

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of CEBE Transactions. To introduce the journal I need to say something about CEBE - the Centre for Education in the Built Environment. CEBE is part of an organisation that is probably unique in the world, but now attracting the attention of many national education ministries: the UK Higher Education Academy. Universities in the United Kingdom are financed principally through government grant but managed with a relatively high degree of individual autonomy. Various auditing, performance evaluation, regulatory and incentive schemes steer the sector, but by and large universities are permitted to choose their own strategies for delivering higher education, conducting research and consultancy and disseminating knowledge. A good deal of diversity in mission and approach results – among universities and among schools and departments teaching the same subjects. And because universities, being populated by academics and students, tend to be *organised anarchies*, even greater diversity is found at the level of the programme, module, teacher and individual student experience. Against this background, the financiers of UK higher education saw the need for an agency that could work with the *anarchists* in building a more robust community of practice in which there was greater sharing of knowledge about subject-specific teaching, learning, scholarship and research-teaching issues. It also saw the advantage of an organisation with close access to the ‘chalk face’ and to subject, research and professional communities. This would help it take the sector forward as it responds to contemporary challenges such as e-learning technology; a globalised education market; wider social participation in Higher Education; educating an adaptable labour force for the knowledge economy; and diversifying the university sector more clearly by mission-orientation.

Along with the Higher Education Academy’s other subject centres, CEBE therefore seeks to promote and broker the exchange of good practice and innovation in teaching, learning and scholarship within its subject community. This consists of some 200 UK university schools or departments and 3,000 academics – as well as a rising number of international academics using CEBE web resources. A look at the website will show how CEBE is attempting to dispense its responsibilities in various ways. CEBE Transactions offers a platform for publishing from teaching without having to specialise in pedagogic research. Its premise is that most academics are highly creative in discovering effective ways of communicating their subjects to students and to wider audiences. Most know that the very act of teaching helps shape and refine knowledge. Having to communicate scholarly ideas, technical arguments, research findings and methodologies sharpens the mind and refines understanding. Teaching improves research and all forms of scholarship just as scholarship and research improve teaching. The approaches adopted are worth sharing. CEBE Transactions will publish case studies, essays, reports and other material that contributes to building up the body of knowledge about effective educational practice in the Built Environment disciplines. Some of these will be the product of work funded by CEBE or other programmes; others will

be submitted for publication as with any other journal. All are refereed against the criteria of usefulness rather than on the basis of systematic contribution to published scholarly debates – although where there is published debate, authors will be encouraged to connect with it.

In this first issue, five case studies on work-based learning are published with a guest editorial from Neil Harris.

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