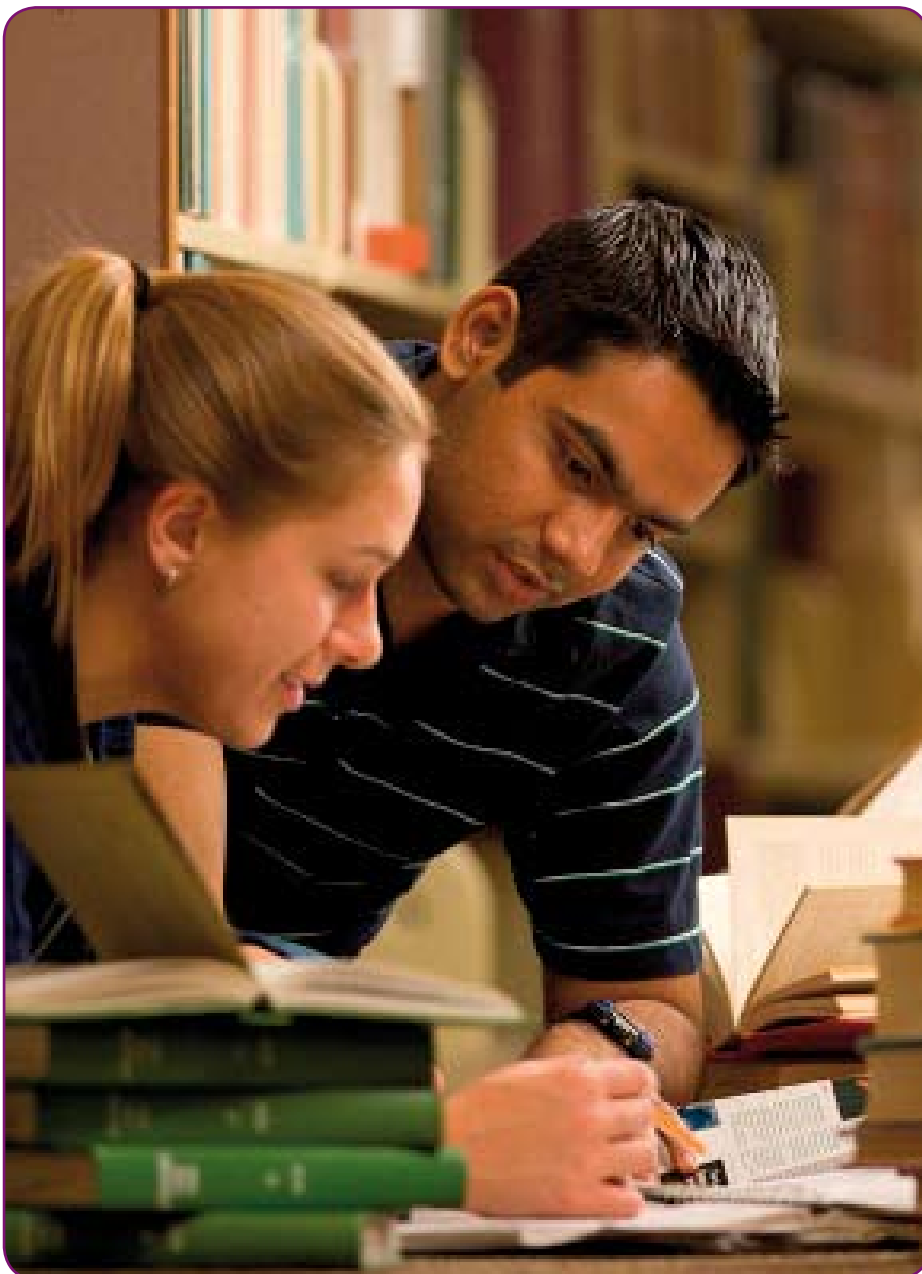


directions

in legal education

Taking the culture of scholarship seriously?

Two recent publications have highlighted a significant loss of socio-legal research capacity within UK law schools



The final report of the Nuffield Enquiry into empirical legal research in the UK (Genn, Partington and Wheeler, 2006) paints a bleak picture of an aging population of empirical socio-legal researchers, and of undergraduate and postgraduate curricula that do too little to introduce new generations of students to the contribution, both intellectual and methodological, of empirical legal research. Similarly, Professor Michael Adler, another distinguished socio-legal scholar, has also recently documented the declining performance of Socio-Legal Studies in the Economic and Social Research Council's Recognition Exercise for postgraduate training. As Adler (2007) observes, in 2005 applications for recognition in socio-legal studies achieved a success rate of only 33%, well below that recorded by criminology and most other disciplines.

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This picture stands in rather stark contrast to the more upbeat claims of scholars such as Twining (1995) and Cownie (2004), concerning the integration and normalisation of socio-legal approaches within the legal academy – though such claims of course relate as much, if not more, to the reception of socio-legal theory as opposed to empirical legal scholarship per se. The Nuffield Enquiry (2006:29-33) points to a variety of causes for the decline of the latter: for example, the continuing influence of professional demands on the curriculum; the relatively heavy teaching loads in many law schools (though this claim is not entirely supported by recent data, see HEPI, 2006); structural difficulties in accommodating the time for empirical legal research; the existing culture of legal scholarship, which undervalues the collaborative work often required by large scale empirical research, and the lack of a critical mass of empirical research experience in many law schools. It is also tempting to ask to what extent both the more theoretical turn in interdisciplinary legal scholarship, and the common perception that policy-orientated empirical research may be problematic in RAE submission terms, have also been important – and possibly linked – factors in the story.

So what of the solution?

The Nuffield Enquiry and Adler reports focus primarily on a range of recommendations to enhance postgraduate training, to increase the critical mass of socio-legal researchers, and to increase collaboration between legal scholars and social scientists. However, the Nuffield report offers perhaps surprisingly few concrete recommendations as regards the undergraduate stage of legal education. It recognises a need to develop more effective socio-legal course materials, and proposes that means should be found for funding research leave to create these. It also recommends developing summer schools for undergraduates interested in developing methodological skills. These are useful and welcome suggestions in themselves, but the report arguably fails to embed such developments in any overarching vision of the role of (socio-legal) scholarship in the law school, or of its relationship to learning and teaching.

We should not only take the Nuffield agenda seriously, we should use it as an opportunity to revisit the scholarly aspirations of the law school. As Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, has argued, an overarching 'culture of scholarship' does matter. Boyer suggests that there are five realms of scholarship, all of which are critical and

necessary to the health of the academy. These he terms the scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, of teaching, and lastly, of engagement. The scholarship of discovery describes the form of scholarship generally equated with the term 'research' – the basic creation, formulation and codification of (legal) knowledge. The scholarship of integration acknowledges the extent to which, in an increasingly complex world, conventional discipline-based 'discovery' scholarship struggles to answer the question "what does it mean". It recognises that inter- and trans-disciplinary knowledge and teamwork is often necessary to synthesise and evaluate knowledge in a way that gives it meaning in 'real world' situations. The scholarship of application refers to what we now commonly call applied research and knowledge transfer. The scholarship of teaching embraces the development of creative and original modes of delivery and the effective evaluation of teaching and learning: in other words it treats teaching as deserving of the same rigour as other areas of scholarship (see the Editorial in *Directions*, Spring 2006). The scholarship of engagement recognises also that scholarly work has a transformative capacity, by using the resources of the university collaboratively with local or other communities to address social, economic, legal and ethical problems within that community.

Boyer's vision not only helps broaden our appreciation of the range of scholarship - and the centrality of socio-legal and empirical perspectives to at least some of these forms - it also emphasises the relationship between research and teaching, particularly at the undergraduate stage, where student engagement with research is likely to be least profound and yet most needed for the future of our discipline.

