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Design/Build in the School of Architecture

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Design/build is a classification of practice in the architecture and construction fields in which the same entity both designs and builds a project. Starting in the 1960s, this practice has gradually made its way into the academic environment. Here, students generate a design and actively participate in transforming that design into a real structure or space. Over the past two decades, this pedagogical construct has become increasingly popular in schools of architecture for its ability to deliver a number of critical lessons to students through the first-hand experience of integrating the poetics of design with the practicalities of assembly and construction.

In recent years, faculty and students in the School of Architecture have undertaken a number of design/build efforts with the hopes of teaching critical lessons to the participants through meaningful, haptic, and hands-on engagement. These projects have taken on two distinct styles. The first style occurs in the relatively high enrollment Building Technology I course, where the primary learning experiences center on the translation of drawn and modeled representations to actual built work. The second style occurs in low enrollment independent study courses and helps students engage with a wide variety of participants and stakeholders by introducing the processes involved in developing a real design project. Faculty research efforts over the past several years have helped refine the utilization of this pedagogy in service of our students and the Carbondale community. Our hope is to seek new partners to work with in coming semesters and to continue to push forward the use of design/build in the School of Architecture.