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What Do Current Planning Students and Recent Graduates Think Planners Do?

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Abstract

A planner's view of the purpose of their actions, the role they play, the focus of their work and in whose interest they operate greatly influence their approach to planning and the outcome of their work. However there is no common and established understanding within the profession on these themes. Contemporary planning theory, practice and education is characterised by the parallel existence of multiple, often contradictory schools of thought. What values and perspectives are held by the next generation of planning professionals as they emerge from contemporary planning programs? This preliminary investigation seeks to identify the views and perspectives of early career planners on the purpose and role of planning, the degree to which planning is oriented on the future and the nature of the public interest, using various schools of planning thought as a thematic framework. In the current phase of a larger project, extant students and recent graduates from planning courses at three Queensland universities were surveyed electronically to ascertain their views, with plans to undertake a broader study of similar populations across Australia. Within the current pilot, students and graduates did not identify strongly with a single school of planning thought, but favoured contrasting rational and collaborative definitions of the role and purpose of planning and the public interest and pragmatic concepts of partial knowledge of the future and the value of experience in managing present issues.

Keywords: planning education; student views of planning; early career views of planning

1.0 Introduction

The Planning Institute of Australia's *Accreditation Policy for the Recognition of Australian Planning Qualifications* (2011) requires that graduates have '(k)nowledge of planning theory and (the) capacity to critically apply this theory as a framework for undertaking planning' (p. 11). Planning theory does not, however, exist as a unitary voice, with differing views as to the underlying purpose of planning, the roles of planners, the appropriate foci of their work and the identification of the interests planning serves, or is supposed to serve (Campbell and Feinstein, 2003; Hemmens, 2007), giving rise to various distinct schools of planning thought (Connell, 2010). The diversity of these schools is further complicated by the long acknowledged reality that planners, as fallible humans, can not truly operate outside the context and influence of their personal values and perspectives (Stollman, 1979; Howe and Kaufman, 1981), with even the basic planning tasks of defining problems and selecting priorities acknowledged as value-laden and political acts (Davidoff and Reiner, 1962). Given the significance of planning education in shaping a planner's ideology, the influence of such ideology on professional practice (Gunder, 2004; Poxon, 2001; Teitz, 1984; Dalton, 2001), and the consequent impacts of these views on society at large, it is pertinent to reflect on the question of what perspectives of planning practice are held by the emerging generation of planners in Australia, and to further consider possibilities for re-shaping how the academy teaches planning theory.

This study, conducted primarily by two postgraduate planning students, each having recently completed undergraduate planning degrees, seeks to clarify the outcomes of planning education, examining views and perspectives of fellow students and graduates, the emerging generation of planning professionals. While academic staff were involved in the project, it was primarily in a consultative role at this stage, with expectations of participation to grow as the project shifts into recommendations for planning educators, an early set of which are included in the conclusions of this paper.

The current study draws on literature on both planning pedagogy and schools of planning thought and the results of a statistical analysis of a pilot survey of extant students and recent graduates to investigate their perspectives on a number of themes. These themes include the purpose of planning, the role of planning, the future orientation of planning and existence and nature of the public interest in planning. Particular perspectives on these themes identify with particular schools of planning thought including the rational, new right, critical, pragmatic, advocacy, and postmodern schools (Allmendinger, 2002; Connell, 2010). The analysis identifies what perspectives are favoured and how diverse the range of perspectives is on a particular theme, how consistently group perspectives correlate across themes with particular schools of thought and how student and graduate perspective differ.

2.0 Planning Education

2.1 History of Planning Education

Planning education has evolved simultaneously to shifts in philosophy within the planning profession and has been shaped by emerging planning theory, political agendas and historical events. Early planning practice grew out of schools of architecture in England in the late 1800s and responded to societal concerns surrounding the social and environmental impacts of the industrial revolution by constructing parks, open spaces and destroying slums in an attempt to improve physical conditions. Although admirable, the design-oriented focus of the profession failed to fully resolve the root cause of the problems of urban areas pre-WWII.

