

Bond University

Legal Education Review

Volume 29

Issue 1

2019

Forward

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FOREWORD

VOLUME 29 (2019)

After a long gestation period, volume 29 of the *Legal Education Review* is about to go to press as I write in mid-2020. The end of 2019 saw a transition of the journal to a new publishing platform, the retirement of our editorial assistant, Doreen Taylor, and my own move from Bond to Griffith Law School. The disruption of these events, however, was about to be overtaken by the declaration of a global pandemic.

As our campuses have closed down, we have collectively had to upskill alongside our students. As I speak with colleagues around Australia and around the world, we are rapidly enhancing our digital capabilities as we adapt to our new online environment. Its first iteration, rolled out as an emergency response, was likely for many of us to have been remote teaching. But as we enter the ‘new normal’ inevitably we will have no choice but to engage more and more in online teaching. No doubt many of you will inquire into the shift, and we do hope to see some critical analysis of this environment in these pages in the coming editions.

In this edition, we are offered a collection of interesting work addressing three broad themes, albeit with diverse perspectives on each: student wellbeing, curriculum, and assessment.

In the first article on wellbeing, Claire Carroll responds to Christine Parker’s critique of the wellness discourse in law. Her argument is that Parker’s analysis was not based on a full picture of what is a complex field. Usefully, however, she picks up on the question of structural factors and offers a framework incorporating both structural and individual issues.

In Kate Seear’s article, we are challenged then to consider the role of trigger warnings in clinic settings. In light of the wellness discourse and the risk assessment of student learning settings, Seear’s article is timely. Juxtaposed on wider discussion about a ‘snowflake generation’ and no-platforming on campuses (especially in the US) Seear’s analysis and conclusions challenge us to think critically about how we best promote student learning in diverse contexts.

From a different angle but still relevant to students’ experience and self-efficacy, Vicci Lau’s article examines how we can encourage the student voice through course evaluations. Lau’s work engages with students’ perceptions of a caring relationship with their teacher, and the consequences for student learning. Given the role of course evaluations within higher education, the possibility of enhancing student engagement with evaluations and the likely consequences of better-quality data is appealing to say the least.

Anna Cody adds to the discussion on student well-being in her analysis of a clinic component in the UNSW ethics course. Her important analysis centres upon students' sense of autonomy and competence—and the ability of a short clinical component to offer a genuine opportunity to develop those perceptions. In this sense, Cody writes not only on an issue related to wellbeing, but also identifies the key role of curriculum in providing opportunities to promote student autonomy and competence.

In terms of designing a substantive law curriculum, Janina Boughey and Lisa Burton-Crawford provide an interesting salve to the long running discussion on teaching statutory interpretation. In their article, they present statutory interpretation as a discrete field of law, usefully taught to law students alongside key tenets of public law. For readers interested in curriculum reform, the article offers a design approach that explains how to do this.

Despite decades of engagement with discourses of indigenisation of the law curriculum, there remains plenty of work to be done in terms of what is taught and the approach for doing so. Ambelin Kwaymullina's powerful article on the UWA process for indigenising its law curriculum examines the equitable partnership established there as a key plank for the success of the ongoing project. Kwaymullina articulates best practice principles to drive appropriate—and successful—indigenisation. As illustrated in the 2018 special edition of the *Legal Education Review* on Indigenous cultural competencies for law academics, careful attention to curriculum in its broadest sense is imperative to planning and implementing change.

Skills, too, have posed a challenge for the legal academy and none more so than group work. Justine Rogers and Marina Nehme explore the missing ingredient in law students' group work: that of intrinsic motivation. Law students are somewhat notoriously averse to group work, and Rogers and Nehme helpfully identify absence of intrinsic motivation as a key factor. They use self-determination theory as a lens through which to develop a framework for effective group work in law school, along with strategies for its implementation.

In an article bridging both curriculum and assessment, Niamh Kinchin examines the role of feedback in enhancing student cohesion in mootings. The rationale for the assessment is to introduce a contextual learning experience for administrative law. Like Boughey and Burton-Crawford, she is seeking to make the subject-matter come alive for students. And like Rogers and Nehme, she grappled with the challenges of mootings as group work. As advocated by Lau, Kinchin relied on systematic collection of student feedback on their learning experience over a three-year period, leading her to conclude that the moot was successful in promoting a cohesive comprehension of the substantive law.

In a stroke of good timing given the changes wrought by COVID, Alex Steel, Lyria Bennett Moses, Julian Laurens and Charlotte Brady analyse online exams. For those of us who have seen the processes for formal invigilated exams turned upside down, this study of UNSW law student experiences of high stakes e-exams is instructive. As higher

education is likely to increase its use of online learning and teaching contexts, including exams, this paper provides empirical evidence of the student experience that will help planning and decision-making.

The breadth and depth of work in this volume are testament to the creativity and scholarship of our colleagues globally. I'm particularly happy to publish an article hailing from the University of Hong Kong, and I urge colleagues throughout the Asia-Pacific to consider submitting work to this journal. Provided it is anchored in the scholarship of legal education, the editorial committee is happy to consider your work.

On one last, final, note, I would like to note the passing during 2019, of two leaders amongst our scholarly community. Emeritus Professor Michael Coper died in April 2019. A noted scholar of constitutional law and the longest serving dean of the Australian National University College of Law, Michael was also a generous supporter of early career researchers and a strong advocate for the internationalisation of legal education. Many of us will recall Michael's warmth and hospitality.

July 2019 then saw the premature death of Professor Des Butler. A scholar of note and a longstanding and respected member of the Queensland University of Technology Faculty of Law, Des was amongst other things, a leader in legal education. An inspiring teacher, he was an early adopter of digital technologies in his teaching and he shared his scholarship in this area through his publications. On a personal note, Des was my supervisor in my LLM by research, and taught two of my children during their studies at Queensland University of Technology.

Both Michael and Des were supporters of the *Legal Education Review*. Both were members of the *Legal Education Review* advisory board at the time of their death. We will miss them greatly.

I wish all of our community well during these testing times.

Kate Galloway
Editor in Chief