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Editorial: Embracing *Scholarship* in the Built Environment

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An important objective of the UK Higher Education Academy is to provide for catalysts to facilitate greater sharing of knowledge about teaching and research issues. In part, the Academy was a response to specific contemporary concerns and political priorities, such as developments in ICTs and e-learning opportunities; internationalisation; widening student access; and developing graduate skills to meet the perceived challenges of a knowledge-based economy. Specifically, the creation of a number of subject centres initially provided a means to raise awareness of, and channel and develop ideas about, subject-specific learning, teaching and scholarship issues.

As an innovative means to strengthening the teaching and research skills of a relatively distinctive grouping of professionally-oriented subjects, the Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) offers particular opportunities to exchange and debate ideas and insights about the individual disciplines that make up the built environment. Importantly, this forum also encourages new discussions around the nature of the 'interdiscipline' and what a scholarship of interdisciplinarity might mean in practice. Moreover, through the publication of the work of international and UK-based scholars in its two journals, *CEBE Transactions* and the *Journal for Education in the Built Environment* (*JEBE)*, CEBE has responded to a latent demand and enthusiasm for an international built environment community of practice. The zeal and professionalism of the articles relating to teaching and learning are testament to a growing sense of identity and 'scholarliness' within the built environment.

The editorials and articles that have appeared in the two journals to date emphasised the importance of professional distinctiveness (Webster, 2008) and the benefits to be derived from inter-professional fluency (Frank, 2005) as different professions speak to and converse with each other across boundaries that may be considered relatively more or less fuzzy. Here, Boyer's prescient declaration continues to be relevant:

> Today, interdisciplinary and integrative studies, long on the edges of academic life, are moving toward the center, responding both to new intellectual questions and to pressing human problems. As the boundaries of human knowledge are being dramatically reshaped, the academy surely must give increased attention to the **scholarship of integration**.
>
> (Boyer, 1990, p. 21, emphasis in the original)

In this editorial I revisit some of the original insights contained in Boyer's (1990) monograph around the nature of scholarship which, I argue, continue to have a particular resonance for current professionally-oriented disciplines and the nature of research.

Transforming Understandings of Scholarship

In *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Boyer (1990) identified four overlapping and inter-locking components of scholarship which remain pertinent. These are: (1) the scholarship of *discovery* which encapsulates the generation of new knowledge and the creativity and curiosity associated with the pursuit of knowledge and scientific advancement; (2) the scholarship of *application* which may be construed as putting discipline-specific research into practice and to effective social use; (3) the scholarship of *teaching* which is fundamentally concerned with enhancing the learning process and establishing a wider culture of, and shared commitment to, intellectual endeavour; through research; and (4) the scholarship of *integration* which refers to the 'connectedness' of knowledge. This latter mode of scholarship actively encourages deliberately working the synergies across and between disciplines to bring new insights to knowledge and to ensure that scholarship informs and shapes society. In many ways, it may be taken as summing up the spirit of *JEBE* in relation to teaching and research.

Furthermore, Boyer's (1990) concept of a scholarship of teaching placed an important emphasis on extending the conception of teaching from one based on transmission of knowledge (or research), to one based on supporting transformative learning. It follows that such a construction of knowledge transformation might then directly benefit society in an appropriate and opportune way. This was neatly encapsulated by Boyer (1990, p. 23) as: "The work of the professor becomes consequential only as it is understood by others". This applies in the classroom but may also be understood as impacting on society as a whole.

More recently, the broader term 'scholarship of teaching and learning' has come to influence higher educational discourse, although much of the literature (see, for example, McCarthy, 2008; Smith, 2008) acknowledges Boyer's (1990) pivotal role in initiating, though not originating, the interest in scholarship. The original report specifically addressed faculty roles and rewards and examined perceptions of the value of teaching relative to research and the associated implications for obtaining tenure and personal promotion. It traced universities' role in society and the evolving inter-relations between research and teaching over time. This historical perspective re-asserted the long-standing and complementary inter-dependencies between research and teaching, and the relatively more recent attempts to discriminate between them. This focused attention on what an appropriate nexus might – or 'should' – be.

Subsequent work investigating and interpreting the distinctions or inter-relationships between teaching and research reveals just how differently institutions, staff, students and society interpret and experience the changing higher education environment (for recent examples, see Prosser *et al.*, 2008; Leisyte *et al*., 2009; Elsen *et al*., 2009). In part, these differences may be explained by the argument that the term 'scholarship of teaching and learning' is essentially discipline-based (Brew; 1999; Healey, 2000). In effect, this means that it falls to each 'discipline' to interpret, construct and apply scholarship in potentially very different ways. In this context, Griffiths (2004) has made a timely and useful contribution by conceptualising a set of research-teaching relationships for the built environment.

