Creating a Fantasy Path to York: An Experiential Learning and Community-Building Activity

Course: Environmental Design

Professor H.

Student: X.

Date: April 26, 2001

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"Traveller, there is no path. Paths are made by walking."

"Caminante, no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar"

(Machado, Antonio; cited by Winkler, S.).

Note: All names have been changed.

Abstract

Sam* and X co-facilitated a class presentation for Environmental Design (ENVS 6132) on March 29, 2000. The presentation included a slideshow of visits made to local conservation sites, as well as a participatory design activity, entitled, "Creating a Fantasy Path to York." This is both a report and a reflection paper on the presentation.

Introduction

Environmental design works with form and space in creative ways to improve or harmonize relationships between constituents—be they people, living creatures, human-made objects, natural environments, or forces of nature. A key goal of environmental design is to minimize the negative ecological impacts of human development within natural, built, social, or organizational environments. For this paper and presentation, I focused on social and educational aspects of environmental design. Drawing from the presentation that Sam and I co-facilitated, this report will attempt to highlight some of the important links that exist between people, learning, design processes, and environments, which may indirectly shape the world in which we live.

Context

In our presentation for Environmental Design class at York University, Sam and I wanted to be able to synergize the learning from Professor H's classes with our own respective

life experiences, as well as somehow create a <u>real-life</u> environmental design application. Through a process of collaborative discovery, Sam and I found two themes kept coming to the fore, in our discussions:

       1) How do we learn? and

       2) How do we design?

Sharing a similar interest in "praxis"—that is, putting theories and learning into practice—we felt our class presentation might be more personally satisfying, if we were able to weave in elements of designing and learning in a practicable way. We also hoped our peers would be interested in joining us in this process. Out of these random thoughts and wishes, the concept for a hands-on design activity evolved. And so, we laid out one large, blank piece of paper, as a collective space for everyone to playfully envision whatever he or she may wish to see and experience on their way to school at York University.

Process and Preparation

The Big Picture

Along with focusing on human and social aspects of environmental design, Sam and I wanted to explore the notion that *how* we learn is just as important as *what* we learn. We sensed that this simple shift in perspective—which is uncommon in mainstream education—would significantly influence not only how one designs, but also the kinds of physical and social environments one may seek to create. Essentially, what we were interested in exploring is environmental design using holistic learning approaches.

Holistic learning can mean a variety of things: for example, creating types of knowledge that recognize things as being whole and interrelated systems, as well as approaching learning in ways that engage the whole of a person—mind, body, and spirit. In fact, these two interpretations are often closely connected. Merriam-Webster's online dictionary defines holistic as, "relating to or concerned with wholes or with complete systems rather than with the analysis of, treatment of, or dissection into parts." Surprisingly (or not),

holistic approaches to learning and cultivating interdisciplinary knowledge are seldom practiced in most educational institutions, or even in mainstream learning situations (eg, group seminars, adult continuing education). Most people have been inculcated in the "top-down," teacher-as-the-source-of-all-knowledge-and-experience learning format. Yet, this faculty is a rare exception within the stifling template of mainstream education, with its emphasis on self-directed learning and flexible attitude towards diverse learning approaches and outcomes. Montessori schools and the Waldorf schools are perhaps better-known examples of alternative, holistic education. Our Environmental Design class was also a wonderful reprieve from standard academic approaches. Sam and I wanted to continue in this same vein by encouraging a multi-sensory approach to learning and designing environmentally by foregrounding aspects of "how we learn" and "how we design" in our presentation.

Class Presentation

By combining environmental design with holistic ways of learning, it became clear that all parts of the development process were important. In other words, Sam and I realized that *what* we talked about was equally important as, *how* we communicated, *how* we learned, *how* we related to ourselves, others, and to our surroundings—and eventually, *how* we would co-facilitate a class presentation.

My own learning was manifested in different ways. At times, I felt an increased sense of wholeness, due to the way we approached our work. Firstly, the need for mutual respect became implicit, both in our discussions and on our field trips. This was evident in our interactions with other people, creatures, and the environments that we encountered in our respective learning journeys. Aliveness, friendliness, spontaneity, and vivid diversity of sounds and textures are just a few of the kaleidoscope impressions that I can recall. Sam describes many such 'learning moments' in his paper:

> I came across several children that were all carrying snakes
> that they found. Each child had one except a young boy
> who was toting a small aquarium filled with garter snakes. I
> had taken their photo for this report, but I firmly informed
> the young man that each person could take a snake, but not

two dozen. These were my ethics, but shortly after, I saw
the boy returning the snakes where he had found them....

