand how public interest design can be utilized for broader grassroots organizing and community empowerment or self-determination.
- Undertake a reflective assessment of one’s own practice, ethics, and goals.

JESS ZIMBABWE: DESIGN AT THE CIVIC SCALE

Participants will discuss the relationship between design, community engagement and political power. We will explore how progressive design and planning ideas are shaped, harnessed, and executed by elected officials and their appointed delegates. In an era of diminished civic trust, what role can designers play in shifting the paradigm of the system from the “expert/professional” model to one that actually seeks and incorporates community input into decisions? The workshop will explore ways that design practitioners can more effectively engage political and civic systems in their communities—and why not?—even run for elected office.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how candidates for elected local office develop a platform of policy ideas and how designers and others can influence that process.
- Identify weaknesses in traditional means of civic engagement and develop prototypes for innovative means of collecting citizen ideas.
- Conceptualize a variety of ways that people with design experience and aptitudes can serve the communities they are a part of.
Why do key parcels in our cities remain vacant or underutilized? What incentives or disincentives do real estate markets, regulatory agencies, lenders and others deploy that hinder development? In places with intractable social problems how can we work within the constraints of market conditions, lending practices and regulatory hurdles, yet still achieve neighborhood revitalization, catalytic developments, better social outcomes and inclusive projects?

Learning Objectives:
- Development Feasibility Analysis
- Public/Private players and parameters
- Project Development Skills

Liz Ogbu: Human Centered Design

How might we have meaningful conversations with community members? How might we engage people in the process of design? How might we develop empathic designs that can tackle wicked social problems? The path to social impact design requires being able to address these questions. Human Centered Design (HCD) is a process through which people’s needs and desires can be discovered and articulated in meaningful ways that can foster creative community engagement and innovative (and contextual) solutions.

Learning Objectives:
- To learn, through case studies, about the basics about Human Centered Design Methodology.
- To understand how to incorporate qualitative data into the design process.
- To learn and practice empathy, prototyping, and collaboration skills.
FEEDBACK

An online post-Forum survey indicated that while all participants had a positive experience, 43% of students and 33% of faculty found Design Futures to be transformational. Below we included a few of the responses that reflected the larger sentiments expressed in the surveys.

The most beneficial aspects of this forum to my professional development/education were:

student responses:

- Meeting practitioners in the field and having a perspective which puts your own values/working methods into a national and global context.
- Understanding the importance of a well designed and facilitated engagement process.
- Opening the doors to the different directions of PID and the network that is already established. Having a network like that is a crucial jump start to getting involved in the field.
- I realized that these issues are a major part of what I want to work on. I still have a long way to go in developing my ability to communicate these ideas effectively, but seeing a project in person, and then actually being able to scrutinize it went a long way.

faculty responses:

- Preparing an entirely new curriculum based on recent thinking/research, having an opportunity to explore it interactively - and learning what to tweak in the future! So helpful to get feedback from students and other faculty and to see where people’s thinking is on the topic.
- Collaborative time with faculty and hearing the different ways that people talk about how to do this work.
- Connections to a broader network of those engaged in social impact design. Great to connect with so many different types of community design resource centers across the country.

The least beneficial aspects of this forum to my professional development/education were:

student responses:

- I wish that I had been able to attend more of the workshops that overlapped in time slots. I felt like many of them (especially when we went to KC) were ones that I would’ve liked to attend but was unable to due to the attendance selection process.
- I do not feel that I learned how to identify the publics needs through the tools. Not sure what I was expecting but I had thought we would discuss examples of what the public asked for and how to identify these requests against an overarching need.
- Some of the workshops start from a “Design Futures 101 perspective,” instead of an advanced course or seminar. I think this could easily be done in smaller seminars and attract alumni to return and expand on topics, theories and practice.

faculty responses:

- Dwelling only on “A”rchitecture.
- Lack of structure around sharing and communication amongst faculty. It would have been great if we all got to present ideas or work to one another as a means to seed productive conversations throughout the week. Or some other way to help encourage and engender rich discussions about this work at large amongst faculty.
- The other workshops. I love attending my colleagues’ workshops, but I fully admit that I don’t need the full three hour version of them, and I enjoyed being able to “audit” by attending an hour of two different ones. I hope that wasn’t perceived as rude by others.
What did we not talk about in enough length, and what topic did we give too much time?

student responses:
- I think more time should have been devoted on how to move past failure, disappointment because the nature of this field is that you probably won’t be winning all the time.
- I wish there was a heavier emphasis on how to get employed within the design world. The conference was extremely informative, but there was little guidance about ways to utilize the knowledge gained after it ended.
- A lot of the workshops stayed on theoretical concepts, and had a lofty air of “designing for others” theme to it, but rarely (if ever) got down to real hard concepts. Issues of race, gender, class, etc never got addressed directly, even though this subject matter is what causes the issues and systematic barriers we hope to design against. In the future, I would hope that we can have more group discussion over these more sensitive topics to really understand the gravity at hand in tackling public interest design.

faculty responses:
- Career development - I think these students want to know more about career paths and stories more time to talk and reflect in small groups. More time to talk about $$ and fundraising.
- We skirted around the topic of evaluation a lot but I was not a part of any session that went into depth of how they evaluated + valued their work + what that yielded moving forward.
- I think we should talk about current issues facing cities and how to engage women, immigrants and youth.
- It would have been helpful as a faculty member to see the overall arc of the presentations before hand, and to better understand where mine might fit in.

