

# 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

The only review article in this issue critiques a collection of 17 essays edited by Goldring, Sampford & Simmonds, who between them also contribute 14 of the chapters. It seeks to identify the challenges currently facing legal education in Australia and reflect upon possible responses. The essays embrace four main areas: legal education in context; designing legal education; new law schools and the future of legal education; and the responses of legal practitioners to the debate about change. Most of the individual essays are thought provoking and shed light on the vexed question of the changing purposes of legal education and the emerging role of law schools in the final stretch leading to the new millennium.

Under Practical Training there are three interesting articles. Sprack examines the role of formative and summative assessment against the backdrop of the inherently conflicting roles for the professional legal skills courses of both educating their students and certifying them as equipped for practice. Crebert & Smith take a serious look at the role of PLT in developing the competency levels needed for practice by attempting to clarify the terminology used in the competency debate. Fitzgerald reports on an ambitious Canadian exercise designed to isolate the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for legal practice, as well as the relative contributions to be made to the total product by each of the phases of legal education. Also in the territory of post-law school education, there is an editor's note alerting readers to the arrival of a new American journal for CLE professionals.

Similarly, there are two articles on Skills digested in this issue. Mack describes how it is possible to design an integrated course covering the teaching of ADR, procedure, substantive law and skills in order to promote a non-adversarial problem-solving approach. Woellner takes the theme of integration further in his account of how substantive law and skills training were merged across the entire curriculum in a new law school.

Of particular interest are the two articles under Technology. Reijnjes & Valcke draw upon their experience in the Netherlands and conclude that, whatever the official rhetoric may be about the adoption of information and communications technology, there are still major shortcomings in our knowledge of how technology can be utilised to improve law teaching quality. Based on the results of their empirical study Migdal & Cartwright puncture a few bubbles by offering some sobering advice on the impact of computer aided instruction on student learning.

A couple of other individual items will merit careful attention. These include Evans' article on how clinical experience programs can be used to develop a nexus between the teaching of skills and values and Mosesson's on how the inherent distrust between legal academics and faculty managers can be overcome in the interests of ensuring quality. Also recommended are Iijima on the dysfunction suffered by some students when confronted with the law school experience and Markovits' condemnation of the dangerous trend for law schools when appraising their staff to substitute market evaluations by consumers for direct personal assessments of quality.

Dr John Nelson, Editor

