

The first meeting of the Nottingham Law School Legal Education Group was held on Monday 23rd June 2008. The LEG, led by Becky Huxley-Binns and Jane Ching, engages in research in legal education and as a result aims to raise the profile, internally and externally, of the teaching quality within Nottingham Law School.

The group discussed the main initiatives in legal education at national, local and institutional level and their impact on what we deliver and how we deliver it (see box on right). We hope to generate research publications from this discussion.

The aims of the Legal Education Group

1. Raising the profile of legal education at NLS *This includes attendance at conferences, internal dissemination of teaching methods (which work and which don't) and publication of research papers.*

2. Publications strategy *We are keen for the members of the group to generate publications on learning and teaching law, and Tom Lewis has agreed to dedicate an edition of the Nottingham Law Journal to legal education.*

3. Collaborations *The LEG is keen to develop more extensive internal links (through the LTC network, inviting lawyers teaching in other schools to share their thoughts on teaching and learning, CASQ etc.) and also externally (e.g. UKCLE, ALT, SLS, SLSA, LILIC).*

4. Income generation

A guide to acronyms [1]:

LTC: Learning and Teaching Coordinator

ALT: Association of Law Teachers

SLS: Society of Legal Scholars

SLSA: Socio-Legal Studies Association

UKCLE: United Kingdom Centre for Legal Education

LILAC: Learning in Law Annual Conference

LSB: The Legal Services Board (remit in legal education unclear so far...)

SRA: Solicitors' Regulation Authority

BSB: Bar Standards Board

Would you like to join us? The LEG is open to **all** academics in all 3 divisions of the Law School, and you do not have to be interested in publishing in legal education. If you are interested in what we teach, why we teach it and how, you are more than welcome to join us, either for a single session or at every meeting. We plan to meet 3 times a year and you will be kept informed by email. We will have a standing item on the agenda of what we are up to in terms of legal educational practice and research. Otherwise, we hope to have 'themes' at each meeting, and we welcome suggestions on what might be discussed in future.

THE FOUNDATION DEGREE

John Tingle explained that Nottingham has had one of the worst progression rates into HE in the UK. One of the initiatives to tackle poor HE access is Foundation Degrees. In partnership with NCN, Nottingham Law School offers a 2 year FD in Law. We currently have 7 students on year 2 of the LLB full-time who completed their FD at NCN and we expect a further 11 this October. There may be a research paper on issues facing FD (Law) students in future.

LTC PROJECTS

John Hodgson, the Law School's LTC is currently leading 4 projects:

1. Transition. This projects aims to manage the process from pre-HE into year 1 HE.
2. Aligning assessments to Learning Outcomes.
3. The Virtual Learning Environment.
4. Qualitative review of feedback to LLB students.

We anticipate research output from items 1 and 4.

MOOTING

As the new LLB (Hons) degree reaches its final year, a new credit-bearing final year module on mooting is launched. This unusual option will be the subject of a workshop/paper at the ALT Conference in Amsterdam in 2009.

THE LPC

The 'unwrapping' or 'disintegration' of the LPC was discussed. The challenge appears be in how to manage the increased diversity of options/models and student choice in a manageable qualification.

THE TRAINING CONTRACT

Jane Ching was unavoidably absent from the LEG meeting, in Redditch at the SRA on a tender bid for the pilot scheme of the new Work-Based Learning Training Contract. Joy Davies gave the group a summary of the types of challenges being faced and we hope to get full feedback from Jane at the next meeting.

POST-QUALIFICATION LEARNING

Joy outlined some of the bespoke training contract 'top-up' courses and diplomas offered in the Professional Division. Recently, 2 new programmes have been validated; a LLM which is an LPC top-up (with a summer school and a dissertation) and a Professional Doctorate (in conjunction with the Schools of Education and Social Sciences). Joy is also involved in a research project on how we assess reflection.

THE BVC

There are more than 2000 BVC students and less than 500 pupillages. James Wakefield discussed the response of the Bar Council to this and outlined the recent debates concerning the role, entry levels, standards and fitness for purpose of the BVC (conducted by the BSB).

PHDs

We have a very healthy cohort of PhD students (currently 12, with some due to be completed during 2008) and this increase in numbers has brought its own challenges, including ensuring we have enough staff to supervise. Graham Ferris also pointed out that we are in need of an articulation of the purpose and rationale for legal education at all levels. That should enable us to achieve an integration of legal theory, practice and application.

Dates for your diaries. 1. The Association of Law Teachers' Legal Education Research Network, in association with the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, invites law scholars to a workshop "**Researching Legal Education: Taking Ideas Forward**" on **Wednesday 1st October 2008** in London. More information is available from pleighton@glam.ac.uk or p.j.harris@shu.ac.uk. 2. The LILAC Conference is **24 and 25 January 2009** in Warwick. See www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/diary