The substance of Boyer's (1990) work on scholarship provided important opportunities not only for constructing teaching and research as a common enterprise but for re-connecting teaching and research to society. It is sobering then to note that Booth (2004), for example, lamented that the UK lagged (lags?) behind North America, Australia and elsewhere in reconfiguring the concept of scholarship in higher education. Here, it is important to distinguish between scholarly teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning. Thus, whilst teaching practice might be considered *scholarly* in that it is informed by personal research, and involves scientific inquiry and reflection into appropriate content, teaching methods and techniques, it can only, according to Shulman, then become *scholarship* once it is subject to peer review and publication:

> We develop a scholarship of teaching when our work as teachers becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of our professional communities so they, in turn, can build on our work. These are the qualities of all scholarship.
>
> (Shulman, 2000, p. 50)

This is where CEBE, for example, discharges one of its responsibilities within the built environment academy by offering intellectual and public space for sharing and extending ideas and practice in built environment professional education.

Embracing Scholarship

The ideas articulated in Boyer's (1990) monograph were by no means the beginning and end of the matter but rather represent work in progress. Indeed, Boyer, himself, at a keynote presentation in 1995, reflected on the subject of scholarship and its new typology, and explained how the original work led to the development of a companion volume, *Scholarship Assessed,* which elaborated a set of standards to evaluate scholarship (Boyer, 1996). Taken together, these ideas have continued to stimulate debate and further inquiry, including what values might constitute a professional scholarship of teaching and how it might be differentiated from Boyer's other forms of scholarship (Trigwell and Shale, 2004), and in what ways different components of scholarship might be conceptualised so that teaching might influence research (Reid and Petocz, 2003). It is important then to be sensitive to the continuing refinement and expansion of the term scholarship. Indeed, it is not only Boyer's (1990) scholarship of teaching that has been extended to embrace learning, but, as academics such as Kreber (2005) explain, the term scholarship of engagement has begun to replace the scholarship of application. This is not mere semantics, but a reformulation of academic scholarship to meet perceived contemporary needs, demands and expectations.

Three important issues for academic scholarship in the built environment arise from Boyer's (1990) arguments. First, in adopting a relatively more holistic construction of academic practice, Boyer (1990, p. 24) asserted a positive and mutually reaffirming set of relationships, based on a view that "knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching". Indeed, I would argue that his holistic typology of discovery,

integration, application and teaching scholarship continues to offer a potentially productive framework for focusing and organising built environment scholarship.

Second, Boyer's (1990, p. 18) articulation of a scholarship of integration called for:

> scholars who give meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective. By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non specialists, too.

This particular conceptualisation of scholarship advocates the evident intellectual benefits to be derived from dove-tailing theories and practices and *re*-connecting or *re*-combining ideas into a harmonious or unifying whole. Such an integrating and holistic ethos is surely foundational to the concept of *re*-search which asserts on-going inquiry. It also clearly asserts engaging with the widest possible community and communicating and disseminating in diverse ways.

Finally, notwithstanding the evolution and re-interpretation of Boyer's (1990) original ideas, his argument that scholarship needs to address human problems and to fulfill societal obligations, is certainly highly relevant to contemporary UK debates around the design of the assessment of research quality. Arguments for a more society-oriented form of scholarship must then take on particular significance for higher education in the UK where debates about the use of the element of 'impact' in assessing research quality suggests that excellent research would need to deliver demonstrable benefits not only to the economy and society, but to quality of life, public policy and culture, and extend scientific knowledge beyond the boundaries of individual disciplines (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2009). Notwithstanding the technical issues involved in capturing such impacts, this indicative and extensive catalogue of potential contributions refocuses attention on the wider societal improvements if not transformations that research (and teaching) are expected to deliver. It is not a huge leap to realise that this takes us beyond a transmissive model of knowledge. It necessitates a critically reflective approach to designing a responsive scholarship for our times.

One potential way for academics in the built environment to demonstrate the wider societal impact of their scholarship is to consider in what ways Boyer's (1990) four-fold typology helps re-frame, re-balance and re-articulate contemporary thinking and practice. In what ways, for example, might the scholarships of integration and application ensure that the relevance of cutting-edge research (discovery) benefits society? Moreover, how can we ensure that a deliberate and transformative construction of a scholarship of teaching and learning informs this activity? Reconsidering Boyer's (1990) seminal work suggests that a real holistic model of scholarship offers a prospective framework. The pace of societal change has not abated. Ideas once seeded still need to be cultivated and tended if they are to bear fruit.