I explained to them that these snakes were still lethargic and
were not ready yet to emerge from the hibernaculum. I then
went on to explain more about snakes and their role in the
environment. The children left with their own opinions;
however, the experience was theirs, and unguided (Sam 2-3).

Both Sam and I wanted to respect people, as individuals, while encouraging holistic awareness and understanding in our "Fantasy Path" presentation. (See pages 7-9, "How We Proceeded," for a detailed description of the workshop.) By setting up a collaborative design activity for the class, we wished to encourage participation and original expression. Above all, we wished to foster a learning environment in which individuality, equality, inclusivity, democracy, and freedom could flourish, as we saw these as being key principles of learning to design 'environmentally.'

The Process Begins

Starting right from where the process began for me…I personally appreciated M [Professor H] having us go around in a circle during one class, in order to share our prospective presentation ideas. It was at the end of this class that Sam and I sensed some common threads of interest, but we were unsure what they were exactly - there was simply some resonance.

We decided to collaborate, and we started by spending a great deal of time communicating our ideas. We hashed out our different perspectives, and discussed what we found most engaging during the course, as well as what inspired us to take Environmental Design in the first place. Learning to navigate and negotiate in this way provided a great deal of "grist for the mill."

Sam and I each aired our personal thoughts about various topics with much passion and conviction. This led us to discover that we were located very differently as people. Our perceptions and experiences often seemed to veer towards opposite ends of the spectrum. I believe a key factor that may contribute to our diverging perspectives may lie in the fact

that Sam is a Caucasian male, and I am an Asian female. Somehow, the ease with which each of us could "belong" to the land that we grew up in seemed quite different.

Our differing perceptions of Canadian identity were somewhat important to our presentation. Identity, citizenship, and a sense of belonging are very much connected to one's willingness to be socially and/or environmentally responsible, and consequently, are key factors in educating people and building public awareness. Yet, this is an area of learning that is undoubtedly complex, and often seems to be highly uncomfortable for most Canadians to even touch upon.

We also discussed the fact that both of us were born and raised in Toronto, and that neither of us knew much - if anything - about our respective ancestral heritages while growing up. We therefore fully embraced mainstream Canadian values, culture, and ways of being, during our formative years. For both of us, our parents had immigrated to Canada quite some time ago, and thus, had fully assimilated into Canadian society.[1] During our adult years, Sam had remained in Canada, while I travelled, lived, and worked abroad for an extended period of time.

However, what we share in common is a concern for people and environments. Let us frame this in a practical and positive light: social differences are a key aspect of biodiversity. Ecosystems have been growing and thriving for thousands of years, precisely because of the variety of living species and our mutual interdependencies. *Inclusivity* must, therefore, be a fundamental consideration in creating any sound environmental solutions. This approach needs to be nurtured at a basic level by also engaging in holistic and inclusive environmental learning methods and conditions. I would propose that fostering such learning, in order to create positive social-environmental change means that differences of all kinds must be embraced, while continuing to seek common ground and co-creating a common vision. Ronald Heifetz, a Harvard leadership course director, goes one step further in suggesting that, "'…conflict is the primary engine of creativity and innovation. People don't learn by staring into a

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[1] Despite the seemingly large gap between Chinese and Canadian culture, my parents had come to North America in their teens to pursue post-secondary education. Enclaves of segregated "cultures within cultures" were far fewer and less readily accessible to them during the 50s and 60s.

mirror; people learn by encountering difference'" (Taylor, B.). By first acknowledging and appreciating our individual differences, I believe both Sam and I felt more open and relaxed, and thus, more willing to understand one another's personal interests and environmental concerns, as well as our respective approaches to living. By continually making efforts to recognize that the playing field of social realities is **not** equal, we found it easier to define the common links between us. In fact, we began our collaboration weeks in advance—by exchanging our thoughts in person, after class, at our respective homes, and on field trips, as well as by phone and via email—and gradually, we found there was just so much to talk about!

How We Proceeded

While Sam and I were engaging in our own learning processes, we wondered how to safely invite others into the experience, and carry it further. In order for our work to be graded, we needed to create a tangible and constructive outcome. Thus, key challenges facing us were: How do we make our presentation interesting and relevant to other people? And, how do we relate it to environmental design?