Engaging students with discovery scholarship demonstrates that knowledge is dynamic and also contingent, and that learning is an expansive experience. Research-led teaching in this sense itself encourages students to view learning as a lifelong process. Exposure to a scholarship of integration similarly has the capacity to broaden students' intellectual horizons. A scholarship of integration and application can be developed through problem-based approaches to the curriculum, which oblige students to look (and think) outside the traditional curricula boxes; they encourage creative thought and new perspectives on legal phenomena. Properly integrated into the curriculum, activities such as innocence projects, death row internships and a whole range of community advocacy and 'street law' projects can

involve students directly (alone or collaboratively with tutors) in a scholarship of engagement. As the work of bodies such as the new Reinvention Centre show, the potential for such activities to embed research-based learning experientially into the curriculum is enormous, with positive consequences both for student motivation and academic research.

Rethinking the culture of scholarship of course creates some significant challenges of its own, and not least to the inherent conservatism of the academy. It would require us to look for ways to redesign infrastructure to support a range of scholarship and embed it more explicitly in the day-to-day practices of the law school. It could involve some, perhaps quite radical, rethinking of curricula – though there is nothing in Boyer's vision that is not already being done somewhere. But the potential rewards include a worthwhile narrowing of the gap between teaching and research, and the opportunity to bring greater substance to the claim that we are all socio-legal now.

Julian Webb, UKCLE Director

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The Reinvention Centre is a Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Its work is profiled at: www.warwick.ac.uk/go/reinvention

Lord Leitch publishes review of long term skills needs

The UK must commit to 'doubling attainment at most levels' of skill to remain competitive in the global economy. That is the conclusion of the skills review commissioned by the government in 2004 and undertaken by Sandy Leitch. The final report of the Leitch Review of Skills, 'Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills', was published on 5th December 2006.

The report underlines the need to raise achievement at all levels, so that, by 2020, the UK can become a world leader in skills. It sets out a radical agenda for doubling attainment at most levels of skill.

The ambitious agenda for change recommended by the report is against the backdrop of a rapidly changing and competitive global economy. There have been some improvements, but, the report points out, there are still weaknesses that can hold back productivity and growth in the global economy.

The report, and background detail about the Review, can be accessed at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm

Among the recommendations of the report for change in the skills agenda are:

- Strengthening the employer voice on skills by creating a Commission for Employment & Skills;
- Launching a pledge for employers to voluntarily train more employees, with the possibility of a statutory requirement to do so if insufficient progress is made by 2010;
- Increasing employer investment in higher level qualifications such as degrees and Apprenticeships;
- Raising public awareness of the importance of training and skills, helped by a new universal careers service that will provide a skills 'health check' for all;
- Compulsory education or workplace training up to the age of 18, following introduction of new Diplomas and Apprenticeships.

Law tops UCAS applications

UCAS figures show that law is the most popular course, with 84,860 applications as of 15 January, an increase of 4.9% from last year. The latest UCAS figures make cheering reading for admissions tutors, with an overall surge in the applications for science, maths and vocational subjects helping to lift the number of applications for undergraduate places across the UK by 6.4 per cent. Admissions tutors were baffled by the welcome rise in applications.

Commenting on the figure for law applications, Sue Heenan, Admissions Tutor for undergraduate law at the University of West England, said: "This year's figures show a recovery from last year's major fall when applications were down 7.4% on 2005. We must remember though that 2005 was an exceptional year with many applicants applying early for university and deferring their place in order to beat the increase in tuition fees.

Although applications all round for law are still down by around 2000 applicants it still remains a popular subject and has more applications initially than any other subject."

Universities and Colleges are key to the success of the Justice Sector

Universities and Colleges are critical to the success of the justice sector, and Skills for Justice (see the 'Developing skills in the Justice sector' article on page 13) are hosting an event on 21 March in Birmingham to explore how employers and education providers can best work together to achieve this.

Delegates will hear about the latest developments in education and training within the justice sector and the seminar will include speakers from Portsmouth University, the UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE), the Higher Education Funding

Council for England (HEFCE), Lifelong Learning UK, Surrey Police and Skills for Justice.

The event has also been designed to provide a rare opportunity to network with colleagues from other universities and colleges.

The event is subsidised by Skills for Justice and the cost is just £50 per delegate, (£75 for two delegates) which includes entry into the event and all organised refreshments.

To register or obtain more information e-mail: malcolm.roberts@skillsforjustice.com

Engineering Enterprise through IPRs:

2nd International Interdisciplinary Workshop: Developing the 'IP toolkit' for enterprising innovators and inventors.

UK Patent Office, Harmsworth House, London EC1 17 May 2007

An opportunity for IP and Engineering academics, industry practitioners and entrepreneurs to explore and demonstrate best practice in delivering commercialisation aspects in the engineering curriculum, leading to a new and improved IP and Engineering 'toolkit for survival'.

The organisers are pleased to confirm that keynote speakers will include Dids Macdonald, CEO of ACID (Anti Copying In Design).

Papers are invited on any aspect of IPR education or commercial exploitation. For further information and to register, please go to the CIPPM website - www.cippm.org.uk.

Supported by the Higher Education Academy Engineering Subject Centre, the UK Centre for Legal Education, and the UK Patent Office.

Further details about the Intellectual property in the engineering curriculum project can be found at www.engsc.ac.uk/resources/ipminiproj/index.asp

Farewell to Liz Anslow

Liz is leaving the UKCLE after 18 months of sterling service as our Executive Assistant. The job title (always rather opaque – not least to those of us who created it!), does little justice to Liz's contribution both in developing a robust administrative infrastructure for the Centre and in providing immeasurable support to members of staff across all areas of activity.



Liz came to the Centre looking for a job to keep her occupied after a career as a senior civil servant within the Department for Work and Pensions, and it is probably fair to say she found the contrast in working practices quite startling! Nevertheless, in true Liz fashion, she set about working out what people did, why they did things in certain ways and, by extensive use of her diplomatic skills, began

to persuade us to think about doing some things differently. It is a testament to her great personal warmth and charm that we almost didn't notice the change happening! We are certainly going to miss her but wish her all the best for the future, which we already know will include spending more time at her house in France with her husband Phil.

Best of the Web for Law

A printed copy of the new Internet Resources for Law booklet is being distributed in this edition of Directions. The booklet is published by Intute: Law and provides a selection of some of the most useful websites for law students, lecturers and researchers.

Intute is a free Internet service created by a national network of UK universities and partners to provide selected access to the best Internet resources for education and research.

If a print copy of Internet Resources for Law is not enclosed in this copy of Directions or you would like more copies for use in your own institution you can download the PDF version from:

<http://www.intute.ac.uk/supportdocs/law.pdf>

Recent developments at the Law Society and the Bar Council

The Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA), established in January 2007, is the independent body now responsible for the regulation, including education and training, of solicitors.

It launched two new consultations in February. The first is on work-based learning (see: www.sra.org.uk/consultations/150.article)

The other was on the future structure of the LPC (see: www.sra.org.uk/consultations/161.article)

For more details on the SRA, its strategy and the consultations, see www.sra.org.uk

The Bar Standards Board (BSB) is the regulation arm of the Bar Council and, as with the SRA includes the education and training of barristers in its remit. For more information, including a staff structure, see www.barcouncil.org.uk

Note that the BSB will have its own website from April 2007.

We'd like to introduce...

Valerie Shrimplin: New Head of Education Standards, Bar Standards Board

Valerie took up her appointment as Head of Education Standards at the Bar Standards Board (BSB) on 1 January 2007. She joined with some fifteen years' experience of the management of education and standards (including quality assurance and regulatory frameworks and procedures) in UK high level professional and statutory bodies and universities. Prior to moving to the BSB, she was Head of Quality Assurance at the Royal College of Surgeons.

