

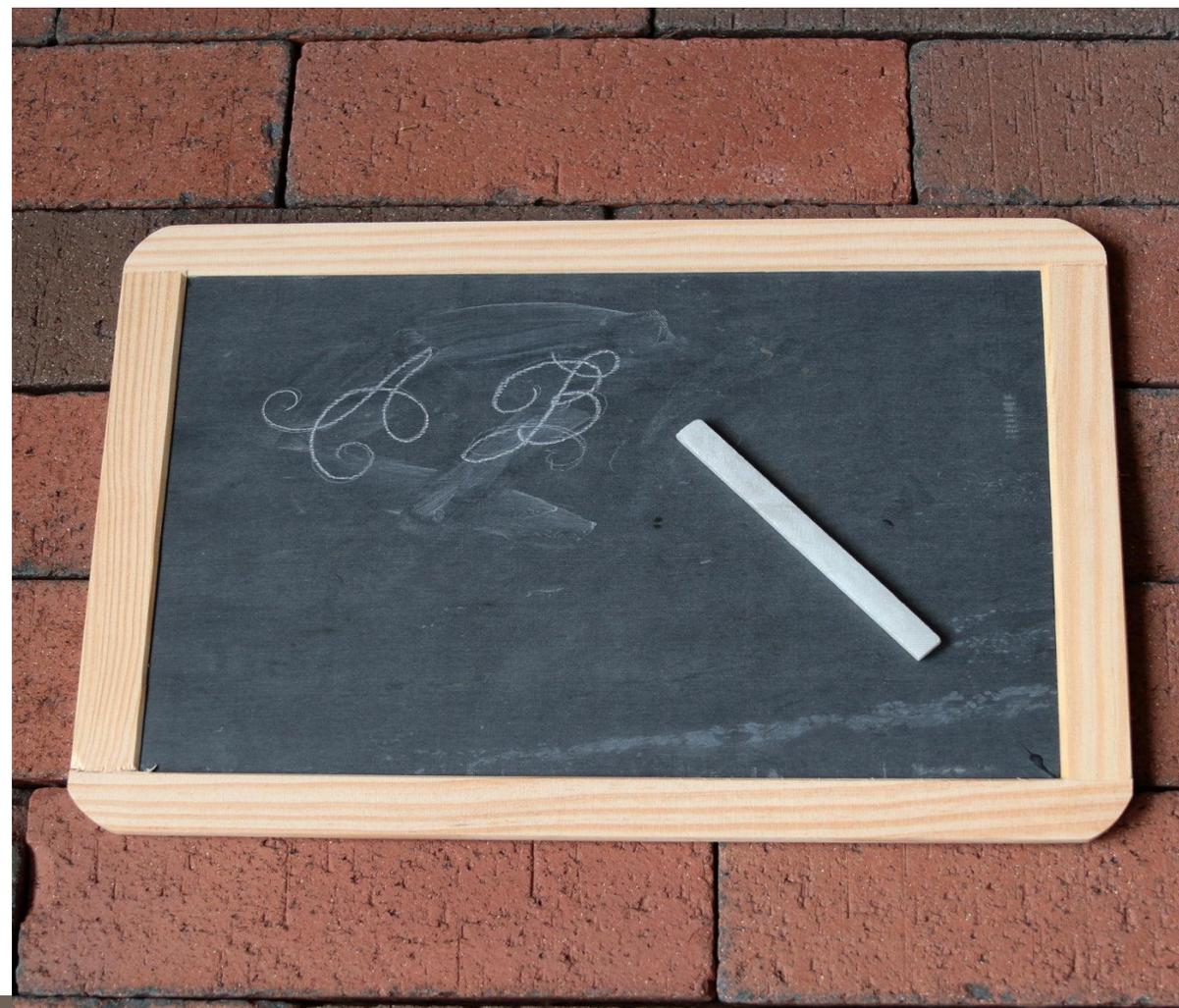
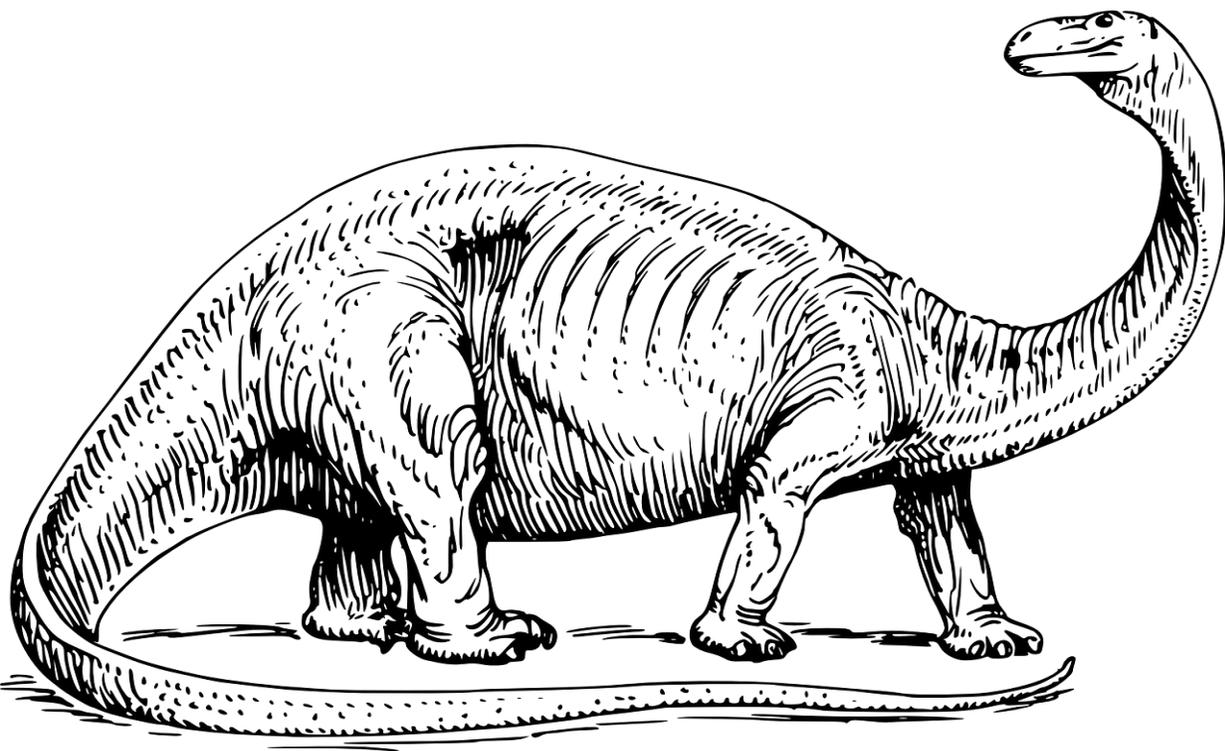