Surprisingly, we did not concern ourselves with these issues right away. Instead, we simply spoke to our interests and enthusiastically discussed the socio-environmental challenges that we find are presently facing people, environments, and the planet, as a whole. Through our discussions, a broad range of issues and ideas emerged. We decided to organize "in-field" learning expeditions to help provide some focus. These site visits were quite inspiring. They also allowed us to bring some aspect of the natural surroundings we explored back to the classroom to share with others. We visited three different areas on two separate days: York University's unbuilt natural areas (Stong Pond, Black Creek), Colonel Sam uel Smith Waterfront Park, and Kings Mill Park. Bringing our cameras with us, we took photographs and slides of the different things we saw and experienced. As well, we collected bits of branches, leaves, dried plants, and rocks to incorporate into our presentation. This was done as respectfully as possible, and any disturbance, intrusion, or harm to the existing areas and surrounding life forms was minimized. By immersing myself in these more natural surroundings, I found the answers to my original questions were slowly being revealed.

While visiting natural areas on York campus, and down by the lakeshore, we were able to develop a flowing dialogue about different aspects of ecological conservation, as well as contemplate the relevance of environmental design. I got a good education, as Sam is quite knowledgeable in this area, and his obvious enthusiasm made for enjoyable learning. At the conservation park we visited, for example, Sam pointed out the different varieties of plant species that interact with one another to create various ground and shrub layers, which in turn, helps to retain enough moisture to keep the soil healthy and fertile for bigger things like large bushes and trees. He also described the growth patterns of fields in relation to the seasons, and gave background information on the many different animals, birds, fish, and amphibians that we came across in our explorations, such as the Red-Tailed Hawk. At York campus, we surveyed idiosyncrasies in the landscape that helped form natural drainage areas, and we observed how human-made objects and constructions, like manholes, small dams, old pipes, and built-up areas, intersected with natural growth (see photos). As well, we examined various tree saplings, which had been planted over the years (probably by Professor M. and the annual tree planting crew), and we noted how some small ones had died off, or had been trampled on, due to lack of awareness by passers-by. In fact, in some areas, it is not at all obvious that trees have been planted, so it is quite easy to knock over the saplings and markers by mistake. Roaming among these more natural, unbuilt areas of our urban / suburban landscapes, I felt the joy of learning flowed more freely. By being engaged more fully, my senses began to sing, and the doors of my perception and learning expanded. These learning adventures also helped foster greater cohesiveness in my thoughts and ideas about the overall presentation, and thus, shaped the course of things to come.

> Do not fail
> To learn from
> The pure voice of an
> Ever-flowing mountain stream
> Splashing over the rocks.
>
> (Ueshiba, Morihei; cited by Motivational Quotes.)

In reflecting upon our field trips, Sam and I felt that facilitating a participatory, experiential activity might be a good way to stimulate ideas about environmental design. We felt enthused about the natural environments we were exploring, and we wanted to invite our peers to co-design environments that are more natural, and yet, are also used for human activities or purposes. It seemed to us that our very own place of learning at York University might make a highly engaging topic, as all of us were likely to have had some thoughts germinating within us about how to improve the campus, ever since we enrolled at York. Sam and I both agreed that York campus, along with its surrounding communities, is in many ways a "dead zone," and a disjointed "wasteland." Yet, it also seemed to both of us that York University has vast and untapped potential for fertility, beauty, prosperity, and connection. As Sam pointed out, most of us spend so much time getting to school or work, as well as studying or working at these places, that it would be great to be in environments that made one feel more alive, so that we are "starting the day off right!" Hence, engaging in a participatory design project that centred on York University offered us an *outlet* for making our dreams of healthy, appealing environments a potential reality - if only on paper.

Thus, we proposed "Creating a Fantasy Path to York," which would allow each one of us to contribute our visions of what we may ideally wish to see and experience on our way to school. We felt this would be an important opportunity for people to put forth their own ideas about space, place, and identity, in relation to school. Psychologist Rollo May describes it this way: "If you do not express your own original ideas, if you do not listen to your own being, you will have betrayed yourself. Also, you will have betrayed your community in failing to make your contribution (cited by Naiman, L.)." An experiential group activity seemed to be a respectful way of including everyone in our presentation, as well as being a practical way to incorporate many of our ideas and materials. We talked in-depth about participation, inclusivity and equality, and we both realized that these objectives actually form an important foundation for our ideas about **learning** and **environmental design**. In fact, we saw the overall design activity as a potential exercise in building trust, safe space, and community. By initiating a collaborative class project, we felt this might indirectly stimulate a social environment similar to the ones that many of us wish to design for others—that is, a creative setting, full of life that helps to foster community, positive feelings, mutual respect, good health, ecological balances, and so on.

