

Editorial

“HOW DO THE STUDENTS’ THINK?”: DESIGNING CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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In this Issue authors have been using student perspectives to think critically about how best to design Clinical Legal Education (CLE) to shape students’ development and engagement with both the clinic and the legal world beyond. We have a collection of insights from Australia, Hong Kong and the UK which pinpoint crucial areas for student development, from communication skills to self-reflection, that can be nurtured through experiential learning in clinic.

Firstly, Alexandra Grey presents student perspectives on CLE in a non-university context. She addresses the lack of insider perspectives and investigation into non-western examples of CLE in her case study of a novel English-Mandarin bilingual clinical legal education program in China. Using student voice data to conduct an “indigenous” study she disrupts the dominant model of clinic in the Global North – as something conducted within the institution. The students’ perspectives shed light on new more flexible models of CLE which bridge the gap between the institution and the community.

Rachel Dunn, Lyndsey Bengtsson and Siobhan McConnell explore the ways that clinic can offer a way for students to engage with law policy and reform alongside of client work through creating a hybrid model of CLE. Their pilot Policy Clinic gave students the opportunity to conduct empirical legal research with the goal of influencing policy and law reform. Working with external organisations and academic staff students were encouraged to cultivate a different kind of understanding of the law as well as pursuing their own research. Recognising that not all law students will proceed to practice informs an innovative way to present other career opportunities and paths within research whilst developing students' insight and skills.

Furthermore, Lyndsey Bengtsson's analysis of client newsletter writing modules integrated into CLE indicates the benefit of students expanding their perspectives of the law beyond the walls of the clinic. Using data gathered through focus groups with students she demonstrates the way that letter writing develops students' understanding of how law firms maintain relationships with clients as well as fostering responsibility and teamwork between participating students.

On the other hand, Lucy Blackburn's calls for us to look to the benefits of *ephebagogy* focusses on the law student's learning experience. She argues that adopting *ephebagogy*, instead of *pedagogy* or *andragogy*, presents a way to tailor CLE to the needs of undergraduate students as learners. She illustrates how the facets of CLE lend themselves well to teaching undergraduate students in a way which compliments their stage in life. As part of developing a creative curriculum, legal educational

practitioners can look to *ephebago*, as a philosophy of learning, and design their courses in ways which nurture students and effectively respond to their position as neither child nor adult learners.

The importance of student reflection for effective learning and development as practitioners within the clinic is explored by Matthew Atkinson and Margaret Castle. Their study gathers and analyses their students' perspectives on the reflective assignments and practices as part of CLE at the University of South Australia and the University of Adelaide. Acknowledging that their students have diverse learning styles and their lived experiences as younger people Atkinson and Castle use the student responses to compare journaling and blogging as reflective activities. The results illuminate the force of online community spaces for the students as they develop through Clinic.

Finally Doris Bozin DB, Allison Ballard, Vicki de Prazer guide us through the benefits of developing psychological resilience in clinic students to combat the high levels of mental distress amongst law students and legal professionals in the field. Their pilot programme integrating psychological support and awareness into the Health Law Clinic at the University of Canberra had extremely promising results with students feeling more supported and confident working with psychological issues within the law and in their personal lives.

I would like to acknowledge that this is a scary and uncertain time for many of us. I hope that everyone is keeping well, and I am looking forward to future times where we may all come together again.