

# Legal Education Digest

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The *Legal Education Digest* is a quarterly digest of articles and other publications on legal education. Over 200 journals are kept under review.

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**All the materials digested have been categorised in accordance with the subject headings listed on page 20. Where there is no material in the issue under a particular subject heading, the heading will not appear.**

## IN THIS ISSUE

It is unfortunate to note that, the staple dedicated journals aside, in the past six months there seems to have been significantly fewer articles on legal education in the general law journals through which we trawl in our comprehensive database searches to produce each quarterly issue. Perhaps legal academics are becoming too busy to publish on topics other than the subjects they teach in this regular law school curriculum or, because of their increasing commitments, are having less time to reflect and publish on such vital questions as the techniques they adopt to enhance their students' learning. Only time will tell whether this decline is temporary or long-term.

This issue features two review articles, the first dealing with a book originating in the UK which is probably destined to be the most influential publication on skills training and its educational underpinnings of the late 1990s, Webb & Maughan's *Teaching lawyers' skills*. The second is an Australian book by Gold & Vignaendra describing the results of a research project aimed at constructing a social profile of entering law students.

Among the 13 diverse articles digested, there are several with a curriculum focus. O'Donnell argues for the injection of cross-cultural perspectives into the law school curriculum and Handley & Considine for the adoption of a client-centred approach in order to give context and relevance to students' learning. Nathanson has some advice about the integration of problem-solving skills within suitable subjects in the curriculum and stresses the importance of instructional design as a tool to this end.

Goldsmith, in inquiring into the moral capacities of tomorrow's lawyers, argues for doing away with the replicative model of professional preparation in favour of a 'transformative' model with different vantage points and perspectives on the law. Weidner issues a wake-up call to faculty in response to what he describes as the cross-currents of lack of confidence about law schools which, like business before them, are now under pressure to reform themselves from within.

There are two articles on improving the law school life of indigenous students. Douglas points out that, for indigenous Australians, the focus is shifting from access programs to improving their success rates at law school to reduce the high attrition rates. Penfold reports on his study into their perceptions of the factors which contributed to their academic success at law school.

Finally, there is an interesting contribution from Rogers on the vexed question of random-calling of students in law school class and its impact on anonymous grading. He is a firm advocate of random-calling because of his belief that the best learning takes place in the classroom, and offers suggestions as to how it can effectively be managed.

Dr John Nelson, Editor