Besides shaping social and physical environments, designing group learning activities, and trying to generate creativity, my personal interest in exploring holistic learning approaches to environmental design extended further. I was particularly concerned about accommodating diverse learning styles, and enabling different modes of expression, during our seminar, particularly since I myself struggle with "academic" learning. Time-permitting, we would have liked to have done part of the presentation outside. However, school realities and time agendas being what they are, we facilitated the activities entirely indoors, in our standard university classroom. "Sterile and direct" is how Sam describes such learning environments (Sam 3). In any case, we divided our presentation into two parts: 1) a participatory design activity, and 2) a slideshow of the conservation sites that we had explored. The first part of the presentation was interactive; the second part was more passive and reflective. The aim was to encourage a multi-sensory exploration of design processes, which we achieved through the use of music, drawing materials, written words, visuals, verbal expression, food, and fun! In these ways, we felt we were able to effectively connect environmental design with holistic, transformative learning approaches.

In preparation for our path-making adventure, Sam and I cut out a wide variety of scrap pictures from old magazines and newspapers, so that people could perhaps add some of their visions to the mural, without agonizing too much about being able to draw.[2] Having greatly appreciated the unrestricted learning approaches that we experienced in Environmental Design class, Sam and I wished to offer the Same freedom to our peers. We found that going on field trips, examining spaces and places first-hand, and providing an open-ended format, allowed us, students, to take the information and materials (eg, field trips, lectures, handouts, readings) and adapt them to our own individual needs. As co-facilitators, Sam and I hoped to use this same democratic process in our presentation.

> "Spokesmen for both the medical and elementary school
> emphasized the importance of carefully constructing the
> educational environment so students could learn from their
> sensory experiences in an individualized fashion" (Ludmerer 167).

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[2] The cut-outs were not meant to impose any specific ideas onto our peers about conceiving environments or environmental design. However, being enrolled in an Environmental Design course, we did assume that there is an underlying wish to design, develop, and engender environments that are somehow healthy and ecologically-sustainable.

A variety of materials were used on the day of the presentation. For the slideshow, we displayed a total of 12 slides, using a slide projector borrowed from FES. For the group activity, we brought markers, scissors, tape, glue sticks, a large rectangular piece of paper, picture cut-outs (eg, natural scenery, people in various modes of being and doing, food, sustainable transportation). We played some ambient music (dolphin calls mixed with piano melodies), during the activities, and we brought healthy food to share at the end of the presentation. We also put up various poster-size quotations around the room, hoping that these might inspire deeper thoughts about learning and creativity (see below). As well, Sam and I brought in photos of ourselves to place on the "Fantasy Path." We would have asked everyone else to do the same, if they so wished. However, we decided that some people may not be comfortable with this idea, and many would have been preoccupied with preparing for their own presentations, on that same day. This also would have meant disclosing details of our presentation, and we wanted people to come to the design project fresh, curious, and open. Having, thus, laid out our comprehensive groundwork, we were satisfied that we had incorporated as many different elements into our presentation, as possible. We felt confident about moving into Stage Two, which was the group exercise. Suddenly, four bare walls enclosing our "sterile" room turned into a busy harvest of people, with bits of dried vegetation, rocks, photos and slides of natural environments, drawing tools, music, healthy snacks, and a safe space for holistic engagement and meaningful expression.

Poster-Sized Quotes

(Most quotes below were posted in the room and had pictures on them. I have added a couple of new ones.)

"Education sows not seeds in you, but makes your seeds grow."
-Kahlil Gibran

"To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong."
-Joseph Chilton Pearce

"Learning is finding out what you already know. Doing is demonstrating that you know it. Teaching is reminding others that they know just as well as you. You are all learners, doers, teachers." -Richard Bach

"One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try." - Aristotle

"Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand." - Confucius

"Mistakes are the portals of discovery." - James Joyce

"What does education often do? It makes a straight-cut ditch of a free meandering brook." - Henry D. Thoreau

"Traveller, there is no path. Paths are made by walking." - Antonio Machado

"The excitement of learning separates youth from old age. As long as you're learning you're not old." - Rosalyn S. Yallow

"Whatever you can do, or dream, you can begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Overall development of our presentation followed an organic process: nothing was pre-decided, and each action evolved naturally from the one before it. There was a sense of building from strength to strength, and eventually, reaching fruition. Our being able to achieve a positive learning experience was largely due to the fact that we took the time to cultivate and ensure good communications, mutual respect, and enthusiastic learning. Our seminar became a total learning adventure, and things seemed to flow with an intuitive logic.