The post-WWII reconstruction efforts in England stimulated a shift in the role of the planner from being a city architect and aesthetic-focused designer, to a public servant focused on land use planning (Sandercock and Berry, 1983). Consequently, planning education for the emerging specialized profession in England from the 1940s was defined by the idea that *'to plan was to express in a drawing the form of existing or proposed land uses and buildings, and that town planning was concerned with the arrangement of land uses and communication routes in the most satisfactory practicable form'* (Sandercock and Berry, 1983, p.35).

Planning was first taught in Australia in the 1950s, at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries, the University of Sydney, and the University of Melbourne, primarily by British expatriate planners (Hamnett, 1999). The design and architecture-based rhetoric of the early 1900s continued to dominate planning education in these *'technical, apolitical, supposedly "value-free" specialist and design-oriented planning courses'* (Sandercock, 1983, p.36). These courses relied on the concept of rationalism that is based on the assumption that logical, scientific knowledge and processes can be applied to society to improve conditions (Watson, 2001). Sandercock and Berry (1983) and Watson (2001) argue that it was evident by the 1970s that the rational paradigm-based planning education of the 1940s and 1950s resulted in planning professionals who were ill-equipped to deal with the large-scale social, economic and political dimensions of urban conurbations that expanded after the war.

During the 1970s there was a shift in the focus of planning education, which proposed a greater theoretical and professional recognition of the political and social role planners now fulfilled in practice and that planners should have a greater focus on social and community issues (Stretton, 1970). Consequently, there was considerable growth in para-planning courses in Australia to retrain planners in the emergent post-positivist paradigm (Sandercock and Berry, 1983). Planning education of the 1970s rejected the rational model and stepped away from its design origins towards the supposition that *'urban planning is really a social science, or a policy science and that questions of design belong in the architecture schools'* (Sandercock, 1997, p.94).

By the mid-1970s significant and ongoing criticism argued that the focus on land use planning had led to planners becoming tools of *'the process of capital accumulation...powerless to do anything but follow and assist the logic of capitalist development'* (Sandercock, 1983, p.39). Based on these neo-Marxist criticisms, programs in urban studies which placed emphasis on the ability to critically analyse the urban environment and the role of planning emerged. These courses emphasised the philosophy that planners should be more than facilitators of capital accumulation (Sandercock, 1997).

Planning education in Australia followed worldwide trends. Despite criticism, the rational model has remained a core element of many planning programs largely because few theories have supplanted the firm grasp of rationality on the planning profession (Hemmens, 1980). However during the 1980s economic liberalism and communicative action introduced alternative planning philosophies. The communicative theory provided *'a new way of understanding action, or what a planner does, as attention shaping (communicative action), rather than more narrowly as a means to a particular action'* (Forester, 1980, p.275).

Emphasis on the environment and sustainable development gained increasing attention in planning programs and courses during the 1980s. Environmentalism emerged on the international policy agenda following the release of the *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN, 1980; Weiss, 1988) and gained greater traction in planning programs following the publication of *Our Common Future (Brundtland Report)* (IUCN, 1980). This led to further critique of the purpose of planning and the role of the planner in responding to environmental issues which eventually led to a gradual widening of the scope of the identity of the planning profession (Weiss, 1988; Colman, 1993).

By the mid-1990s there was greater focus on linking practice and education through the practice movement. This movement was centred on the notion of learning from practice to inform practice. Planning programs began examining *'planning as an activity and on the actual practices of planners as they undertake work that*

is now accepted as fundamentally political in nature' (Watson, 2001, p.179). The pragmatist planning philosophy relates planners' success to their intuition and ability to draw on experience. The practice movement resulted in practical experience-based planning courses becoming central to Australian planning education during the 1990s. Practicum courses were introduced worldwide to have students engage with the planning profession and to encourage students to reflect and participate in dialogues surrounding planning practice (Hughes, 1998; Brooks et al., 2002; Coiacetto, 2004).