Nottingham
Law School
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Thirty five Years before the mast – Reflections on legal education

John Hodgson

A long time ago ...



Oversight and Regulation of (Legal) Higher Education

- Successive generations of university with very limited outside scrutiny
- Unresolved tensions over the relationship between academic law faculties and vocational education
- Similar tensions in other fields – e.g. engineering
- Professional apprenticeships phased out in favour of ‘advanced FE in an HE setting’.

Ormrod Report 1971

- Review of legal education and training
- Established the 'core subjects' – then constitutional law, contract, tort, criminal law and land law.
- Endorsed the law degree as the main academic precursor (but with a CPE option).
- Minority view that vocational stage remain largely in the hands of the professional providers – College of Law and Inns of Court School of Law

Benson Commission 1979

- Review of the legal services industry as a whole
- Motivated by concerns over 'access to justice'
- Conservative recommendations (monopolies largely maintained except for licensed conveyancers); no fused profession; some support for CABx and other advice agencies.
- Did give rise to the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct

Marre Report 1988

- A further review of the provision of legal services
- Focus on 'access to justice' and the 'unmet need' especially for social welfare law.
- Reviewed funding models for legal aid and other assistance
- Prompted my first contribution to legal education literature (Marre in Perspective – New Law Journal)

Lord Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct 1991 - 99

- Created by the Courts and Legal Services Act
- Lengthy review of the academic stage in particular
- Broadly endorsed the academic/vocational/professional division of Ormrod
- Work on the content of the law degree overlapped with development of the first QAA benchmark
- Replaced by the Standing Conference on Legal Education (until 2003)

QAA and HEA

- Initially a close focus on the discipline level
- HEA funded centres of excellence – UKCLE, based at Warwick
- QAA subject benchmarks
- QAA subject review and developmental engagements
- Audit ‘deep dives’
- Now much broader institutional approach

Law Society/SRA/ Bar Council initiatives

- LPC and BVC from 1990s
- Training Framework Review (2003 -4) (LS and Bar)
- Articulation between the three stages and running them together.
- Various attempts to facilitate wider access – foundation degrees
- The SQE