

COMPILING EACH NEW ISSUE OF THE DIGEST

As subscribers are aware, every three months the Centre publishes a new issue of the Legal Education Digest. Occasionally we are asked about the procedures we follow in assembling the Digest. Here is how it is done.

The first step is to perform a number of electronic database searches. With the assistance of the University of Sydney Law Library, our research assistant, Tim Marshall, carries out searches in three principal legal and education databases, originating from Australia (AUSTROM; sub-databases: Australian Education Index; Attorney General's Information Service), the United States (WILSONDISK) and the United Kingdom (LEGALTRAC). These provide a comprehensive coverage of the articles, books and other publications on legal education issues emanating from the common law world.

As would be expected, the four major journals on legal education, each with a different focus, namely the Journal of Legal Education, Legal Education Review, the Journal of Professional Legal Education and Law Teacher, are bound to be the sources from which we draw many of the articles we digest. However, through database searching we are able to keep more than 200 other journals under review, a list of which can be obtained from the Centre at no charge.

Additional materials often come into the Centre's possession in its role as an information clearing-house on legal education, such as reports from around the world on research projects, policy development etc. Sometimes we also receive requests from authors to consider articles for digesting.

Tim Marshall's next task, once he has tracked down the articles, is to copy them and to prepare the working drafts of the Digest entries. At the

same time, I am writing the more substantial review articles, which have now been a feature of the Digest since Vol.3 No.3, of the books and reports identified as being especially significant contributions.

Once Tim has finished his working drafts, he passes them on to me on disk for consideration as to whether they are worthy of inclusion. In my quality control function as editor, I also read all the articles and edit Tim's drafts before writing the editorial.

The materials for the issue are then supplied on disk to Kate Massy-Greene, the Centre's Administrator, who lays out the Digest according to a standard format and gives it to me for proofing and final approval, before dispatching it to the printer.

Our aim is for each issue to contain about 20 digested articles plus two review articles. In order to maximise topic coverage, our intention is to abstract a wide range of articles falling under as many subject headings as practicable. We are also concerned that a Digest entry should contain a sufficient account of the article to enable readers to make a fully informed decision as to whether or not to take the trouble to obtain a copy with a view to reading it in full.

Editor

CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION

REVIEW ARTICLE

A guide to implementing clinical teaching method in the law school curriculum

S Rice (with G Coss)

Centre for Legal Education 1996

This small book, published by the Centre for Legal Education in early 1996, is an invaluable guide to the use of the clinical method in law schools.

It provides a comparative examination of the range of clinical models available in Australia, North America and England and concrete advice for curriculum development purposes on which methods are appropriate for different educational aims at each separate stage of the law degree. As the intended audience is primarily Australian, suggestions are made about which of the models are suitable for the Australian law school environment. However, the messages contained in the book are of wider application and there is bound to be a market for it wherever the introduction of the clinical method is being contemplated by law schools.

The aim as stated in the book is to provide a 'Guide...that is intended to be an accessible and useful document. The Guide should be useful to those who are planning or managing a law degree course, and who want to consider the feasibility of introducing a clinical element into the curriculum'. It is the culmination of a long-term research project, conducted by the author, who at the time was the Director of the Law Faculty of the University of New South Wales' clinical program at the Kingsford Legal Centre¹. As such, it draws upon the extensive academic literature and the author's considerable experience of the clinical method in action. However, as he points out, whereas much of the debate in the literature deals with the educational viability of clinical programs, 'the real difficulty faced by the law school, after accepting the worth of the clinical method in broad principle, is the design and implementation of an appropriate form of clinical teaching'.

Chapter 2 contains a potted history of the clinical method, necessarily short in a small guidebook focusing on issues of practical implementation. The formative factors in its

¹ Simon Rice is now the Director of the Law Foundation of New South Wales.