There is not space for everything and to throw out parts of the existing curriculum is a threat to the expertise and even livelihood of many. But the prize which might be obtainable if we create space is worth keeping in view. The capacity to develop an effective personal standard of professionalism is based on the freedom to perceive clearly external demands and pressures, one's own internal value judgments, as well as those self-centred wishes and impulses that run counter to professional goals. Opportunities to deal with such problems are too infrequent during students days. Students need both the ongoing pressure of frequent demands to evaluate professional experiences objectively and then to integrate such learning into mature patterns of behaviour.

Pedagogy and ideology: teaching law as if it matters

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Considering whether law students receive a legal education that is meaningful and relevant to them raises interesting questions about what education is, what it's for, how we teach, how we learn and, essentially, how we know what we know. We need to challenge the perception of a single, monolithic interpretation of the law which disregards competing interpretations and contexts. Doing so brings students into their own learning who might otherwise be left outside and better contextualises law for all students.

University education in its widest sense is a whole-person process, where the focus is not so much on the teaching and learning of specific skills or training, as it is on the cultivation of personal autonomy, intellectual independence and the development of lifelong critical perspectives. At the very least, a university education ought to strive to prepare people for a changing world by promoting the intellectual and analytical skills that will assist them in assessing choices about their lives.

Legal education has long been the subject of inquiry into its purpose and methods and the landscape of legal pedagogy reflects the diversity of interest it has generated. More recently, there has been a focus on legal education within a wider knowledge context, examining the teaching and learning of law as part of the overall project of developing analytical and conceptual skills as exemplified in the whole-person process of a university education.

What exactly the form that this 'liberal and humane' legal education should consist of is the subject of considerable curiosity. At the very least it seems to embrace the notion that law must be taught within the context of the society in which it operates. There has, of course, been much attention paid to the teaching of 'law in context' across the literature, both from an experiential and academic stance. At one end of the spectrum is the view that 'context' consists of such practical and practice-based 'lawyer-in-action' skills as client interviewing, drafting, oral argument and the like. Certainly these are appropriate and defined skills for training students preparing to enter professional practice as solicitors or barristers. Clearly this type of education will have more direct, practical relevance to students pursuing law careers rather than law degrees. Wider is the view that context encompasses studying law by reference to the large body of cases and texts that make up the bulk of student learning material. Here the academic and vocational begin to merge, as students learn first how to read cases and then to apply the information gleaned from the material to given fact situations. The skills of comprehension, analysis, synthesis and application learned in this context will likely be of use to students irrespective of their ultimate occupation. Wider yet is the view that law must be examined in its historical, social, cultural, economic and political contexts, which provides a useful analytical tool for students regardless of their educational objectives. Another element to the 'law in context' issue is the observation that law simply affects people differently depending upon their circumstances.

All these various forms of context have been subject to considerable scrutiny in the literature of legal pedagogy in recent years, with some attention paid to investigating the impact of ideology on the construction and interpretation of law. Law exists not only as a form of concrete expression found in statues and common law and as commentary in legal texts and journal articles. Law may be thought of as the expression of the approved rules of conduct which have been agreed upon in the proper manner by the proper persons in power. What counts as the proper mode of law-creation is, of course, itself a matter in the control of the powerful.

Those ideological, social and cultural factors that affect the way lecturers understand and teach also affect the way students learn and communicate with their lecturers. Students bring their own meanings and ideological backgrounds, beliefs and histories with them to the classroom. If we acknowledge the impact of ideology in the way students assimilate information and use it to make sense of the world around them, it is right that legal education should endeavour to place law in a context that, at least in some ways, reflects their own reality. This project is all the more relevant, given the higher education objective of cultivating students' personal autonomy. We ought to provide students with information that makes real for them the way in which law operates. In other words, we need to integrate differing legal and cultural perspectives into and across the law curriculum. Moreover, since law itself is a dynamic and complex matrix of social, cultural, economic, historical, anthropological and psychological factors, our approach must not only be cross-cultural and cross-experiential but interdisciplinary as well.