2.2 Links between Planning Education and Practice

The theories and philosophies students are exposed to throughout their education undoubtedly shape their understanding of planning and inform professional practice (Gunder, 2004; Poxon, 2001; Teitz, 1984; Dalton, 2001). A comparison of planning programs in Australia and New Zealand found that the location of the planning program within a university school structure influenced the philosophies and skills taught. Planning programs within design or architecture schools had more policy courses than programs within science schools (Gunder and Fookes, 1997).

Beauregard (1995) argues that planning theory only became a core element of planning education in the 1960s, after the profession had formed an identity separate from its architectural roots. Existing planning programs in Australia tend to waver between presenting a multitude of different planning models and focusing primarily on the practicalities of professional practice. This has meant that planners emerging from such programs have entered the profession with a broadly inconsistent and fragmented theoretical grounding. However, Gunder and Fookes (1997) argue that the strength of Australian planning education is that it presents a diverse range of perspectives rather than a single philosophy or theoretical underpinning.

The purpose of planning education is to prepare prospective planners for the realities of the profession and provide them with appropriate knowledge, understanding of theory and skill levels. Planning programs are designed to '*expose the student to the various ethical and ideological frameworks that influence planning decision-making*' (Burayidi, 1993). Consequently, it is important that planning programs are structured to provide students with the knowledge and skills that practice will demand them to have (Gunder and Fookes, 1997; Memon and Cullen, 1988; Colman, 1993). The scope of the planning profession has broadened significantly since the profession's inception. Many planning graduates will gain employment in traditional, rational land-use planning positions, while others will be employed in less traditional roles such as environmental planners and officers, in public health, community services, transportation and mining. This broadening has required planning education programs to also offer a broader array of elective courses providing students with a greater number of multidisciplinary skills and knowledge.

3.0 Views and Perspectives of Planning Practice

Various views of the purpose and role of planning, the degree to which it is oriented on the future and concepts of the nature of the public interest are held by planners. These views frame and influence planning practice. Different perspectives on these themes reflect the various fields and specialities of planning, the broad range of intellectual influences on the profession and the different world views, ideologies and experiences of planners. The lack of a commonly agreed view on these themes within the profession (Campbell and Feinstein, 2003; Hemmens, 2007) underpins and separates the various schools of planning thought (Connell, 2010).

This investigation required a framework or scale of perspectives held by planners on the role and purpose of planning, future orientation and public interest. Various typologies of planning theory offer a framework including the procedural-substantive dichotomy (Faludi, 1973), Hudson's (1979) differentiation between synoptic, incremental, transitive, advocacy and radical schools, Friedman's (1987) identification of societal reform, policy analysis, social learning and social mobilisation traditions and Yiftachel's (1989) typology based on explanatory-prescriptive and substantive-procedural dimensions. Allmendinger's (2002) typology differentiates between the systems and rational, new right, critical, pragmatic, advocacy, postmodern and collaborative schools of thought. Under this typology, a school of thought is '*a collection of mostly coherent and self-supporting theories/ideas/philosophies*' (Allmendinger, 2002, p.X). Connell (2010) outlines the different positions and views of each school on the philosophy of knowledge, purpose and role of planning, future orientation and the public interest.

Allmendinger's (2002) typology of schools of planning thought and Connell's (2010) account of each school's perspectives and positions is used as a framework to structure survey questions and responses. The purpose of this article is not to debate planning theory, this typology of planning theory is merely used to structure and categorise student and graduate perspectives on questions of the role and purpose of planning, future orientation and the public interest. This typology, presented in Table 1, was selected as it has previously been used as a framework by Connell (2010) to discuss the themes being investigated.