Her particular interests include national and international quality assurance systems and practices; liaison with internal, external, government and overseas institutions; and the maintenance of standards in the context of widening participation and diversity in universities and the professions.

Experience as a consultant has also contributed to Valerie's knowledge of policy making in education and standards, and the drawing up and implementation of appropriate quality assurance systems in universities (including work for the UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and overseas activity in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, China, South Africa, Fiji and elsewhere).

Valerie's earlier career was as a university lecturer and researcher. She holds degrees from the Universities of Bristol, Manchester and Witwatersrand (Johannesburg).

She has presented and published quite widely on Italian Renaissance Art, and on the influence of

cosmology on art and architecture, including her PhD thesis, "Sun, Symbolism and Cosmology in "Michelangelo's Last Judgment" (Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies)".



A word from Valerie

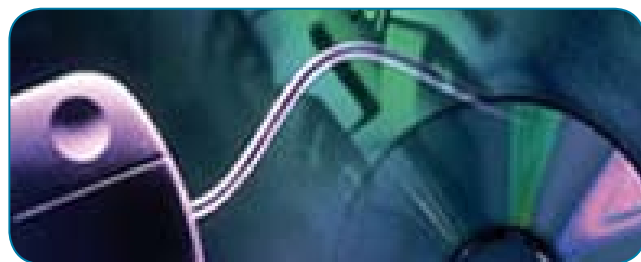
"Promoting excellence and quality within the profession and ensuring that those who qualify as barristers have the right level of skills and knowledge is a principal strategic objective for the Bar Standards Board. As Head of Education Standards I will be working with the Board's new Education and Training Committee to ensure that both the quality of training delivered to those undertaking BVC courses and pupillage training, and the standards we expect students to achieve, are of the highest order. This is important not only for the future of the profession but for clients and for the wider public interest."

An Adventure in Blogging Land with *Digital Directions*

by Karen Barton & Maureen Spencer

“Nerds do it, teens do it,
even educated MPs do it...
let's do it, let's BLOG!”

(with apologies to Cole Porter)



One of the great joys of attending UKCLE events like the Learning in Law Annual Conference is the sense of companionship and community it provides. The opportunity to meet up with colleagues from around the country and to spend time jointly reflecting on the presentation we had just attended, or chatting about the every-day common issues we all face is a valuable aspect of this type of event. At their best, these informal exchanges of often semi-developed or embryonic ideas provide us with an understanding ear, a sounding board, or even inspiration. The problem we often find though is that the initial feeling of positive energy and enthusiasm sparked in this environment slowly starts to fade, and by the time we're at our desks on Monday morning it's back to business as usual, mounds of admin and a feeling of splendid isolation.

However, things don't have to be this way. In the fastest growing sector of the Internet people from all walks of life, including many of our students, are finding that Web Logs (Blogs) provide them with a new form of communication, socialising and learning in ways that would not have been possible previously. Delia Venables (www.venables.co.uk/blogs.htm) has provided an informative and thought provoking review of the world of legal blogs. She explains, "A blog is a website designed for frequently added news items which can be set up using various templates and where the detailed work of running a website is done for the blogger by the blogging service provider". The UKCLE

has just become a recent addition to the ranks of service providers. It is hosting one of the first blogs specifically for law lecturers to enable us to keep in touch. Our aim is for the blog to become a kind of online interactive diary, open to those with a common interest in legal education. The blog in other words will provide an opportunity for an instant home for your reflections or observations, long or short, on any number of questions.

This new blog joins one of the as yet small but growing number of UK law blogs (or blawgs; one of the more irritating aspects of the blogging world being an affection for punning!). Not surprisingly perhaps the USA is currently ahead of the UK in the range and number of blogs. Venables usefully lists those UK law blogs which are currently in existence highlighting Nick Holme's Binary Law (www.binarylaw.co.uk). Another notable example is provided by Strathclyde University's Professor Paul Maharg's Zeugma Blog (<http://zeugma.typepad.com>).

So why aren't UK legal academics embracing the blogging phenomenon with open arms?

Possibly because the jury is still out on what blogs can achieve. J. Bradford DeLong, professor of economics at the University of California at Berkeley, for example, writes colourfully in a recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education of how blogging

provides him with a form of extended academic paradise that he calls the 'Invisible College' (see <http://chronicle.com/free/v52/i47/47b00801.htm>). Others however claim that blogging, where the potential to reveal aspects of one's persona or opinions that might otherwise remain hidden, can adversely affect academics' chances of promotion or even tenure, as an article from the New York Sun highlighted (www.nysun.com/article/21296), sparking a great 'blog debate' about the whole issue.

For some of us, the reason why we haven't jumped on to the blog roller coaster may simply be due to a lack of time or enthusiasm: *When do we do it?* Others may be reticent about the idea of publishing semi-formed thoughts and ideas for public scrutiny: *What do we do or how do we do it?* For many the question may simply be, 'Why should we do it?'

There is no doubt that in their best form blogs can and do provide something of that same feeling of collegiality and forum for sharing ideas that we enjoy all too infrequently at the few academic conferences we manage to get to each year. To get some idea of how fertile the blog landscape can be have a look at the blog Directory, BLAWG (www.blawg.com/About.aspx). Hosted by lawyers in the United States this focuses on legal-oriented subjects and covers a huge range of topics with contributions from librarians, commentators, technologists, practitioners and students as well as law lecturers. Remember that blogging is about debate and the floating and gradual formation of ideas rather than

centre projects

the presentation of fully developed body of work. After all, finding the time to jot down a few simple thoughts or responding to someone else's ideas is far less time-consuming than putting together a publishable piece of work. Does this mean that quality is then compromised? We would argue that it is not and that, in fact, blogging has the potential to raise the level of debate in some areas as well as prompt new ideas for research and collaboration. For an example of the kind of high quality and topical debate that blogs can encourage have a look at the US based Legal Ethics Forum which has been launched by a number of leading Law Schools. (www.legaethicsforum.com)

Blogging may also allow us to raise awareness of a number of important current issues with a wider audience than our close-knit community of academic colleagues including existing and potential students, university management and even policy-makers.

We, the joint editors, hope it will help us all feel we are not alone.

For these reasons we have created Directions' alter-ego, Digital Directions, a blog for law teachers. Our hope is that it will provide the sort of forum for discussion and debate that we will all feel comfortable contributing to as well as enjoy reading. While we don't want to make any premature judgements about the value of such a blog, we are aware that we will only be able to judge its success if enough people take the first step in posting at least one entry. Some ideas for contributions might include notes from a conference you have attended, reaction to an article in the Times Higher

Education Supplement, some stories from your teaching, or thoughts on possible research. The possibilities are of course as open as those in everyday conversation. Bear in mind that our Digital Native students will be spending much of their time conversing electronically with their peers and so it is a good idea for us to be tuned in as well.

So, we'd like to send a warm invitation to all those who have thought about the idea of blogging, but have wondered when they would find the time; or those who weren't quite sure how they should start or what they might say; or even those who are still a bit sceptical about the whole idea to click on the Digital Directions link from the UKCLE home page and post a blog (a few lines is fine) about this article, or any other article published in the current issue of Directions and let's see where the adventure might take us.

Karen Barton
(karen.barton@strath.ac.uk)
& **Maureen Spencer**
(M.Spencer@mdx.ac.uk)
UKCLE Associates
Editors, Digital Directions



The Digital Directions blog can be accessed at:
www.warwick.ac.uk:9180/ukcle/associates/digital-directions

it's SIMPLE:

Simulated Professional Learning Environment

by Patricia McKellar

Patricia McKellar, UKCLE, explains how an innovative new project involving Ardcalloch, a fictional town in the west of Scotland, will help students engage in learning through authentic simulations.

