

understanding of the phenomenon of law teaching with a view to its improvement. However, in this reviewer's opinion, the project would have been greatly assisted if closer attention had been given to the research design at the outset. The data analyses do not go beyond frequencies and percentages and the necessary cross-tabulations, which is very strange for a quantitative study, even one that is essentially exploratory and not testing hypotheses. Although it is easy to discern the independent and dependent variables used in the design, the relationships between them have been inadequately treated. Thus, at points in the report claims are made of the existence of significant differences between groups. However, without subjecting the data to certain basic tests normally used to determine statistical significance, notably chi-square, t-tests and analysis of variance, such statements must remain merely conjectural. For example, it would have been so easy to have employed either t-tests or analyses of variance, where appropriate, to tease out the significant differences with respect to the relationships between the demographic variables on the one hand and the dependent variables formed by the respondents' views on the importance of various aspects of their work and the measures offered for enhancing their job satisfaction on the other.

Unfortunately, in this, as in other respects, this project has failed to live up to its promise. It has certainly not gone very far towards answering the central question posed by the authors of whether law teachers see themselves as lawyers or academics.

Editor

How important is teaching to law teachers?

P Leighton & T Mortimer
29 *Law Teacher* 2, 1995, pp 152-168

This article has been written by two of the three authors of the UK research report, *Today's Law Teachers: Lawyers or Academics?*, reviewed above. It focuses on those findings contained in the report which relate to issues about teaching.

The topic of law teachers and law teaching can clearly generate heat and controversy. The central criticisms of law teachers appear to be that they are ill equipped for their work and may even be poor teachers. And yet the pages of *Law Teacher* are packed with articles on interesting or innovative teaching methods.

Are these articles unrepresentative of law teaching generally? Is the overwhelming majority of teachers using traditional, declaratory methods requiring little active participation from students? Legal education appears to remain wedded to the notion that bad teachers are tolerable, that competent students will themselves direct their studies and that anyway law texts and other learning materials and methods are more than adequate.

Ambivalence towards teaching, as opposed to scholarship, represents one of the central dilemmas of legal education. Others concern the purpose of legal education itself: the extent to which it merely comprises stages leading to the production of effective practising lawyers or whether emphasis should be given to the acquisition of lawyerly skills, especially in the context of a need to relate legal education to its social, economical and political framework.

The article then describes the research design and methodology adopted in the study and provides a synopsis of the findings relating to law teaching. It concludes with the admission that there are aspects of the findings which clearly require further probing. Suggestions are made of further research topics which could be pursued, either by undertaking a more detailed questionnaire covering a narrower range, by interview or by ethnographic research methods.

TEACHING METHODS & MEDIA

Business law for non-lawyers: setting the stage for teaching, learning and assessment at Hong Kong Polytechnic University

L M Skwarok
29 *Law Teacher* 2, 1995, pp 189-212

Those who teach law to non-lawyers are the forgotten players in the legal education arena, shadowed from the limelight by those who lecture to prospective lawyers in faculties dedicated to the study of law. The important role played by law teachers in preparing students for the business world is seldom acknowledged by academics, students, legal practitioners or industry. The teaching of Business Law to business students needs not and perhaps should not be taught in the same manner as to LL.B. students.

Three fundamental issues relating to the teaching of business law need to be addressed: (1) What is the most effective method to teach large groups of students? (2) Students often perceive the Business Law subject as peripheral to other units, such as accounting, economics or

quantitative methods; and (3) Many students contend that success or failure in the law subject is the luck of the draw. Exam results indicate that students experience difficulty in comprehending the essential techniques required for answering legal problems.

A core of law lecturers in the Department of Business Studies at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University has sought to answer these questions. They decided that the main aim of business legal education is to prepare students for the business world in order that graduates should be able to operate a business within the parameters of the law. Importantly, they should know when to seek professional legal advice.

The lecturers decided that Business Law students should not be expected to comprehend the vagaries of legal reasoning and that lectures should not be dominated by esoteric points of law. Students need to have an understanding of matters such as the types of contracts encountered in business, when and how misrepresentation can arise, the practical aspects of forming a company and the advantages of conciliation over litigation.

A Business Law Teaching Plan and corresponding teaching materials were developed to reflect the integration of innovative, student-centred teaching methods and the revised Business Law curriculum. The Plan covers 24 hours of lectures and 24 hours of seminar material. It seeks to increase student participation in the learning process. Each topic covered is taught from a business perspective, where the relevant legal principles are discussed in a commercial context. The object is not to fill students with

every possible legal principle they should know in their careers or to provide an economic analysis of the law. Students are taught that all legal problems have not only a legal solution but also a business solution and that business relations and reputation are costs to be considered alongside the costs of disputes.

The Business Law Teaching Plan was designed with the learning and social behaviour of the Hong Kong student in mind. The success of the program depends on the willingness of lecturers to abandon traditional roles and the expectations of law teachers.

Assignments and final examinations provide an indication of whether the course objectives are being met. The final exam emphasises that success is not to be found in memorising and reproducing detailed principles of law but in devising appropriate solutions to legal problems.

Student feedback has generally been positive. Feelings of alienation between staff and students are reduced and lecturers find the learning environment less draining. The drawbacks of a student-centred learning approach are that some students steeped in traditional methods find that their expectations are not met by a participatory scheme, that if students are unwilling to participate, then there is no alternative method of learning and that the initial preparation of the Plan is labour intensive.

Excerpts of the Business Law Teaching Plan are reproduced, together with a sample exam paper written in order to require students to consider legal questions in a particular business context.

TECHNOLOGY

[no material in this edition]

WOMEN'S ISSUES

[no material in this edition]

CROSS-REFERENCED SUBJECT HEADINGS

Access to law school (see Enrolment Policies)

Accreditation (see Governance or Evaluation)

Administration

Admission criteria (see Enrolment Policies)

Admission to Practice

Aim (see Purpose)

Articles of clerkship (see Practical Training)

Assessment methods

Career paths

Changes (see Policy & Development)

Clinical Legal Education

Competency based training (see Curriculum)

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Context, Criticism and Theory

Continuing Education

Continuing Professional Education (see Continuing Education)

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Core curriculum (see Curriculum)

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Course content (see Curriculum)

Course organisation (see Curriculum)

Course structure (see Curriculum)

Critical legal studies (see Context, Criticism and Theory)

Cultural perspectives (see Context, Criticism and Theory)