Table 1: Comparisons of Schools of Planning Thought (adapted from Almendinger, 2002 and Connell, 2010)

	Rational	Critical	New Right	Pragmatic	Advocacy	Postmodern	Collaborative
Philosophy	Positivist	Positivist	Positivist	Pragmatic	Post-positivist	Post-positivist	Post-positivist
Decision or Process Orientation	Make or enact decisions	Enact decisions	Make decisions	Make decisions	Manage processes	Manage processes	Manage processes
Decisions Make	Concerned with predicting controlling activities	Complicit in patterns of accumulation & distribution	Mediate local externalities of issues & problems	Manage present problems	Address inequalities among stakeholders	Engage diverse stakeholders	Support communicative decision making
Role of Planners	Expert technical professionals	Instruments entrenched systems	Facilitators of efficient market	Experienced practitioners act on ideas	Advocates of marginalised groups	Narrators of different experiences & values	Facilitators of collaboration & agreement
Future Orientation	Strong: predict & control	Critique: strong	Moderate: defer to market	Weak: spontaneous order	Weak: injustices	Weak: diversity	Moderate: collaborative visioning
Knowledge of Future	Knowable through modelling forecasting	Knowable through & extrapolation of existing conditions	Partially knowable through analysis of market trends	Partially knowable through intuition & experience	Partially knowable through extrapolation of present injustices	Unknownable: involves complex & unstructured events	Unknownable: involves individual decisions
Public Interest Alternative	Public interest of maximum utility	False interest status quo	Greatest individual freedom	What works benefits community	& Pluralist: guided by social justice	Pluralist: aims to support diversity	Pluralist: substitutes understanding & agreement

3.1 The Pluralism of Planning Approaches

While the shifting influences on practice can be traced, no single paradigm currently dominates the profession (Campbell and Feinstein, 2003; Hemmens, 2007). Rather than superseding past approaches, developments in planning theory have added to and increased the range of perspectives and theoretical rationales embraced by the profession (Hudson, 1979). Planners have a *'latitude of choice among analytical paradigms'* (Hudson, 1979, p.396). The rational tradition persists despite widespread critique as it reinforces a form of professionalization attractive to planning practitioners and institutions (Dalton, 1986). Variegated approaches have emerged such as mixed scanning, which draw on both comprehensive and incremental scales. Sager (2009) suggests that the communicative model advocated by educators and the professional community conflicts with the new public management approach favoured by politicians and administrators. Some theorists (Hudson, 1979; Dalton 1986) argue that the diverse applications of planning and the complexity of planning situations require parallel application of complementary and countervailing approaches. Ultimately no one theory has satisfied the majority of practitioners or theorists of its independent sufficiency for the profession (Hemmens, 1980).

Some see the disagreement on a single approach to or perspective of planning (Campbell and Feinstein, 2003) as providing *'several useful forms of reasoning of value to planning'* (Dalton, 1986, p.151) and embrace it under the reasoning that *'having planners with the ability to mix approaches is the only way to assure that they can respond with sensitivity to the diversity of problems and settings confronted, and to the complexity of any given situation'* (Hudson, 1979, p.396). However others have observed tensions between the unworkably conflicting values and expectations of some approaches (Sager, 2009) and issues such as the convenient and selective misuse of theoretical reasoning in justification of established decisions (March, 2010).

3.2 Planners' Views in Practice

Planning thought influences practice by providing *'a conceptual framework for organising actors' perceptions of their life worlds and consequentially informing practices and actions'* (Alexander, 2010, p.102). The schools of thought articulated through planning education influence the approaches planners may draw upon (Dalton, 1986; Alexander, 2010) and shape the beliefs and ideologies of individual planners and the larger profession (Dalton, 2001; Gunder, 2004; Poxon, 2001). While the lack of a clear understanding of formal planning theory among some planners has been noted (Friedmann, 2003), studies have shown that a planner's value positions on planning themes (Howe and Kaufman, 1981) and perspectives (Raja and Verma, 2010; Alexander, 1998) both influence professional practice and planning outcomes.