This Issue

In many ways the papers in this issue demonstrate just such scholarship to integrate and innovate, cross-fertilise and co-exist, critically reflect and support transformative learning. The articles indicate the continued relevance of Boyer's (1990) notions of scholarship to better understand the linkages between research, teaching and learning.

David Chapman's paper specifically addresses the challenges facing built environment educators in their endeavours to facilitate student learning so that as professionals working within the built environment they may engage in developing and communicating knowledge within and between professional disciplines. Critically, Chapman argues that the reality of working in a multi-stakeholder and dynamic environment and against a background of complex decision-making, multiple variables and scientific uncertainty necessitates the integration of analysis and problem-framing between disciplines to enable professional action. Chapman does not underestimate the challenges of integrating different professional knowledge frames, understanding and action over time, space and scale, but argues that an integrative approach is a pre-requisite to any possible sharing in decision-making and collaborative action. He examines this proposition through a discussion of interdisciplinary place-based action learning for both initial professional education and lifelong learning situations.

In a paper focussing on planning education, António Ferreira, Olivier Sykes and Peter Batey address the complexity of contemporary decision-making within the built environment. They develop the metaphor of the mythical multi-headed monster, the Hydra, to conceptualise how different theoretical standpoints may co-exist. The Hydra Model illustrates how a discipline can accommodate and thrive whilst several standpoints maintain a competitive interaction. The paper examines the evolution of planning theories over time and considers the international term 'spatial planning' which purposefully seeks to convey a more integrative conception of planning. The authors advocate the need for planners to become 'polyrational' which they define as the capacity to flow freely from one form of reasoning to another. Such critical detachment from a specific theoretical standpoint, they contend, enables professionals to adopt a holistic view of all the available standpoints and thereby avail themselves of alternative problem-setting and -solving insights.

Richard LeGates' paper also takes UK spatial planning as its focus and reports the findings from the Spatial Literacy in Teaching project. This took a competency-based approach to spatial planning thinking and practice drawing on concepts from the emerging field of Geographical Information Science and Technology. Significantly, the author interweaves insights from these two evolving, interdisciplinary fields of study. In identifying a set of spatial thinking concepts planning students are likely to be required to apply in professional practice, Le Gates seeks to advance spatial literacy skills. Adopting a competency inventory approach, he proposes a tentative curriculum which integrates technical, cartographic, interpersonal and organisational, and spatial analysis competencies, together with relevant cognitive foundations and an awareness of GIS software and interoperability. These are then

mapped in relation to a range of course pathway specialisms, notably environmental planning, transport planning, urban design, and urban research.

The final two papers is this issue are concerned primarily with architecture students though the findings have wider relevance and applicability in practice. In examining ways in which educators might move away from a relatively transmissive model of learning, Andy Roberts and Hannah Yoell examine the use of reflective journals. Significantly, they differentiate between the learning that occurs during the design phase and creative development of drawings or models, for example, which tends not to form part of the formal assessment, and the output or completed project which constitutes the object of assessment (of learning). Paradoxically, they argue, this focus isolates the student's decisions, dilemmas and critical reflection from the finished product, despite considerable emphasis being placed by tutors on the development, exploration and selection of ideas. The integration of learning journals into the assessment of design project work was then a practical attempt to redress this balance and render the learning process more visible. The paper reports staff and student experiences and perceptions of the initiative raising a number of issues in relation to the implementation and execution of learning journals in assessment. This leads to the tentative elaboration of a typology of learning attitudes – natural, convert and disengaged – which certainly invites further empirical research.

The concluding paper in this issue by Louis Rice argues that playful learning can be effective in motivating and improving student engagement, and encouraging multi-disciplinary learning. Rice seeks to apply insights from the literature on the uses of play in children's learning into a higher education context, arguing that creativity, imagination and spontaneous learning can be nurtured through play, thereby stimulating individuals actively to engage in meaning making. In theoretical terms, Rice is concerned to elaborate an educational context for the use of the *dérive* in relation to play and to illustrate in what ways a playful approach to learning in higher education helps to generate an atmosphere of creativity and imagination. In the spirit of Rogers and Freiberg (1994), the case study offers interesting insights into how educators might develop learning environments in which students are given the freedom to learn, open themselves to the serendiptous, and play with concepts, boundaries and disciplines. Refreshingly, Rice's paper then serves to remind us of the exhileration of personal discovery and the challenges of creating learning environments that stimulate curiosity.

Following the metaphor of the *dérive*, the authors of these individual papers did not know that their papers would end up together in this issue, and readers will construct their own connections and interpretations. Each paper in its own way may integrate and illuminate ideas and data in new ways and then offer useful complementary insight. In submitting their work to peer review and critique each author demonstrates their personal commitment to scholarship in the built environment.

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Editor

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