The most enjoyable aspects of this experience were:

student responses:
- The time spent getting to know other students in this field! I’m glad to know there’s a community around this topic, and once I graduate, I won’t be in it alone.
- Hearing about the tools and cases professionals at the forefront of the field are using to get work done.
- Being able to immerse myself within the design world. I knew little about community design practices before this experience, so it was nice to be exposed to a wide variety of PID initiatives.
- Students and faculty participating on the same task, sharing their idea and values.
- Each workshop brought a very well thought out and curated experience. I also loved the variety from “theory” discussions to practical tools I can use tomorrow if I were to lead a PID discussion or workshop.

faculty responses:
- Learning from students and learning from treasured colleagues and friends.
- All of the workshops were great and enabled us to connect with other conference participants in meaningful.
- The focus on student leadership - a ‘teach-in’ for public interest design! How fantastic, and a very strategic positioning vis-a-vis other PID events such as SFI, ACD, and PID workshops.
- The opportunity to interact with students and discuss core issues with them; generally sharing knowledge and insights with young leaders - very meaningful discussions.
FEEDBACK

What were the most beneficial aspects of the field trip?

student responses:

- Having the event in a different city and seeing how things are done in other parts of the country was not only eye opening and enjoyable but getting out of your town is ritualistic for leaving behind prescribed thinking.
- I enjoyed seeing the city and seeing the diverse range of projects going on.
- The small group workshops seemed to encourage more open discussion. It was great to get out of Lawrence for a little while and see more of the area.
- Interacting with on-the-ground community organizers. Additionally, I think it is important to see imperfect projects, but framed as such with an open conversation about what was positive and what could be improved.

faculty responses:

- The opportunity to challenge a model of community engagement that is far too common, and begin a discussion about equity and privilege as they play out in the real world.
- Seeing some very real examples of how far we still need to come in talking about these issues and namely how practitioners present projects to students/an audience.
- Witnessing the on-the-ground realities of how the adaptive reuse of a former public school has thus far fallen short in its transformative aspirations for the neighborhood.
- Informal time to interact with everyone, bonding time.

What were the least beneficial aspects of the field trip?

student responses:

- I wish we could have done more walking and engaging than listening on a bus. I also thought it would have been great to work with one of the partners whether it be through a charrette or providing manpower on a service project.
- I didn’t enjoy the videos, it felt like although the people had wonderful intentions, they also seemed oblivious to many of the nuances we were thinking through. An example is when one of the presenters described white people as “ordinary Americans”.
- The trip to the school in KC. I don’t deny that they have made positive impacts in the community, but it seemed like they developed in a way that appeared better to the media and outside sources than it actually was.

faculty responses:

- It was really the loss of a day is some ways, with no time to discuss or process new data and with no engagement for participants in any of the afternoon’s scheduling.
- The panel discussion was frustrating in that the community representative was not included in the project in a respectful way. The tour continued that framing.
- I would have liked to have seen more projects + also have heard from some residents of Mannheim Park + those living in the Bancroft School.
- The evening Pecha Kucha. I would have loved to see the students or alumni featured there. I think we got a great flavor from KC on the tours and would have liked to see the evening be a way to start reflecting and projecting forward.
How has this experience impacted your potential leadership capacities in PID?

student responses:

- This experience gave me the confidence that there is hope for the ways that I envision communities treating all of its members in a much more sustainable and equitable manner.
- I now have so many more resources, skills, and a network of other people inspired to explore PID.
- The empowering skills we were taught create confidence and make goals seem more attainable.
- It has helped me establish discussion topics with friends, colleagues, and peers. I feel good knowing a solid foundation of the issues and problems faced in communities and having some tools to help draw the community together to speak about what they would like to change or see.

faculty responses:

- It helped to clarify the real needs for shifting from an outreach to an engagement model, and showed me a more concrete role embedded in both individual and praxis that I’m genuinely excited to develop.
- Relationship building with current leaders is very important to future leadership. Both to grow leadership, but also to change direction.
- I think that it made me a better educator and leader certainly. Many new approaches or visualizations of this type of design work that I hope to incorporate into existing courses and in advocating for more offerings at my institution.
- It has allowed me to improve relationships with peers and superiors and better understand issues others are facing, but I would have liked more than that - it seems like faculty are there to teach, but it would be great if there was no division and everyone was students, what if it was framed that way? Would it change the way people act?