4.0 Planning Programs Surveyed in Pilot Study

The pilot study focuses on students and graduates of the three planning programs in southeast Queensland: Griffith University (GU), the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the University of Queensland (UQ). These programs were chosen as they account for the majority of planning graduates in Queensland and established networks and knowledge of the institutions aided survey distribution. The purpose of this paper is not to compare the differences in the teaching of planning theory or how the various schools of planning thought are articulated in planning programs; this is beyond the approved scope of this research. Basic information on the presentation of planning theory in these planning courses is provided only as a backdrop to the views and perspectives students and graduates identify.

While each planning program in the pilot study includes planning theory, some programs integrate theory throughout the program while others have dedicated theory units (see Table 2). All programs expose students to a broad range of theoretical perspectives and schools of planning thought and a broad range of readings are listed for each theory unit. As all three courses are accredited by the Planning Institute of Australia they have satisfied the requirement that graduates have *'knowledge of planning theory and capacity to critically apply this theory as a framework for undertaking planning'* (PIA, 2011, p. 11).

Table 2: Units with Substantial Planning Theory Emphases in Planning Courses

University (Location of Planning Course) - Degree Conferred	Units Identified by Review of Unit Outlines ⁹
GU (School of Environment) - Bachelor of Urban and Environmental Planning	Introduction to Environmental Planning (1017ENV) Urban Analysis (2056ENV) Planning Practicum (4016ENV/4017ENV)
QUT (School of Civil Engineering and Built Environment) - Bachelor of Urban Development (Urban and Regional Planning)	Introduction to Planning & Design (UDB161) Planning Processes & Consultation (UDB266) Planning Theory & Ethics (UDB473)
UQ (School of Geography Planning and Environmental Management) - Bachelor of Regional and Town Planning	Foundational Ideas for Planning (PLAN1100) Planning Theory (PLAN2001) Advanced Planning Theory (PLAN4001)

5.0 Methods

Survey questions were developed based on the crosscutting themes identified by Connell (2010); the purpose of planning, the role of planning, the future orientation of planning and the existence and nature of the public interest. Response scales were constructed to reflect the position and rationale of each school of planning thought on each theme, these had to be concise and yet complete. As most positions when presented in an affirmative sense appeared reasonable and agreeable, questions were phrased so that the respondents ranked each option with the aim of eliciting an indication of their favoured perspective. Respondents were asked to rank the various perspectives on each theme numerically on an absolute scale corresponding to the degree to which they agreed with that perspective. The difficulty of expressing complex opinions with a simple numerical scale is acknowledged but within the scope of this study unavoidable and considered to be of little consequence to the broad patterns observed.

The sampling frame included planning students and recent graduates of the three major planning schools in southeast Queensland as identified above (GU, QUT, and UQ). Extant undergraduate planning students predominantly in the third and fourth year of their degree were included as they have had the opportunity to be exposed to various schools of thought. Early career planning professionals who graduated in the past five years were included as their views and perspectives reflect practice. Consequently the graduate responses will indicate if student views change in response to the experience of professional practice. The pilot survey was published online using a university based online survey tool and distributed through email requests sent by faculty members, social media and personal networks. The survey was available for three weeks in June during university holidays, which may have influenced the response rate.

Statistical analyses of the pilot survey data focused on identifying four trends: the perspectives respondents favoured on each theme, the diversity of perspectives identified with on each theme, the degree to which responses across themes converge on particular schools of thought, and the degree to which student and graduate responses differ. Statistics including mean scores and standard deviations, were used to identify significant patterns in survey results. T-tests were used to identify differences between student and graduate responses.

6.0 Results

The survey was completed by 56 participants (41% QUT, 34% GU, 25% UQ), with current planning students composing two thirds of the respondents. Recent graduates which accounted for one third of the respondents completed their studies primarily in 2010 and 2011. The population of current planning students who responded to the survey is heavily weighted towards those who expect to graduate in 2012 (44%), with diminishing representation of those who are at earlier stages of study (31% class 2013, 19% 2014 and only 6% 2015). Gender bias is evident among the respondents with nearly two thirds of the respondents identifying as female. Approximately half of the respondents had completed a month or less of practical experience in the planning profession while a fifth had completed 12 months or greater.