Regulars at the LILI, and now LILAC, conferences over the years will already be familiar with the progress of a small town in the west of Scotland called Ardcalloch. This is a fictional creation of Professor Paul Maharg who, along with colleagues at Glasgow Graduate School of Law, designed and built a virtual town to enable students to engage in authentic simulations of professional transactions. The application is now used as a teaching learning and assessment environment for students on the Diploma in Legal Practice (the Scottish equivalent of the LPC) at the Glasgow Graduate School of Law. Papers, presentations and talks to law staff have brought universal praise and the cry of 'how can we get that?' Until now the barriers have been lack of resources, lack of technical expertise and lack of committed ongoing support. UKCLE has always known the value of what became known as the 'transactional learning environment' and in 2006, along with JISC, began supporting a major project which will result in the eventual development of an open source application, now called SIMPLE (Simulated Professional Learning Environment) for use by UK Law Schools- or indeed by any professional discipline, such is the versatility of the product.

Ardcalloch was initially designed as a virtual learning environment (VLE) used to help students learning how to undertake practical legal transactions. It consists of a fictional town on the web, situated on the south bank of the river Clyde, quite close to Glasgow. The town is represented by a map and by an online directory of several hundred institutions, businesses, virtual student law firms, and people.



The environment is used as an integral part of the transactions that students, in virtual solicitor firms, carry out in the course. In Civil Court Procedure for instance they learn how to raise and defend court actions through webcast lectures, styles and text books together with face to face tutorials. They then put this learning to use in the transactions whereby, in their virtual firms, they raise or defend a civil court action. This means that by the time they have completed the Diploma, they have experience of taking part in a court action and all the interaction that may involve e.g. with the Sheriff Clerk, the client, witnesses, opposing solicitors etc. In order to create the background to the tasks, fictional clients and firms have been created to allow real-time messaging between the client, the other firm, the

student firm, and relevant institutions in Ardcalloch. Such experience is fairly unique on courses such as the Diploma, where normally students are trained in dealing with parts of transactions, but rarely have experience in dealing with an entire transaction.

The real life aspect of the application is further enhanced by the fact that the students are dealing with several transactions simultaneously. Just as in a 'real office' situation the application has been adapted to suit a number of different legal domains. For example students undertake simulated transactions in a Personal Injury negotiation and, in the Conveyancing module, they complete the purchase and sale of domestic property. In Private Client, students learn and are assessed on their ability to wind up the estate of a deceased client.

centre projects

The SIMPLE project is a joint venture of UKCLE and JISC with each institution providing funding of £100,000. BILETA also provided funding for a preliminary two day seminar in Scotland. The Project Leader is Professor Paul Maharg who has brought together an expert team to implement this project. He is a leader in the field of simulation learning and his work in legal education has attracted considerable attention both here and abroad.

The project to design and build this highly innovative, open-source, transactional learning environment using gaming technologies and mobile learning technologies began in early 2006 when Law Schools in the UK were invited to apply to be considered for participation in the project. Written proposals were submitted and several law schools were visited by members of the project team before a final decision was made. Three Law Schools in England and Wales are now taking forward their projects (Glamorgan, Warwick and West of England) and two in Scotland (Glasgow and Stirling). These will be pilot projects which will be developed over two years from July 2006 and will inform the eventual development of an open source application for use by UK Law Schools. However the technology and design will also be used by students, staff and administrators in a large-scale implementation in other professional disciplines including Social Work and Architecture, and can of course be used internationally.

Over the last few months the Law Schools have been working on the specifications for their projects to ensure that the application built at Strathclyde will meet the needs of their individual modules. IT staff are now developing the suite of tools which will allow the law departments to create their own virtual town and law offices; and while they are doing this, the participating law staff are now moving on to consider how to populate their environments e.g. development of character roles, scenario design, supporting documentation and customized

resources etc. It is expected that the pilot projects will be implemented within the curricula of the participating departments in September 2007. The next issue of Directions will bring further updates on progress but in the meantime please keep in touch through the project website at:

<http://technologies.law.strath.ac.uk/tle2>

or through the UKCLE site at:

www.ukcle.ac.uk/research/projects/tle.html



One of the aims of the project is to make the technology available to law schools to use without the aid of a technology team. Thus the SIMPLE project will generate the following outputs:

1. An open-source suite of applications, free at point of use, comprising SIMPLE server application, virtual town application, and client tools which will enable academic and administrative staff to populate and manage content of the town, define and manage the transactions, and configure the professional workspace user interface
2. Detailed documentation of the design and implementation of SIMPLE, to include:
 - User manual, developer manual, source-code and functional specifications
 - Use cases and scenarios
 - Simulation task designs, including characters, roles, documents, document variables, document tracking tools,
 - Discussion reports and interviews with learners, staff and administrators.
 - Learners' logs of use of SIMPLE
3. A project evaluation report

Patricia McKellar (P.A.McKellar@warwick.ac.uk)
is the E-learning Advisor at the UKCLE

Providing individual written feedback on formative and summative assessments

by Keren Bright



In August 2006 the results of the second National Student Survey were announced. Two findings in particular provided a dramatic contrast: whilst 80% of students were satisfied with their courses overall, 40% were not satisfied with their course assessment and feedback.

There may of course be all sorts of reasons for this difference between the percentages. What some students may actually be saying is that they were disappointed with the marks they were awarded. Students may also be dissatisfied with assessment and feedback because they did not adequately reflect the design and learning outcomes of the course. Additionally, students may fail to recognise the many ways in which feedback may be provided: if it is not in writing directed to them personally, it has not happened. Feedback can also be delivered orally in lectures, in tutorials and in one-to-one meetings. But the dramatic difference in the two percentages above must also indicate that for many students the quality of the feedback they receive is inadequate.

At this point it may be instructive to reflect upon your own experience as a student and what you wanted to know after you had submitted a piece of work. Clearly you wanted to know your mark as soon as possible and probably how you compared with the rest of the student cohort. You would want your mark to be justified by the marker and be told what the reasons were for receiving the mark it did. You would also want to know what else you should do in the future to improve and attain a higher mark.

It is a surprising thing that many of us law teachers have never been taught how to mark and how to give feedback (the same is of course true across all academic disciplines). We have just been expected to know how to do it by some automatic rite of passage with which we have not had to engage. As law students we had our work marked and as law teachers we mark students' work. Another surprising thing is just how little has been published about the provision of various forms of feedback and their relative effectiveness. Compare for example the amount of literature that exists on assessment design.

What follows are suggestions to consider when providing written feedback to individual students. They are given against an appreciation that this is highly demanding of staff time, particularly when student numbers have expanded and the resources at institutions may not have increased in the same proportion. However, perhaps we also need to have an awareness of student expectations following the increase in tuition fees.

Whilst it may prove impossible to provide individually-tailored written feedback for all assessments, the educative aim surely ought to be to provide this for some.

features

General considerations when providing written feedback

- Consider both the intellectual and the emotional perspectives when commenting on a student's work.
- Use a friendly, conversational tone.
- Ensure your handwriting is legible. Better still, type your feedback.
- Return feedback to students promptly (ideally within two weeks of submission) and before they prepare their next assessment.
- Be available to students after they have received their feedback: they may need specific development or wish to discuss your comments.