For students outside the mainstream of traditionally represented law, legal education is often marginalising at best or effacing at worst. This invisibility is hardly consonant with the liberal and humane education students ought to receive from higher education. Compounding matters of invisibility is the conviction of some that the practice of law can do very nicely without all of this folderol of multiculturalism and lesbians, gays and women. So

why bother learning anything that isn't going to be directly relevant to the business of law? The fact is that we live in a multicultural society where people of differing culture, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation or level of ability can and do seek legal information. Ignoring this is fine as far as it goes, until a gay or lesbian seeks legal services from a lawyer ill equipped to provide adequate legal advice. As law lecturers, we are in a position to contribute to a better-informed legal profession by raising awareness of these issues in the first place. Even if most of our students do not go on to practise law, we will at least have validated the experience of those who would otherwise have remained invisible and exposed others to some ideas and issues they might otherwise not have considered. Information is made available for students to decide for themselves whether to accept all of it, some of it or none of it, but at least the choice is there to be made on an informed basis.

To make legal education more inclusive and reflective of society as a whole, much work needs to be done. To begin with, we can consistently integrate differing perspectives within the learning materials – whether lectures or tutorial questions – as part of the course delivery. We can include a variety of social contexts within our case studies, problems and questions. In doing so we challenge other students' tendencies to generalise and assume a common interpretation of legal issues. Moreover, it is important that we take the initiative here in order to include those who might be reluctant to speak out themselves or who do speak out but do so at tremendous personal cost.

Not only must differing perspectives and social contexts be integrated into the curriculum; they must be integrated across the curriculum. A much larger project in creating a cross-cultural and experiential law curriculum consists of rethinking and re-designing the curriculum from a critical perspective that draws on wide and varied sources.

GENDER ISSUES

Women in the law school curriculum: equity is about more than just access

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10 *Legal Educ Rev* 1, 2000, pp 141-162

Equality of access to law schools for women has not levelled the law school playing field. The temptation to see women who have made it to law school as 'successful' and to consider that equity concerns are better focused elsewhere must be resisted. This is because, despite the apparent equality of access for women students of law, the reality of women's experience of learning at law school continues to be unequal to that of men. That is, women do not yet have equity of participation in tertiary legal education.

One of the most important reasons why women's experience of tertiary legal education is inequitable relates to the content of the law school curriculum. It is only since the mid-1980s that the inclusion of women's perspectives in the law school curriculum has been considered a serious issue. But debate has been sporadic and seemingly confined to discussions amongst those who understand the importance of the inclusion of gendered perspectives in the curricula. In terms of the broader legal academy, this issue has remained relatively low on the list of priorities.

Traditionally, the law school curriculum has ignored the specific perspectives of women, because, according to well-established liberal legal ideological approaches to understanding the law, the law is something which is objective, neutral and value-free. Although feminist legal theory has questioned the claim of the law to be rational, objective and neutral, it has not yet foiled the perpetuation of male biases in the law and the law school curriculum. Of particular concern have been the silencing, alienation and marginalisation of women at law school as a result of the designation of women's issues and perspectives as irrelevant.

Not only do law schools play a critical role in shaping and socialising our attitudes toward the law, the legal profession generally, and appropriate styles of lawyering, but also the content of Australian undergraduate law courses satisfies the academic requirements for admission to practice. Legal education is the foundation of every lawyer's function and performance in the legal system. To the extent that the law school curriculum ignores gender issues, it legitimises and perpetuates the existing biases in the legal system and the practice of law.

In terms of the general calibre of lawyers who graduate from our law schools every year, the equity-based content of the law school curriculum is extremely important if they are to be able to serve women as well as men. Lawyers need their legal education to include content relevant to women.

Since the recommendation was made that feminist legal theory be offered in separate elective subjects or in elective subjects that deal with legal theory, how many of Australia's law schools have introduced feminist legal theory units into the elective curriculum? A study of the elective curriculum subject lists of all 27 of Australia's law schools revealed that currently only eight universities offer a specific elective entitled 'feminist legal theory'.

The introduction of a gender and the law unit in the elective curriculum is no panacea for women students of law, nor for women consumers of legal services. Indeed a number of problems have been identified with this strategy for equity-based curriculum reform. For example, it is a danger that law faculties will substitute offering a feminist law elective for dealing with these issues in the core curriculum.

The development of feminist electives in the law curricula of a relatively small number of Australia's law schools is not sufficient progress for gender equity in the law school. It is too little spread too thin. The real answer is to integrate the experiences of women into the content of courses throughout the entire curriculum. The process of attempting to integrate women's issues into the traditionally androcentric core law curriculum is, however, one which is extremely challenging and confronting for legal academics. This is be-