⁹ Identified from review of published unit outlines or equivalent documents in the pilot study phase. Future efforts towards this study will involve consultation with program leaders to ascertain full listings of units with substantial planning theory components.

6.1 Philosophy of Knowledge

Three questions measured which of the three philosophies of positivist, post-positivist and pragmatic the respondents most agreed to through a three-point Likert scale in which a score of one indicates the highest level of agreement and three indicates the lowest. Overall both graduates and students identified greatest with a broad statement presenting a post-positivist view that in planning practice knowledge and information should be based on contextual evidence, experience and the interpretation of complex interactions and relationships (1.52). This was followed by the almost equally rated positivist statement (2.23) which asserted that knowledge and information should be based on value-neutral evidence, logical and systematic experimentation, observation and measurement and pragmatic statement (2.25) which asserted that knowledge and information should be based on what makes sense to practitioners from ongoing experience, incite and reflection on practice (Table 3). There is no statistically significant difference in perspectives between student and graduate groups. These results suggest that respondents may favour the contextual and experiential based information of the post-positivist planning schools while the objective and scientific information of the rational school is viewed with some scepticism.

Table 3: Generation of Knowledge and Information in Planning Practice (Mean Likert Scale Values)¹⁰

	Positivist	Post-Positivist	Pragmatic
Students (Standard Deviation)	2.22 (0.74)	1.46 (0.60)	2.32 (0.81)
Graduates (Standard Deviation)	2.26 (0.81)	1.63 (0.68)	2.11 (0.88)
All Respondents (Standard Deviation)	2.23 (0.76)	1.52 (0.63)	2.25 (0.84)
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.83	0.34	0.36

6.2 Substantive and Procedural Orientation

When asked to identify to what extent planners should focus on making decisions about outcomes or manage processes, respondents favoured a balanced approach. Nearly half of the graduates (45.95%) and students (52.63%) chose the balanced perspective, with the remaining respondents equally split between perspectives which biased substantive or procedural orientation (Table 4). This distribution of responses does not privilege either the view held by the rational school that planners make substantive decisions or the view held by the advocacy and communicative schools that planners manage processes. Again, there is no statistically significant difference in perspectives between student and graduate groups.

Table 4: Substantive & Procedural Orientations (Percentages of Respondents)

	Substantive Orientation		Balanced	Procedural Orientation	
	Make decisions about outcomes	Principally make decisions about outcomes but also manage processes	Equally make decisions about outcomes and manage processes	Principally manage processes but also make decisions about outcomes	Manage processes
Students	0.00%	24.32%	45.95%	29.73%	0.00%
Graduates	0.00%	21.05%	52.63%	21.05%	5.26%
All Respondents	0.00%	23.21%	48.21%	26.79%	1.79%

6.3 Decisions Planners Make

In response to the question of what decisions planners make measured through a seven-point rank comparison in which a score of one indicates the highest level of agreement both groups of respondents overwhelmingly identified with the rational school (Table 5). The rational school sees the planner as a decision-making with authority surrounding land uses, human activities, patterns and flows of development and manage change. The pragmatic school, which is concerned with present issues and problems, was the

¹⁰ A value of 1 indicates the highest level of agreement with 3 indicating the lowest level of agreement.

second most commonly identified perspective identified by both graduates and students. This was followed by the new right focus on the external impacts of local development markets. There is little difference in the ranked scores of the current students and graduates with the exception of the sixth and seventh ranked philosophies. This indicates that time spent and exposed to planning practice has had some, though limited influence on the perspective of graduates on their understanding of the decisions that planners make in reality.