Comments on student scripts

Good practice

- Invariably phrase your comments as statements and not as questions.
- Explain your comments.
- Tell the student where they did well and why.
- Tell the student where they went wrong and why.
- Unravel misunderstanding.
- Point out and explain irrelevant content.
- Point out and explain missing content.
- Consider referring the student to cases, statutory sections, chapters / pages in particular texts (although the approach taken here will vary between institutions).
- In places rewrite the student's wording to demonstrate improvement (rather than commenting "This is confused", "This could be better expressed", "This sentence needs to be more succinct").

What is best avoided

- Ticks without explanatory comment are fairly unhelpful.
- Writing "good" without explaining why something was "good" or how it could be made better.
- Frequently using question marks and expressing comments as questions. This creates uncertainty for students. However, the occasional question to encourage the student to think is helpful.
- Giving so much feedback, no matter how well-intentioned, that a student feels overwhelmed and discouraged by the amount of criticism.
- Giving so much feedback that a student is unable to distinguish between the minor points indicated for improvement and the major.
- Exasperation; sarcasm; rudeness; attempts at humour at the student's expense.
- Words, terms and phrases the student is unlikely to know (unless you explain them). Again, the approach taken here will vary between institutions.
- Abbreviations, poor grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Instructions difficult to act upon without further clarification e.g. "Expand your argument", "This needs greater analysis".

Summary comments or general analysis of a student's assessment

Good practice

- It is old advice, but it works! Start and end your summary or analysis with positive comments. Helpful criticism with suggestions for improvement should be sandwiched between them. Remember that part of your role is to support and encourage your students in their learning.
- Provide comments that are specific to the student and not generic to the student body.
- Give reasons for the grade given.
- Explain where marks were lost.
- Concentrate on key points.
- Treat the student's work with respect, but be clear and realistic in your comments.
- Help the student to organise the structure and content of their answer.
- Tell the student what they should do to improve in the future (feed-forward).

What is best avoided

- Comments which are so general and vague as to be meaningless and unhelpful.
- Being far too encouraging. The student will be left wondering whether they really did well, whether they should have been given more marks or whether you are being too kind or even patronising.
- Giving equal weight to a minor strength and a major weakness.
- Too many negative comments.

Go to:

www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/assessment/index.html for further resources on assessment, including a recently published research report on formative feedback.

Keren Bright (K.E.Bright@open.ac.uk) is Group Manager (Law) Open University Business School and is also an UKCLE Associate.

Largest ever consultation on future of legal education and training in Scotland

By Liz Campbell and Neil Stevenson

More than fireworks were launched in Scotland in November 2006. As 5th November passed, the Education and Training Department of the Law Society of Scotland was preparing to go public four days later with a three month consultation on the future shape of solicitors' education and training.

Cynics may have viewed this as merely another attempt to tinker with the Diploma in Legal Practice, often viewed as a “soft” target for Society reforms, but a quick glance at the interactive website and online questionnaires would have proved them wrong. This was to be the biggest ever consultation in the Society's 50+ year history – biggest in terms of potential respondents (with the consultation live online for three months, literally anybody could log on and share their views) and biggest also in terms of scope – a true “cradle to grave” approach to solicitors' training, ranging from undergraduate study through to Continuing Professional Development requirements and the issue of ongoing fitness to practise.

The Society took a deliberate stance of not recommending a completed policy but, instead, floated a variety of suggestions for comment. Some of the suggestions were deliberately provocative and designed to stimulate a wide variety of stakeholders to think about what it means to be a solicitor and to consider the standards that should be applied at each stage of professional life. From the outset, it was made clear that this was a one and only chance for everyone to have their say and that those who chose not to engage would be firmly told that they had had their chance if they later criticised the direction taken.

In deciding to consult on the full spectrum of education and training issues, the Society was responding to a number of drivers. The days of a “one size fits all” approach to solicitors training are numbered, if not already over. The Society is increasingly faced with applications from individuals who wish to qualify as solicitors but have not followed the conventional route of LLB

degree, Diploma and traineeship. There is a need to articulate and justify the required outcomes for each stage of the training process. Consideration needs to be given to how relevant work experience outside the current two year traineeship can and should be measured and credited. It has been the proud boast of the Law Society of Scotland over the last few decades that the practice of law is not the preserve of those whose parents can support them through the process. As higher education generally, and legal education in particular, becomes more expensive, the Society needs to ensure that unnecessary financial barriers are not placed in the path of those who have the desire and aptitude to forge a career in the Scottish legal profession.

The nature of legal practice has changed considerably in recent years and the Society has a duty to ensure that its members, present and future, are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the needs of twenty-first century practice. At the same time, we must maintain the internationally recognised standards of Scottish legal training and ensure that our approach meets the requirements of EU and domestic legislation.

In the run up to the launch of the consultation, the pages of the Journal of the Law Society of Scotland had, coincidentally, carried several articles discussing various aspects of education and training. The issues highlighted within the consultation were, therefore, already to the forefront. The consultation achieved significant coverage in the Scottish print media and even featured on BBC news. At the time of writing, we are a week from the close of the consultation. There has been a significant level of engagement from almost all categories of stakeholders. Detailed analysis has

yet to take place, but early indications are that those who have responded have given constructive and thought provoking responses, often using the free text boxes to share their views. As ever, the devil is in the detail, and with over 700 responses received, it will be some time before the full data set has been analysed.

The Education and Training Committee have committed to meeting in a series of detailed discussion sessions. Liaison with other organisations with a particular interest will continue and updated information will appear on the Society's website from early April onwards. Being more definite is not possible at this stage as there is a genuine commitment to respond to the issues and concerns raised in the responses. Giving due consideration to views expressed, many of which may be conflicting, will take time.

One thing is certain – and that is the fact that the consultation will result in change – we just don't know what that change will be yet!

The authors of this article would be delighted to receive questions or comments from readers and can be emailed at:

lizcampbell@lawscot.org.uk
neilstevenson@lawscot.org.uk

Liz Campbell is the Director (Education and Training) and Neil Stevenson is the Deputy Director (Education and Training) at the Law Society of Scotland.

Developing skills in the Justice sector

By Steve Batty

Sector Skills Councils are independent, UK wide, employer-led organisations who were developed to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sectors. The 25 Sector Skills Councils now cover 85% of the UK workforce.

Skills for Justice was licensed on 1 April 2004 as the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for the Justice Sector and works with the whole Justice sector across the United Kingdom. By providing a coordinated approach to skills issues, we are helping to break down the functional silos that have hampered effective service in the past.

The overall aim of Skills for Justice is to assist the Justice sector in having a workforce with world-class skills that will enable the highest levels of performance in public, private and voluntary organisations across the whole UK, in all sub-sectors.

This will involve:

- Reducing skills gaps and shortages
- Improving productivity, business and public service performance
- Increasing opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce
- Developing and reviewing National Occupational Standards in order to inform and improve learning supply, including apprenticeships, Awarding Body and higher education provision

The Justice sector encompasses a wide range of essential public services, delivered by the public, private and voluntary sectors. Half a million people work in the Justice sector, either as employees or volunteers in services such as: community justice, court services, custodial care, customs and excise, police services of the UK, and prosecution.

Since its inception Skills for Justice has been engaging with and influencing employers, government departments, devolved administrations and all key partners. It has developed a clear understanding of the current and future skills needs of those working in the Justice sector and in addition we are developing and implementing tools to improve the skills of the workforce through working with employers, learning providers and individuals.

National Occupational Standards

One of the key pieces of ongoing work is the development and ongoing review of National

Occupational Standards (NOS). NOS units now cover the following areas: Policing and Law Enforcement; Community Justice; Countering E-Crime; Custodial Administration; Custodial Care; Custodial Healthcare Intelligence Analysis and Technical Support; Legal Advice; Managing Justice Sector Services, and Youth Justice. Details of the NOS are available on the Skills for Justice Website www.skillsforjustice.com

The comprehensive suite of NOS was developed in consultation with employers and therefore, reflects the roles and skill needs within the Justice sector. NOS units have many uses and they are being applied in many ways including the compilation of job role profiles, the design of learning programmes and in identifying the content of qualifications for the Justice sector.