Living the Learning

> "Play is the best way to learn, because the learners do not fear the consequences of their thoughts and actions. [But so often, in society and work,]…fear of the consequences -- or fear of one another -- dominates the [decision-making and learning] process" (Geus, Arie de; cited by Muoio, A.).

"How we learn" and "how we design" are two themes interweaving the presentation that Sam and I prepared for Environmental Design class. I believe the "proof is in the pudding": our co-participants in the design activity are the ones who hold the answers to how well the environmental design and group learning activity went. Ideally, we would have liked to do a debriefing with the class, after the seminar was over, to discuss and record what was learned from it, as well as to discover what aspects of environmental design came up for each of us, during the exercise. Yet, there were time limitations. My own view is that **living the learning** is more meaningful than recounting and regurgitating the abstract theories of others. In lieu of being able to offer feedback from the class participants about our actual learning experiences, the following is a summary of what Sam and I touched upon in our own discussions of why the themes 'how we learn' and 'how we design' seemed important to us, with respect to environmental design.

In conceiving the "Fantasy Path" idea, both of us were aware that it was unavoidably a human-centred exercise. If one were to approach environmental planning and design with

the idea of striving for respectful co-existence, one might spend time in communion with all the living "others"—flora, fauna, waterways, and such—and allow them to rightfully and naturally take up their own spaces, so that humans do not necessarily dictate things, except to ensure our own survival, in more socially-optimal and ecologically-integrated ways. However, this is not the framework we are using for this presentation. York University is an established area, primarily intended for human use. Trying to fight on behalf of ecological conservation from a 'protectionist' viewpoint would be virtually impossible, under the current school administration. Thus, the "Fantasy Path" design project is – by necessity and practicality – an anthropocentric endeavour.

Good communication was a key part of our seminar. It was essential to each phase of our project: preparation, development, and presentation. The importance of listening, as well as allowing adequate time to get to know one another, were among the very first lessons that Sam and I discovered, during our collaboration. We ensured good two-way communications by constantly providing feedback, asking each other questions, and just generally keeping one another informed about new developments, as well as sharing ideas and concerns that we might be having about our presentation. By developing mutual trust and understanding, as well as clear communication, I believe we were able to move towards **cooperative action**, in a far more cohesive way. As Lester B. Pearson, Canada's 14th Prime Minster, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957, suggested:

> "How can there be peace without people understanding
> each other and how can this be if they do not know each
> other?"

Besides establishing good lines of communication, both Sam and I were interested in employing processes that stimulated deeper creative thinking. We wondered what types of physical and social environments might heighten our skill development in this area. Since learning is a highly complex process, it seemed that using multi-sensory approaches would help people to better absorb the learning. We hoped to build upon H's egalitarian teaching style, by asking our class to participate in experiential learning

activities, and to also engage in both individual and collective design processes to foster greater creativity, as well as a sense of community for all.

Many different human values, goals, and aspirations became an intrinsic part of our presentation. The act of presenting our seminar helped us communicate far more than this paper could possibly do. Our key values and ideas were implicit in the design approaches we used. We strived to treat everyone as equal individuals, with no one having any greater say or special authority. People were free to participate in whatever ways they chose to. This became an exercise in autonomy, mutual respect, and democratic freedom. Sam and I simply lay out a framework, by offering a large, blank sheet of banner paper to create upon. This eventual mural provided a common focus for people to explore both individual and collective realities, needs, ideas, and wishes– with respect to environmentally [re-]designing York University campus.