Table 5: Decisions Planners Make (Mean Rank Values)¹¹

	Rational	Pragmatic	New Right	Collaborative	Postmodern	Advocacy	Critical
Students	2.08	3.49	4.08	4.15	4.31	4.47	5.51
Graduates	2.47	2.70	3.73	4.05	4.61	5.47	4.56

6.4 Planners' Roles in Decision-making

When asked to rank the type of decisions planners make respondents were divided between privileging rational and collaborative schools. The rational school perspective that planners are expert professionals was ranked first by 38% of respondents and the collaborative school perspective that planners are facilitators of collaboration among stakeholders by 39% of respondents while the pragmatic view of planners as experienced practitioners who act on ideas and beliefs was also consistently ranked highly (Table 6). The responses indicate that students and graduates differ in their understanding of the role of the planner. Half of the students consider that the planner's primary role in practice is to facilitate collaboration among stakeholders compared to only a fifth of graduates. Graduates most commonly identified with the perspective of planners being expert professionals followed by experienced practitioners. This suggests that the collaborative definition of planning held by students may be challenged by rational and pragmatic processes they encounter later in practice.

Table 6: Planners' Roles in Decision-making (Mean Rank Values)¹²

	Collaborative	Rational	Pragmatic	Postmodern	Advocacy	Critical	New Right
Students	2.32	3.32	3.89	3.95	4.35	4.95	5.22
Graduates	3.89	3.16	3.37	4.16	5.00	4.11	4.32

6.5 Present & Future Orientation

Half of the respondents favoured a balanced perspective with regard to consideration of future conditions and present issues, with just over a third advocating for a perspective which focused more on future conditions while still considering present issues as shown in Table 7. Students and graduates differ significantly in their orientation towards future conditions or present issues. While two thirds of graduates believed that planners should focus equally on future conditions and present issues, students were equally likely to agree that planners should focus equally to a balanced perspective or to a future orientation which still considered present issues. The higher weight placed by graduates on present issues reflects the immediacy of the issues they deal with at the work place compared to the idealism of the students. Exclusive orientations to either the future or the present were largely unsupported showing that neither future-oriented practice as held by the rational school or present-oriented practice as held by the advocacy and pragmatic schools are fully rejected. The bent toward focusing on future conditions among some respondents may cause them identify with rational school processes concerned with control and prediction over the pragmatic school's exclusive focus on the present.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

Table 7: Present & Future Orientation (Percentages of Respondents)

	Present Orientation		Balanced	Future Orientation	
	Focus on present issues	Principally focus on present issues but also consider future conditions	Equally focus on future conditions and present issues	Principally focus on future conditions but also consider present issues	Focus on future issues
Students	0.00%	13.51%	43.24%	43.24%	0.00%
Graduates	5.26%	15.79%	63.15%	15.79%	0.00%
All Respondents	1.79%	14.29%	50.00%	33.93%	0.00%

6.6 Knowledge of the Future

Graduate and student perspectives on the ability of planners to forecast and know about future conditions are relatively similar, however there are differences as to the intensity of their agreement. Both groups of respondents overwhelmingly identified with the pragmatic school, supporting the idea that the future is only partially knowable (Table 8).

Table 8: Knowledge of the Future (Mean Rank Values)¹³

	Pragmatic	New Right	Advocacy	Critical	Rational	Postmodern	Collaborative
Students	2.84	3.00	3.35	4.14	4.30	4.95	5.43
Graduates	2.68	3.63	4.95	4.16	4.52	4.89	4.21

6.7 Planners & the Public Interest

When questioned as to the nature of the public interest that guides planners, respondents identified with the contrasting rational, pragmatic and collaborative philosophies (Table 9). Students most commonly ranked the rational perspective of the public interest (3) before a pragmatic perspective (3.11) followed by a collaborative perspective (3.59). This trend is reversed as graduates ranked the collaborative perspective of the public interest first (2.84), before a pragmatic perspective (3.11) followed by a rational perspective (4).