Qualifications for the Justice sector are also being developed and reviewed on an ongoing basis. A map of the qualifications owned by Skills for Justice is available on the Skills for Justice Website.

Working with HE

The recently published Leitch Review (see page 3) highlights the need for SSC's to work closely with Higher Education and represent employers. Skills for Justice has already formed good working relationships with many institutions within Higher Education including QAA, Foundation Degree Forward, HEFCE, UKCLE and numerous universities. A good example of Skills for Justice and HE working together is the Diploma in Probation Studies. The Diploma in Probation Studies (DipPS) is the recognised qualifying award for probation officers in England and Wales. In response to employer needs Skills for Justice has developed a quality mark for learning and development called Skillsmark. Employers were unhappy that learning provision often did not meet their needs and want assurance that their investment in training will meet their expectations.

Skillsmark is awarded to learning providers who have gone through a rigorous assessment process and have been recognised as providing high quality learning programmes, relevant to the needs of the justice sector.

Skillsmark has two parts:

1. Recognition - awarded to learning providers at an organisational level
2. Endorsement - awarded to individual learning programmes

Skillsmark has three main purposes:

1. Provision of information - Skillsmark is designed to provide employers with information about the best courses for their employees
2. Accountability - the justice sector spends a great deal on education and training. Demonstrating that it is fit for purpose helps show that value for money is being ensured.
3. Enhancement of provision - all quality mark schemes enable good practice to be shared, and Skills for Justice will enable this wherever possible. The focus on occupational standards will enhance courses that are designed to meet employment needs.

Skillsmark is based on five key principles, developed by Skills for Justice:

- to provide a quality mark for use within the justice sector
- to embrace all providers of education and training
- to develop a two-step licensing framework: recognition and endorsement
- to ensure the process is evaluative and based on evidence presented
- to keep bureaucracy to a minimum by using third party quality assurance reports wherever applicable.

Further information can be obtained from Jane Kirk at Skills for Justice
e-mail: jane.kirk@skillsforjustice.com

For details of the event Skills for Justice are hosting to explore how employers and education providers can best work together, see page 3.

Steve Batty is the Qualifications Advisor at Skills for Justice.

Retention of Law Students: Diaries, study skills and reflective learning - *what works?*

By Simon Brooman

Introduction

For more than ten years the university sector in general has been guided, harassed and cajoled to improve retention rates in Higher Education. What was the starting pistol for this? Was it the Dearing Report and its recommendation to 'give high priority to developing and implementing learning and teaching strategies which focus on the promotion of students' learning.' Or was it the House of Commons Education and Employment Committee of 2001 which looked at the most effective methods to reduce non-continuation of students? Somewhere along the line the HE sector suddenly seemed to be jumping head over heels to do something about retention rates – new front-loaded systems, better personal tutoring systems, early feedback, reflective diaries, conference papers, in-house staff development – all were brought to bear on the, apparently novel suggestion to some, that we really should be doing something to help students pass the first year, let alone a three year law programme.

What was the problem?

In the School of Law at LJMU we had a problem similar to many others, particularly the 'new', university law departments. Our situation was far from unique. Student retention rates appeared to be falling from the late 1990s and no one was entirely sure why. Certainly there had been a 'drift' in several possible influences on this, but definitive analysis was inconclusive. The 'old' universities were taking more students – was this having an effect on the quality of our intake? Was the new 'A' level structure to blame? Students began to take up more employment opportunities as shortfalls in the grants

system began to bite – was this affecting their ability to study in HE? It certainly appeared to be affecting the raw attendance figures at seminars and tutorials. And finally, our retention figures appeared to be suffering in some years – ranging from 70-86% the three years 1999-2001. Not a disaster, but for a law school used to retention rates holding consistently at 85-88% – a cause for concern. The picture for part-time students was worse – sometimes far worse. We had some serious questions that needed an answer.

The 'solution'

The answer, if one could ever be found to all the problems of retention, was complicated. We actually had to start from the basis that some 'lack of retention' is essential and probably desirable. Some losses are integral to a robust system of marking and standards. But where to draw the line on retention rates? I was firmly of the belief that a programme with our intake profile might be able to achieve 90% but 83-88% was a suitable benchmark to be measured over a number of years.

We had already begun the idea of front-loading some form of support by introducing a modified Legal Skills module in 1998. Following research involving third year students and a review of the published literature, I produced a report examining the whole question of retention. I recommended, amongst other things, the following strategy:

- better identification and targeting of at risk students;
- a front loaded support module;
- earlier formal assessment feedback within the 1st ten weeks of students commencing the law degree;
- a more coherent pastoral support strategy.

The overall intention was to create a co-ordinated approach to improving retention rates, improving the performance of our students and to create independent learners at an earlier stage in the LLB.

What was introduced?

The main component of the new strategy, introduced in 2003, is a six week front loaded module called Independent Learning in Law (ILL) with the aim of bringing some of the 'new thinking' on study skills and reflective learning to bear on the LLB. The module is fairly staff intensive involving ten LLB staff and there were many discussions concerning 'resources' at the time of its 'birth' that had to be overcome. The ILL module encourages students to investigate and discuss learning techniques generally and those specific to law. (Incidentally, the 'ILL' acronym is unfortunate but not as unfortunate as the first incarnation of the module. This was 'Effective Learning in Law' which soon became known as 'Effing Learning Law' – the lesson on careful naming was well noted!).

As for content of the module - particular attention is paid to learning skills and theory and to exam and essay technique, but the module has continued to evolve. For example, there is now considerable second and third year involvement in delivering seminars to the first year which has proved to be very much appreciated by the first years and adds to the CVs of those helping in delivery.

Of particular note in the delivery of the ILL module is the assessment. Initially I introduced both a standard essay and an essay (called a 'learning report') to review the first thirteen weeks of the course by reference to a personal diary and more traditional sources of theory and studies in learning. This worked well but the second reflective essay was a revelation to the law staff including me. I think it



would be fair to say that many staff were originally sceptical about this essay. On receiving and marking the essays however, the law staff was so impressed with the standard and thought put into this work that it became the sole method of assessment on the module the following year. This remains the case today and we are impressed by the honesty, self-analysis and learning related research carried out by students new to university life. For many of us on the staff it has certainly had the additional benefit of enhancing our appreciation of the first year experience in general, and our knowledge of our tutees. The essay requires very careful explanation, criteria setting and guidance – but its overall benefits are recognised by both students and staff.

What was the effect on retention rates?

The improvement in retention rates was striking, immediate and has remained broadly consistent ever since. For full timers the retention rates for first years have moved from 70-86% range in the three years 1999-2001 to 83-88% in the four years 2003-6 – a small but significant improvement.

The improvement in part-time retention was remarkable. Whereas first year completion rates had sometimes been as low as 50% they now follow a similar rate to the full-timers with 85% or so proceeding into the second year. We have not carried out specific research to examine why this happened in particular to the part-timers. Anecdotal evidence from discussions with part-time students in ILL seminars revealed several advantages that they, in particular had gleaned from the changes. Chief amongst these was the examination of learning techniques for students, many of whom were returning to study. The provision of early feedback on one piece of work also appears to have settled nerves before negative thinking on ability had become entrenched.

Student perceptions of the Independent Learning in Law module.

Student perceptions of the ILL module were sought by questionnaire in a research study undertaken by myself and Dr Anna Carline in 2003/4. Results were obtained from 126 students. Some of the most striking results seem to support the new strategies as being significant in improving retention rates if student perceptions are to be believed.

