

Editorial

It has been a long road, but the best things are worth waiting for. The idea for a new journal goes back several years when Chris Webster had a vision that a high quality refereed journal would help promote the development of an international community of educators in the broad subject area of the built environment. Time will tell what contribution JEBE can make, but already the editorial team is encouraged by both the number of papers being submitted and the quality of the research and debate they contain. JEBE (Journal for Education in the Built Environment) is a welcome addition to CEBE's portfolio of resources and it is useful to remind ourselves of the reasons for its creation.

CEBE's overarching mission statement is: *To help built environment educators shape knowledgeable, skilled, distinctive, adaptable and creative graduates.* As part of delivering this mission, JEBE will be a mechanism for fostering a community of teacher-researcher-practitioner scholars engaged in rigorous research and reflection of their practices. It will become one of the principal international homes for peer-refereed papers on built environment-focused educational research and theory.

JEBE will be a major resource for teachers, trainers, practitioners and scholars in higher education within the broad discipline area of the built environment. It will provide an international forum for discussion and debate on subject-focused teaching, learning and scholarship issues and a means for disseminating the findings of well founded academic investigations. JEBE aims to foster high quality academic debate about the way knowledge is generated, codified, taught, transferred and learnt. It will promote stronger links between research, scholarship, teaching and practice. It will expand the international community of educators in the built environment and provide a means for disseminating pedagogic knowledge throughout the community of educators, thereby providing a stronger intellectual basis for practice.

In this first issue, there are six highly interesting and diverse papers. Sustainability is currently seen as an important agenda in all aspects of life. Alison Cotgrave and Rafid Alkhaddar explore this issue in the context of sustainable construction within undergraduate programmes. They identify that progress is being made, albeit slowly, and that there are barriers to improving the quality of education in this respect. These include the structure of higher education in the United Kingdom, the apparent indifference of some academic staff, a lack of a common approach to inclusion of sustainability issues in the curriculum and a lack of engagement between industry and academia. In their conclusions, they present an all too familiar picture of academic programmes. Graduates enter industry with some understanding of sustainability issues, but their potential as agents of change is limited and society and industry believe that much more could be done in universities to improve their knowledge and skills.

Assessing the quality of research is an issue that taxes governments around the World. Deborah Peel examines this issue in the context of planning education. Her paper contends

that contemporary political, practice-related, and academic debates around, for example, the knowledge society, Information and Communication Technologies, and the skills agenda, highlight the pivotal role of educational research in this changing landscape. It identifies a number of questions for the forthcoming research assessment exercise in the United Kingdom.

Mustafa Alshawi, Jack Goulding and Ihsan Faraj present a conceptual framework for developing a fully customisable, knowledge-based learning environment that satisfied the requirements of inter-operability intelligent tutoring. It is based upon the use of learning objects and accommodates a variety of user interfaces. It is questionable whether the technological revolution has penetrated as far as the classroom and in this paper one glimpse of the way this may happen is explored.

The impact of research on teaching is a constantly debated theme. Mark Deakin reviews two approaches to evaluating the benefits of a link between research and teaching. His paper provides evidence to suggest that students value the link between teaching and research, placing particular weight on research led teaching and the bearing which it has on the quality of their learning experiences. The paper should promote and advance the debate in the research-teaching nexus. The issue is also picked up Robert Freestone and David Wood's paper. This paper reports on a series of workshops in Australia designed to explore this issue and inform policy. The paper stresses the symbiotic relationship between teaching and research and identifies that, amongst others, rewards and incentives to staff play a significant role in the health of this relationship.

The paper from Mei-yung Leung *et al.* presents a comparative study on learning approach between construction engineering students in Hong Kong and mainland China. The comparison comes out of a large and significant study of students. The main finding is that there are distinct differences in approach, with China preferring a deep learning approach. The findings will help in programme design and transfer of credit negotiations for students wishing to study abroad.

This is an eclectic and rich mix for a first edition and one which gets JEBE off to an excellent start. More papers are in the system and it is expected that there will be three editions per year, plus special editions, from here on.

Finally, the Journal relies heavily on its editorial staff and special thanks goes to Diane Bowden for all her hard work in marshalling all the reviewers and authors in time for this first edition.

Mel Lees

Editor