As facilitators, Sam and I engaged in a thoroughly holistic process, from start to finish. We cultivated a "whole-person" acquaintanceship, in which we not only shared personal information and intellectual reflections, but we also ate together, walked, observed, and experienced a variety of environments. Similarly, we attempted to facilitate holistic group learning that engages people in a multi-sensory way, while respecting each individual's unique vision. Standard teaching techniques are often conformist, authoritative, and controlling in nature. This can stifle creativity and innovation. By contrast, holistic education and healthy experiential learning aim to develop not only the intellect, but also, the physical body, emotions, psyche, personality, individual talents, artistry, and so on, of the learner. Rudolf Steiner, a 19th-century holistic educator, who founded the Waldorf schools, believed that the teacher is a living, yet fallible, example to students. He suggested that "we [teachers] should be able to develop what in reality lives in ourselves and…[pass that] over to the children in a living way" (13). Steiner encouraged his teachers to engage in mutual learning processes that **allowed the students to make conscious choices in their own development**. In this way, one may increase one's inherent knowledge – instead of having it largely imposed upon her or him, by an outside source. Unfortunately, most academic learning is largely geared towards perpetuating dominant ideologies, and manufacturing "acceptable" social behaviours. Sam and I tried our best to counter the effects of such prevalent academic teaching styles and approaches

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at York University, by offering possibilities for more transformative learning and creative expression in our presentation.

> "The problem is never how to get new, innovative thoughts
> into your mind, but how to get old ones out." (Hock, Dee
> [inventor of Visa]; cited by Cox, G.).

Our overall learning experiences in Environmental Design class profoundly shaped the design activity and its various nuances. Through our class trips to diverse field sites, like the Brick Works, the East Don, the University of Toronto, we were able to learn and understand more about how physical, natural environments are impacted by people, and to discover how environmental design approaches may help foster more positive and balanced relationships between humans, non-humans, and our shared spaces. Particularly after visiting University of Toronto's downtown campus and learning about H's and other designers' interventions there, this personally gave me hope that good environmental design is possible – even after an area has already been built up. A year after Sam and I facilitated our presentation, I came across this comment by Anne Taylor in "The Ecology of the Learning Environment":

> The playground was a forgotten piece of property, even
> though it was often the most valuable piece of land in the
> neighborhood. Instead of being used as a landscape design
> for learning, it was a barren patch of ground encompassed
> by a chain link fence" (Taylor).

Taylor's insights helped me to recall some of our class discussions about the York University campus, and the overall importance of environmental design. Moreover, the article captures the essence of the presentation that Sam and I co-facilitated, by making clear the practical and vital links between environmental design and multi-sensory learning. The Master Plan at York University effectively blocks the potential for creating a more sustainable campus through actual legislation, which is frustrating to many at the Faculty of Environmental Studies. Hence, our mini-design project (ie, the mural) was almost an act of resistance: both of us wanted to foster hope and creativity among students, who are learning in a university that seems to care little about environmental

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approaches, and thus, limits almost any possibility of our being able to directly apply our respective learning to much-needed projects on, and around, York University campus. Likewise, Anne Taylor describes the typical American school as being, "an environment in which children spend a large share of their time for over eighteen years and beyond, [yet] leaves little room for self-expression and a sense of ownership or involvement." We felt our participatory design exercise was a way to subvert similar educational realities at York, for a very brief moment. Moreover, "Creating a Fantasy Path to York" was a culmination of the broad learning that we had acquired through Professor H's Environmental Design course.

When All is Said and Done

To conclude, Sam and I took the concept of Environmental Design to heart. We expanded upon what we had learned from the course: we played with the ideas, shaped them, and then, applied them to creating an environmental design project that we could also share with others. We, then, invited our peers to apply their classroom learning to this visioning activity, thus, creating a more integrative educational process for everyone involved. The Fantasy Path became both a forum and a painter's canvas for expressing our ideas and concerns about designing environments that are hopeful, healthy, and life-giving. In an unspoken way, I believe both Sam and I sensed that what could be convivially shared between two people, might also be extended to larger groups and other social settings. During a short space of time, we did our best to create more holistic learning processes, by involving everyone in our presentation, and by respecting each person's unique ways of being, learning, and expressing oneself. We did not wish for people to feel mechanical or bored—or, conversely, to feel stressed and embarrassed into any particular mode of thinking, being, or doing. By engaging in a democratic, participatory, experiential workshop, we wished to cultivate mutual respect, freedom, creativity, goodwill, and community in our learning environment. Through this path-making exercise, we hoped to briefly inspire a sense of creative communion, such as the one that Sam and I were able to experience and enjoy, during our weeks of preparation. Our presentation was not simply a few ideas or rote exercises slapped together, but rather, a dynamic, holistic, and self-reflexive process that became, for me, a worthwhile learning journey.

I believe the lasting revolution comes from deep changes in ourselves which influence our collective life" (Nin, Anais; cited by Miranda, B.).

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