

Specifically, there are two faces, or rather two layers, concerning the same issue. The first concerns the fact that the ability of some black women to stand their grounds and assert their voices may jeopardise their interests in the very circumstances that a similar behaviour would enhance the interests of elite white men. The second layer derives from the plight of black males whose law school experiences contradict mainstream feminist analyses that assume gender to be a dispositive factor. Apparently, the 'maleness' of these students is supposed to imbue them with the appropriate credentials to thrive and pull ahead of their female counterparts in legal education. However, black males do not have a particularly easy transition in law school; the norms and strategies of the dominant pedagogy militate against their opportunity to establish and realise their expectations of success. Like women and students from other minority groups, many black male students participate and interact in legal education as the 'other' whose traits and presence are no less reduced to a difference. This convergence of the experiences of minority males with female law students points to the complexity of the issue as well as the dangers of overdetermining gender, race, and the like as discrete, independent variables.

INDIVIDUAL SUBJECTS/ AREAS OF LAW

The last ten years: what your students know that you should know
46 *J Legal Educ* 4, 1996, pp. 467–626

Editor's Note: This issue (Dec, 1996) is almost entirely given over to the publication of a series of papers presented at a workshop conducted under the above title by the Association of American Law Schools. The un-

derlying premise of the workshop was that, although law teachers and scholars are presumed to keep up to date on developments within their own fields, they are often out of touch with pertinent developments in adjacent fields. At the workshop specialists in 13 areas of substantive law described what had happened in their fields over the past decade, with special attention being devoted to developments that impinge on other subjects and to the needs of those not teaching in those areas.

LEGAL EDUCATION GENERALLY

Thinking 'culture' in legal education

A O'Donnell

7 *Legal Educ Rev* 2, 1996, pp. 135–153

It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a 'multicultural society'. However, contemporary Australia could more properly be characterised as a society with a multicultural population, regulated and governed by a monocultural power structure. One aspect of that power structure is the legal system and the gap between a monocultural legal system and a diverse population has been the subject of commentary for over 30 years. This commentary has highlighted issues of access and equity. It has been recognised that law schools and the traditional law curriculum must bear part of the blame for the ongoing failure of the legal system to respond to issues of cultural diversity.

The full value of cross-cultural perspectives on the law may be realised when they contribute to a broader pedagogy in which relations of power and racial identity become paramount as part of a language of critique and possibility. Despite renewed attention

to the law school curriculum, the field of legal scholarship remains relatively impervious to trends elsewhere in the academy. A United States commentator has observed that 'law schools are behind the times in confronting the issues posed by the debate over the canon. Our basic core curriculum stands astonishingly unchanged and unexamined compared to that of the rest of the academy.' An Australian academic has echoed these concerns: 'Scholars in law have remained disturbingly content with regimes of truth, designed within agencies of the state, which often naturalise or elide questions of oppression and inequality.'

Secondly, cross-cultural perspectives must be integrated throughout the curriculum to avoid a perceived marginalisation of cross-cultural issues as disassociated from the remainder of students' studies. In particular, the challenge is to examine precisely those most 'opaque' areas of the curriculum, where we confront the accumulated, taken-for-granted and common sense assumptions the law uses to understand the complex social world.

The actual content of 'cultural awareness' education is usually described only in the vaguest of terms. In the context of legal education, such training has been incorporated through practical training or through the introduction of discrete, optional, specialist courses to the undergraduate curriculum, such as 'Aborigines and the Law' or 'Law and Cultural Diversity'. Those seeking models for integrating cross-cultural content into the core undergraduate curriculum have relatively few models on which to draw.

Certain assumptions underpinning 'mainstream' multiculturalism present particular hazards for cross-cul-