A striking 89% of responding students felt that the module had helped them improve their performance on the first year. Sixty-seven per cent felt that the module had helped them to adjust to university life in general and 82% felt that the module had made them more aware of their potential strengths and weaknesses in terms of their studies. A significant number - 85% - kept a diary – and of those, 58% found them to be useful aid to their first year studies.

The overall impression from the research is that students found a front-loaded programme to be a significant aid in their first year studies and the improvement in retention rates appears to support this assertion.

Conclusion - so what works?

It is difficult to apportion credit to any particular factor in the new strategies employed on the LJMU LLB. Each student appears to be taking individual benefits according to his or her needs. The combination of an existing legal skills module, a new front-loaded 'learning to learn' type module, a 'reflective report', personal oral feedback on a piece of work as soon as is practicable and enhanced pastoral support has made a significant contribution to retention on the LLB. This is particularly notable in relation to part-time students. The course currently has the best retention rate at LJMU for courses taking 200 or more first years.

The first year strategy has prevented some students from falling through the retention net, contributed to our mission on access to HE and helped fulfil a moral obligation to give students the best chance at obtaining an LLB.

In the words of one part-time student in her ILL essay:

'If I am truly honest, my initial thoughts were that ILL would be a waste of time. However, I am glad to say that I surprised myself and completely changed my view. I have to admit that my reflective diary made extremely interesting reading, in particular I could see my ups and downs, likes and dislikes and feel it necessary to keep it going throughout this next semester.'

One full-time student commented in her ILL essay:

'At first I was reluctant to fill in my reflective diary as I thought it was pointless and would just be a waste of time. I did not see how I would benefit from this because surely getting as far as a degree course meant that I was quite capable of learning? However, over time I noticed just how beneficial reflective learning was, as it made apparent to me all the flaws that existed with my learning style, but I also learned how to combat these problems and ultimately learn more effectively.'

Simon Brooman,
(s.d.brooman@ljmu.ac.uk)
Principal Lecturer in Law and
Learning Support Co-ordinator,
Liverpool John Moores
University, School of Law.

Reflections on the first Learning in Law Annual Conference

For John Stanford, the first Learning in Law Annual Conference offered something for everyone by exploring themes such as globalisation and sustainability. Our legal education and training community has gone through its LILAC evolution.

On January 4th and 5th this year the first Learning in Law Annual Conference (LILAC) took place at the University of Warwick. It emerged and blossomed so subtly that it felt as if it had always been around.

It grew out of the two one-day conferences the 'Learning in Law Initiative' and the 'Vocational Teachers' Forum'. Those conferences were separate, but had overlapping educational concerns and many participants in common. LILAC brought them together for the first time. And it worked.

That judgement is, of course, personal and subjective. I have not seen the apparently glowing reports to be found in the evaluation sheets. My comment is based on my experience of it and reflection on its value as a professional development activity for me.

I want in this article to extol the virtues of the LILAC, to point out some of its complex and dramatic impacts and to encourage those of you who were not there in January to attend next year.

LILAC avoided some of the unnecessary structuring of issues into 'academic' or 'vocational' categories and was planned around themes.

The themes included creativity, globalisation and sustainability, quality and ethics, and fitness for purpose of legal education and learning models. These were not the exact titles used by the organisers, but my labels.

The issues raised by international concerns about globalisation, climate change and sustainability have been proper matters for consideration for some time. At this

conference, speakers (not least one of the keynote speakers, Professor Harry Arthurs) drew attention to the way those issues have impacted upon students, teaching, recruitment, course structure and the content of law courses. This theme provided some of us, well me anyway, with a wake-up call making me realise I had not given these issues enough thought in this context.

The concept of creativity in teaching, course design and thinking are relevant to all involved in legal education and training. The chance to have some time to remind ourselves about our responsibilities, our opportunities and the joys of trying to be creative in our courses and our teaching came at a good time in the year - not too late for incorporation into New Year resolutions, early enough to bring into planning for the next academic year. That theme showed itself in much of the conference, and not just in the sessions under that label. So, many interesting developments were being either showcased or tentatively introduced, most were evidence of creativity by the presenters or were just right for prompting fresh ideas in the rest of us.

I have referred to there being one LILAC conference. Of course, that is partly true in that there was only one booking system and we were all in the same university, but there were well over 180 different conference experiences happening at the same time. Nearly all 180 or more who attended will have participated in a different set of the 35 or so presentations that took place around the keynote plenary sessions, so find out from others too what the conference was about for them.



When I think about LILAC and my experience of it, I regard it as having a number of different characteristics.

- It was a beacon to help refresh our focus on learning processes.
- LILAC encouraged a return from the welcome relaxation of the seasonal celebrations to something nearer to disciplined thinking.
- LILAC offered a challenging shake-up of conventional thought about what a law teacher's responsibilities are amid changing political, economic and social concerns.
- It was an opportunity to listen to some of the most vibrant thinkers and practitioners in legal education, to reflect and to make plans for the next cycle of teaching and course planning, and
- It was a fantastic reunion of old friends and contacts and a chance to make many more. A social event with that rich mix of intellectual stimulation, gossip, possibly a glass too many at dinner, people you care about and laughter.

Other characteristics of LILAC are:

- It is infectious. You can't help but engage with the ideas that are being floated, sometimes then holed beneath the waterline, sometimes becoming lifeboats for rescuing those near to drowning. You have to join the debates.

- It is dangerous. There's the risk that you will be tempted to break free from straitjackets of the past and behave unpredictably.
- It is frightening. There's so much more going on in our legal education and training community than you realised.
- It is reassuring. Not all your old friends are collapsing under the pressures of their responsibilities.
- It is intriguing. There are so many different incentives and motivations to attend and participate.
- It is comforting. So many others share your concerns and some of them can help you see ways forward.
- It is diverting. There's time to step away from the routines that would otherwise occupy those two days.

Learning in Law 2007

So, whether your motives are your own development, checking out the competitors, seeking reassurance that you are in the right job, show-casing your wares, making new friends and contacts or delighting in the renewal of auld acquaintance, try not to miss it in 2008.

The richness of the opportunity provided by the UKCLE team should not be under-estimated.

John Stanford,
(johnstanford47@hotmail.com)
is an Independent Consultant

Learning in Law Annual Conference: Event Report

4 – 5 January 2007

Warwick University, Coventry

Maxim Tomoszek and Vendula Bryxova summarise the sessions and keynotes from the first two-day Learning in Law Annual Conference.

On 4 January 2007 at about 8:30 a.m. the delegates of the Learning in Law Annual Conference 2007 began to trickle into the Ramphal Building of University of Warwick. After collecting the conference pack at the desk the participants chose their favourite session out of four possible on that day – “(De)Constructing the global law school”, “Creativity in the law curriculum”, “Making good lawyers – making lawyers good” and “Is legal education working?”

After the opening by Amanda Fancourt (UKCLE) in the lecture theatre all the participants parted into appropriate rooms where the parallel sessions took place.

In Parallel session 1 “Creativity in the law curriculum”, Gary Watt (University of Warwick) presented the benefits of using acting and performance in legal education, focusing on methodology and assessment of these activities. Robin Lister (Bradford University) then addressed the role of literature in undergraduate law curriculum. During the presentation of his law and literature subject he mentioned many excellent texts, which could be very effectively used in legal education.

In Parallel session 1 – “Making good lawyers – making lawyers good” – the first paper presented by Sara Chandler (College of Law) and Nigel Duncan (City University) gave a wide view of how the need for adopting legal ethics and clinical subjects in a

law school curriculum and the need for using clinical methods is perceived. Scott Taylor (University of St. Thomas, USA) shared experience of making good lawyers through developing students' sense of morality and social justice.