Table 9: Planners & the Public Interest (Mean Rank Values)¹⁴

	Rational	Pragmatic	Collaborative	Critical	New Right	Advocacy	Postmodern
Students	3.00	3.11	3.59	4.32	4.41	4.46	5.11
Graduates	4.00	3.11	2.84	4.79	4.26	4.47	4.53

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

7.0 Discussion

7.1 The Multiple and Dominant Schools of Thought of the Emerging Generation of Planners

Overall this investigation found that extant students and recent graduates did not consistently identify with positions related to a single school of planning thought on either an individual or group level. Particular perspectives on each theme were favoured, however these perspectives did not correlate across themes. Moreover conflicting perspectives on a range of themes were ranked consecutively. Respondents identified with a post-positivist philosophy of contextual and experiential generation of information and knowledge. On the question of the decision planners make, rational and then pragmatic perspectives were favoured, while on the question of the role of planners, rational and collaborative perspectives were equally favoured followed by a pragmatic perspective. An equal orientation towards future conditions and present issues was favoured while scepticism of the ability to fully predict future conditions is evident with respondents identifying with new right, pragmatic and advocacy perspectives of a partially knowable future. Concerning the nature of the public interest, contrasting utilitarian and communicative concepts were favoured followed by a pragmatic perspective.

These findings corroborate the literature discussed previously which has noted the parallel existence of multiple contrasting theoretical perspectives within the profession and taught in planning programs and the selective and mixed application of approaches by planners in practice. The concurrent identification with conflicting perspectives shows that either respondents have not fully considered their views, see no need to reconcile the conflict or hold that one of a number of perspectives may be validly held. The results also suggest that the professional conception and utilitarian public interest of the rational school is still held by the emerging generation of planners despite their identification with a pragmatic scepticism of knowledge of the future and the addition of collaborative roles and perspectives of the public interest. The consistently high ranking of pragmatic perspectives suggests a degree of confidence with the value of experience and the grounded practicality of the profession.

7.2 The Differences between the Student and Graduate Responses

Overall student and graduate responses reflected the same theoretical perspective, however some differences exist in the most favoured perspectives relating to the role of the planner in practice, the nature of the public interest and the degree to which planners are oriented on future conditions. Students highly favoured a collaborative perspective on the role of planners while graduates favoured the rational and pragmatic perspectives. Contrastingly, students favoured a rational perspective of the public interest while graduates showed high confidence in a collaborative perspective. Students were equally split between favouring a balanced focus and a future bias on the orientation of planning while graduates overwhelmingly favoured a balanced focus.

These differences are explicable by the varied levels of practical experience. Graduates are more likely than students to have participated as planners in decision-making and planning processes and their perspectives are informed by experience in addition to education. Graduate tendencies to recognise the planner as an expert professional may be linked to their increased interest in the professional identity of planning or the institutions they work for and are associated with. Sager (2009) emphasises this point, concluding that institutions favour the *planner as expert* philosophy of the rational school because it gives greater control over the outcomes of planning processes. Lower graduate ranking of a rational school utilitarian concept of the public interest may suggest that professional experience has demonstrated the practical difficulties of this perspective or challenged their view of the capability for objectivity in practice. Likewise the differing perspectives of the orientation of planning on future conditions may result from planning practice being more incremental and less future focused than projected by planning education.

8.0 Conclusion

Inevitably there is a variation between the planning philosophies of current students and practicing graduates due to the broadening influences of experience, time and reflection. This paper set out to analyse the consistency of planning student and planning graduate philosophies based on themes, including the purpose of planning, the role of planning, the future orientation of planning and existence and the nature of the public interest in planning. The statistical analysis of the survey responses revealed a degree of consensus between students and graduates particularly relating to the purpose of planning and the degree to which planning focuses on the future. Variations in the student and graduate philosophies were evident surrounding the role of the planner in practice and the nature of the public interest.

The lack of an overarching dominant philosophy for either group indicates that the next generation of planners are likely to follow in the footsteps of previous graduates and have varied philosophies surrounding

different components of their profession. It is likely that education has a significant role to play in shaping professional planning philosophies, however further study is necessary to confirm this. The results of the survey analysed and presented in this paper indicate that planning programs are exposing students to multiple planning philosophies and encouraging the students to build on their education through experience and practice.

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