

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins
School of Environment and Technology
Construction Engineering and Management Research and Enterprise Group
Values and Sustainability Research and Enterprise Group



Research interests

Practice-led sustainability research is my focus, specifically interpersonal interrelationships in individual, project-based, and institutional contexts. Currently, I concentrate on qualitative research on sustainability, human values, problem framing, and design decision processes in architecture.

It is a strong and deeply held belief that by combining practice and research in architecture and sustainability, I can make the most impact in sustaining the planet for both human and non-human inhabitants. This extremely urgent and is of paramount importance considering the transgression of many planetary boundaries beyond their carrying capacity. In addition to my experience as a senior design architect, manager, and lecturer, I have also won the RICS Best Sustainability Paper for my first research contribution.

Qualifications

PhD, School of Environment and Technology
Jan 2014 → ...

Master, University of London, Birkbeck College
Sep 1999 → Nov 2001

Bachelor, Illinois Institute of Technology
Jun 1989 → May 1995

Master, University of Exeter
Sep 2012 → May 2013

Master, Arizona State University
Jun 1995 → Sep 1995

Employment

Doctor of Philosophy, Managing Sustainability Through Architectural Design Decision Processes: Underpinning Influences of Human Values on Design Problem Framing

School of Environment and Technology
University of Brighton
Brighton, United Kingdom
6 Jan 2014 → 5 Sep 2020

Doctor of Philosophy, Construction Engineering and Management Research and Enterprise Group

University of Brighton
1 May 2018 → present

Values and Sustainability Research and Enterprise Group

University of Brighton
6 Jan 2014 → present

Committee Member

Constructing Excellence, Sussex
United Kingdom
1 Jan 2015 → present

Senior Architect

Crowther Associates Architects
United Kingdom
1 Mar 2013 → present

Activities

RIBA Part 2 Postgraduate Dissertation Supervisor

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Supervisor)
Jan 2018 → Jun 2018

Interfacing High-end Research with the Construction Industry

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Organiser)
16 Nov 2016

Global Cleaner Production and Sustainable Consumption: Accelerating Transitions to Equitable and Sustainable Societies

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Participant)
1 Nov 2015 → 5 Nov 2015

Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (External organisation)

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Member)
2015 → 2019

Constructing Excellence, Sussex (External organisation)

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Member)
2015 → ...

Institution of Environmental Sciences (External organisation)

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Member)
2013

Royal Institute of British Architects (External organisation)

Richard Kulczak-Dawkins (Member)
1997 → ...

Approach to teaching

As a part-time academic juggling a professional career as an architect and small family, I find it both challenging and tremendously rewarding to throw myself into teaching and embrace the opportunity wholeheartedly and enthusiastically. One approach I consider fundamental is addressing students like adult people, colleagues in the learning journey, and part of a team in which I'm helping to guide people on a journey where my role is supporting and motivating people to do their best. This way, the approach is more about guiding but not spoon-feeding, encouraging and not dictating.

In working with all our Built Environment students, I explain processes and applications of building design and construction in a logical, practical sequence through real-world examples, explanation and live-sketching/drawing based on my 26-years' architectural practice experience. Through sketching and diagramming, I try to bring students along with me in the explanation, engaging people with both active sketching and drawing plus descriptive explanation of rationales, approaches, systems, details, broader connections, applications and impacts concerning sustainability. Because I've had experience in implementing technologies and techniques we're teaching on actual buildings and construction, I also explain practical tips-and-tricks for when students are ultimately employed in industry, and why they're relevant and useful—why it matters—for each of our disciplines across AT, BS, QS, PM, and CM. To me, this means everyone can experience the curriculum in ways that are personally meaningful. There is nothing to compare the feeling of seeing the moment of inflection in a student's face and eyes when they shift from being unclear to the moment of 'getting it' and understanding with clarity—priceless!

My lecturer's role as mentor and senior 'team-member/colleague' to me means that I do my utmost to ensure I'm enthusiastically communicating my modules' material in the most accessible way to students of varying abilities and language skills, whilst encouraging everyone to do their best, accepting that their efforts may not always be their best nor what they intended, but the best they could do in their circumstances, which are sometimes very difficult. The best way to explain is that I empathise and guide students. For many, university is a transformational experience and I see my role as helping everyone to transition from young adults in senior school to young professionals prepared for the workplace, consistently reminding them that's our goal—nothing brings me greater satisfaction than my students getting good jobs in industry. Our graduate placement record I'm told is excellent.

Interpersonal communication, to me, is paramount: speaking clearly and politely, regularly asking for people's questions, periodically asking if my explanations were sufficiently clear, encouraging students to think about what I'm teaching by asking pertinent questions about what I've said, giving them opportunities to speak to me before and after class, make appointments, responding to emails within 48hrs and providing courteous and helpful responses that encourage people to think and search out information too. Simply remembering students' names seems to surprise them! Regular reinforcement, announcements, information through Student Central are also provided to ensure the flow of current information, where I'm always uploading slides in advance of lectures so students can print and annotate. Many seem to respond well to my enthusiasm, empathy, approach and commitment, with unsolicited student feedback consistently echoing sentiments 'I wish we had this kind of help last semester/last year/the previous years'.

Originally, I was invited to teach during my PhD studies, now part-time and nearly complete, and because of the positive, unsolicited, and repeat feedback that the Built Environment Division continues receiving from students across all year-cohorts, I keep getting invited back to fill part-time temporary vacancies. It has meant the PhD has taken longer, but the opportunity to contribute to students' futures was too good to miss.

My approach to developing teaching and learning

Opportunities to understand diversity are important to me, so the last training I attended was about recognising and working with Dyslexia and Disabilities. As an educator, it is important that I try to understand the variety and diversity of our students so I can better help everyone, both those identifying as diverse and those not. This includes both students and teaching colleagues, because working with disabilities and diversity requires is worthwhile and meaningful to me personally.

Previously, I have taken the LTHE course and enjoyed learning about better ways to engage and encourage; manage and provide appropriate and timely feedback (even when this means working all hours); and module construction and management. I have taken the online module in understanding extremism on campus and I'm working my way through my list of online CPD. On PhD completion, I intend to begin PGCertLTHE.

Not forgetting that I also discuss experiences with my two subject area mentors, and asking other lecturers how they address things like feedback, providing support, and encouraging improvements in those struggling. Continuous professional development via enquiring, learning, application, and reflection is a golden thread that runs through my entire approach.

Research interests

In addition to my experience as a senior design architect, manager, and lecturer, I am also an award-winning qualitative researcher in sustainability, human values, problem framing, and design decision processes, having won the RICS Best Sustainability Paper for my very first research contribution. I am interested in practice-led sustainability research, specifically interpersonal interrelationships in individual, project-based, and institutional contexts.

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Research outputs

Psychosocial influences in design for sustainability: values and frames in the built environment

Kulczak-Dawkins, R., Piroozfar, P. & Harder, M. K., 4 Nov 2015.

Managing sustainability through decision processes: the influence of values and frames

Kulczak, R., Piroozfar, P. & Harder, M., 9 Sep 2015, *Proceedings of 31st Annual ARCOM Conference*. Lincoln, UK, p. 437-446 10 p.

Managing sustainability: Values and frames influences in design decision processes

Kulczak-Dawkins, R., Piroozfar, P. & Harder, M. K., Jul 2015.

Human values and problem framing as influential heuristics in sustainable design decision processes

Kulczak-Dawkins, R., Piroozfar, P. & Harder, M. K., 11 Jun 2015.

The Aesthetic Experience of Architecture: Debating the essentialist account of Roger Scruton

Kulczak-Dawkins, R., 2001