In the first keynote address Harry Arthurs (York University, Canada) considered the influences of globalisation on legal education and through the example of the new trans-systemic curriculum at McGill Law School in Ontario he showed the approaches to global legal education and related challenges – how to persuade the students and how to address their expectations or the use of agnosticism as a pedagogic strategy. After the keynote speech a poster session illustrating current UKCLE projects took place.

During Parallel session 2 titled “Is legal education working?” Sefton Bloxham and Andrea Cerevkova (Edge Hill University) reflected on their project to integrate the personal development plan (PDP) within the legal curriculum. They focused on dealing with student and staff scepticism, IT problems, insufficiency of students' reflection and assessment of student progress. In the next presentation, Sara Chandler and Wendy Pettifer (College of Law) analysed Lord Carter's study on procurement of legal services and its consequences for legal education.

In the meantime Kartina Choong (University of Reading) and Donald Nicolson (Strathclyde Law

School) presented their papers in Parallel session 2 called "Making good lawyers – making lawyers good." Kartina talked about the necessity of establishing mediation as part of a law school's curriculum. Donald's paper dealt with the idea of preparing more ethical lawyers through the development (or moreover change) of students' moral character.

The first day of the conference was closed by Parallel session 3. In "Creativity in the law curriculum" Glenn Robinson (BPP Law School) presented the benefits of a student-centred approach to part-time programmes and pointed out that part-time students have worse results than full-time students, and therefore require a different approach, especially in connection with learning styles. Peter Wendel (Pepperdine University) described his project aimed at helping students (especially those being disadvantaged by their social background) to do better at the exams.

Parallel session 3 "Making good lawyers – making lawyers good" enabled Karen Barton and Paul Maharg (University of Strathclyde) to present their experience coming out from the Standardised Client Project. Afterwards Nigel Duncan (City University), Gary Watt (University of Warwick) and Julian Webb (UKCLE) as editors of academic journals discussed ways of getting published.

The parallel sessions of the second day of LILAC included again "Creativity in the law curriculum" and "Is legal education working?" and two new topics – "Clinical legal education" and "Engaging students."

The session on Clinical legal education began with a discussion on Model standards for UK clinical legal education moderated by Sara Chandler (College of Law) and Philip Plowden (Northumbria University).

In the second keynote address Peter Williams (Quality Assurance Agency) presented the UK experience concerning quality assurance in higher education. After dealing with purposes, tensions and history of the academic regulation in the UK he pointed out that only providers can assure quality and that academic regulation has to work with the grain of academic life, not against it.

Parallel Session 5 on Clinical legal education was hosted by Kevin Kerrigan, Georgina Ledvinka and

Philip Plowden (Northumbria University) with their extremely interesting paper on reflection and Maxim Tomoszek and Vendula Bryxova (Palacky University, Czech Republic) sharing their experience on introducing legal clinics in the Czech Republic.

The last parallel session included the innocence project presented by Michael Naughton (University of Bristol) and Julie Price (Cardiff Law School), and a workshop from Scott Taylor (University of St. Thomas) dealing with promotion of innovation in law schools' curricula.

The participants had the opportunity to exchange their opinions and ideas during breaks with refreshment in the foyer of Ramphal Building and the Conference dinner prepared in Rootes Social Building of University of Warwick on Thursday evening.

The conference was very well organised – many thanks to all who made the course of the conference more pleasant by their accommodating and amiable approach, help and advice. We hope this tradition of LILAC is going to continue.

Assistant Professor Maxim Tomoszek (maxim.tomoszek@upol.cz) and Assistant Professor Vendula Bryxova (vendula.bryxova@upol.cz) are from the Palacky University, Czech Republic.

More details about the Learning in Law Annual Conference 2007, including session reports, are available from

www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/archive/learninginlaw2007.html



International Law Book Facility

The International Law Book Facility (ILBF) is a UK-based registered charity, whose aim is to provide legal texts to law schools, law societies, pro bono groups and other institutions in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. For the first time the legal profession and legal publishers have come together in a national effort to raise funds and collect and distribute books. The ILBF urgently needs funds and offers of help to ensure its success. To find out more about the ILBF and how you too can help, please visit the website at www.ilbf.org.uk.

Your help is needed both in donating old editions and donating funds to cover the costs of shipment. To make a donation, please send cheques payable to 'ILBF' to the address below.

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Education for Sustainable Development Project: call for grant funding bids from Scottish institutions

Sustainability is now recognised to be a key area of development for the education sector. In particular, the policy and practice context points to the need to consider how best to embed it into higher education learning and teaching strategies and curricula.

The Higher Education Academy is currently undertaking a programme of development activity and capacity building so as to better assist institutions and subject communities in their development of curricula and pedagogy to equip students with the skills and knowledge to live and work sustainably. This recognises the importance of increasing 'sustainability literacy' among students and the growing demand for sustainability skills among employers.

In order to help develop this capacity the Higher Education Academy's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Project invites applications for the funding of grants from Scottish HE institutions designed to:

- encourage a culture in which innovative developments in the embedding of sustainable development in the curriculum are valued and acknowledged at a national level;
- promote good practice in the embedding of sustainable development in the curriculum;
- disseminate within the wider community innovative methods or materials originally developed for use within a single institution in the embedding of sustainable development in the curriculum.

The HE Academy has set aside £4k for one such grant available exclusively to individuals working in Scottish institutions.

Applications should be submitted by noon on April 16th 2007. Applicants will be informed by May 1st 2007. It is expected that projects will be completed by April 30th 2008.

Details of how to apply can be found at:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/5271.htm

Information on the work being undertaken by the UKCLE on Education for Sustainable Development can be found at:
www.ukcle.ac.uk/research/projects/esd.html

If you would like to contribute an article to Directions, contact Shakeel Suleman, S.A.Suleman@warwick.ac.uk

- UK Centre for Legal Education • University of Warwick •
• Coventry CV4 7AL •
- Tel: 024 7652 3117 Fax: 024 7652 3290
e-mail: ukcle@warwick.ac.uk Web: www.ukcle.ac.uk

The UKCLE events diary covers events with a legal education or general learning and teaching focus, as well as links to other law focused learning and teaching events listings. The listing can be accessed at: www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/diary.html. To add your event contact UKCLE (e-mail: ukcle@warwick.ac.uk)

29-30 March 2007

2007 Annual Conference for Teachers of A Level Law
Madingley Hall (Cambridge)

For more details, see:

www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/courses/coursedetails.php?id=329

1-3 April 2007

Association of Law Teachers 42nd Annual Conference:
Legal education: fit for purpose?

University of Plymouth

For more information, see: www.lawteacher.ac.uk

3-5 April 2007

Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference 2007
University of Kent

For more details, see: www.kent.ac.uk/nslsa

16-17 April 2007

22nd BILETA Annual Conference: Paper, Scissors, Stone:
Business, Law and Politics

University of Hertfordshire (Hatfield)

For more details, see: www.bileta2007.co.uk

14-16 June 2007

BIALL Conference 2007

Sheffield City Hall

For more details, see: www.biall.org.uk

3-5 July 2007

Higher Education Academy Annual Conference 2007
Harrogate International Centre

For more details, see:

www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/conference.htm

9-11 July 2007

Shakespeare and the Law

University of Warwick

For more details, see: www.shakespearelaw.org

18-20 July 2007

Storytelling in Law

Inns of Court School of Law (London)

For more details, see:

www.city.ac.uk/law/vocational/storytelling_in_law_.html

10-13 September 2007

Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference 2007
Durham University

For more details, see:

www.legalscholars.ac.uk/conference/index.cfm