

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue contains a review article on a new book by a distinguished English law school academic, Anthony Bradney, entitled *Conversations, choices and chances: the liberal law school in the twenty-first century*. It is possibly the most significant contribution from the United Kingdom to the debate about the purposes of legal education since Twining's *Blackstone's Tower* in 1994.

In this issue there are a total of four articles digested under the heading of Skills. Matasar revisits the statement of skills and values contained in the MacCrate Report, now 10 years old, and examines its subsequent impact both on the teaching of skills and values at law school and on the profession as a whole. Todd makes out a persuasive case for the teaching of legal writing skills by placing the focus on the most pressing area of student writing need throughout their years of study, namely teaching them how to write better exam papers. Bannai & Enquist contend that law schools have a role to play in assisting students to recognise bias, cultural or otherwise, and suggest ways in which legal language and analysis can be used to overcome the risk of unexamined cultural assumptions or express bias. Finally, Cordon describes one law school's response to the teaching of advanced legal research skills through a practice-oriented curriculum designed to provide a direct link to skills actually used in practice.

Under Teaching Methods & Media we have three articles. Glesner Fines contends that, in the midst of a crisis of confidence in the abilities and motivations of their students, law schools should critically examine their assumptions about and attitudes towards their students' performance. She suggests that the solution lies in the adoption of high expectation teaching methodologies to boost the motivation of students and enhance their amenability to instruction and ultimately their performance. Schwartz describes a method for teaching new law students how to become self-regulated learners through the provision of an educational environment that gives them the resources and the situations with and in which they can best learn. The objective is to equip students with the skills to be intrinsically motivated, self-directing, self-monitoring and self-evaluating, in the recognition that a crucial quality for a lawyer is autonomous learning, the ability to learn what needs to be learnt and to cope with novel situations. In the final article under this heading Chestek advocates the use of the moot case approach to teach first year students legal analysis, writing and research and explains how this technique can best be employed. Advice is also offered on the choice of a suitable moot case problem by balancing the conflicting needs of not having a problem so legally or factually complex as to frustrate first year students, while at the same time making it sufficiently complex to sustain student interest throughout the year.

There are two complementary articles under Law Schools dealing with ranking and branding issues. Thomas provides a detailed examination of the arguments of both the supporters and the critics of currently used law school ranking systems. He maintains that law school rankings, by using criteria that are either irrelevant or unknowable, are so deeply and inherently flawed as to do a disservice to persons trying to evaluate law schools by failing to provide them with a valid assessment of quality. He suggests other approaches to obtain information about individual law schools to assist in making rational judgments about the best one to attend and, in lieu of a single ranking scheme, sets out a list of the basic attributes of a good law school upon which knowledgeable observers could agree. On the other hand, separate from the issue of external rankings, Ariens explores the recent efforts of law schools, in a deliberate response to the consumers of legal education, to brand themselves by claiming an educational distinctiveness in selling their services to those consumers.

The remaining articles are a mixed bag. Scallen canvasses arguments for the teaching of Evidence as pragmatic legal rhetoric. Wallace considers the advisability of moving toward a globalised approach to judicial education and how this might be best achieved. Finally, under Teachers Kift examines the challenges posed by the increasing use of casual staff to teach first year students. She identifies ways in which the teaching staff can be supported and made feel more valued, while addressing student concerns about the variation in the quality and attitudes of these teachers. She concludes that staff casualisation should be embraced and nurtured, rather than marginalised as a teaching backwater and lamented as an economic rationalisation.

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