What resources do you wish you had to support your growth in the field going forward? (students only)

- Perhaps videos or recordings of the talks, the seminars were really dense, it would be great if we could go back and watch or listen to them again.
- Definitely having funding to do that work is the most important. I think there needs to be a dramatic improvement in the operation of the practice and funding sources though. The financial system is too disconnected for a layman to navigate and I do not feel this is a sustainable system for the long term.
- Financially stable possibilities, such as a list of paid non-profit positions with healthcare packages.
- A PID pathway in my classes. Our school has an environmental literacy requirement, but there is not even an option in our program to focus of social issues.

If you could attend a shorter alumni event next year, would you? (100% say yes)

If so, what should it include? (students only)

- A reflective period of how people have integrated what they learned from this year’s Design Futures.
- Advanced Topics in Community Design Process, Case Studies and a longer Pecha Kucha with more organizational support.
- Maybe regional and easy to access. Possibility for alumni to display work.
FEEDBACK

If you could participate again in future DF Student Forums, what role would you like to have as alumni? (students only)

- Some form of position that can illustrate to the students how they can apply what they’ve learned towards going to grad school, continuing school, and/or finding employment opportunities.
- I hope that one day I can present my work or lead a workshop. Until then I’d love to attend again.
- I am still very young in comparison to the majority of people that attended this year so I believe I would benefit next year from solidifying connections I made this year and doing a pecha kucha at the end.
- I would love to give a presentation or run a workshop, or assist others in doing this.

How has this experience altered the way you will engage with your future work? (students only)

- Its made me more critical about my internal process and how that impacts the processes that I am apart of. And what will hopefully remain with me, is that if someone isn’t “getting it”, the prerogative is on you to change how the material is presented so that they do.
- I hope I can not only incorporate PID into whatever I choose to do, but continue to think about it critically, as a dynamic field and strategy.
- I feel that before coming to this conference I still had the very naive perspective that I was “helping others.” I feel that in my future work I will be more aware of the fact that I am working with (not for) others, and that these people are experts in their own right.

Who was missing from our faculty spectrum (names of specific people, disciplines engaged, etc)? (faculty only)

- I would have like to have heard from community members / project partners.
- It would be interesting to bring community-minded civic & environmental engineers (both students and faculty), as well as user experience designers/computer science folks into this space. Perhaps even some benevolent real estate development students thinking about how to do development without displacement.
- I think it would be great to have a landscape perspective. The urban and rural landscapes and regional ties are something our students are going to need to be responsive to in creating equitable exchange. Perhaps someone from the Rural Futures Institute? I think even having a small facilitation training for one of the last day’s options would be great.

What other offerings/programs should we develop for practical and university DF faculty? (faculty only)

- I just hope to continue the conversation at this scale. Also, I feel my network has expanded and now it’s my job to follow the folks I met proactively and not just stay in my bubble until the next conference.
- The faculty dinners were wonderful and lovely. There seemed to be a set of mini-groups with people involved working on ideas; perhaps these informal groups might become a bit more visible for others to participate in. Maybe there’s room for faculty-to-faculty workshops or at least working sessions.
- “Master level” courses for faculty at design futures on topic that we are interested in - maybe do a poll on what topics faculty want to learn more about and then have someone come in to lead that for us.
- Online learning opportunities.
If you were going to pass along three resources (include weblinks or full citations) to the student alumni, what would they be?

- Design for the other 90% series from Cooper Hewitt
- “What We Made” by Tom Finkelpearl
- NEA Webinar Series on Social Impact Design
- PDF of David Orr’s address titled “The Designer’s Challenge”
- Short readings would be great but I would really encourage them to take a close look at the work being done by the community design centers - for example: Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) http://www.dccudm.org/ Tulane City Center (TCC) http://www.tulanecitycenter.org/ Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (GCCDS) http://gccds.org/ KC Design Center (KCDC) http://kcdesigncenter.org/
- Andrew Goodman’s “When bad presentations happen to good causes.” http://www.thegoodmancenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/cover3-300x300.jpg
- School of Unity and Liberations (SOUL) http://www.schoolofunityandliberation.org/
- “Design for Equity” series on Impact Design Hub (https://impactdesignhub.org/tag/design-for-equity/)
- http://post.at.moma.org/content_items/587-is-tactical-urbanism-an-alternative-to-neoliberalurbanism
- http://nonprofitwithballs.com/2015/01/are-you-or-your-org-guilty-of-trickle-down-communityengagement/
- www.beautifultrouble.org
- www.downtoearth.org.in
- http://www.ecoliteracy.org/essays/designers-challenge The Ecoliteracy website is also one I would offer to our students