

The creation of the first year law teacher: A matter of transition, (diversity, engagement, design, assessment, evaluation and monitoring)?

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What has happened with the Principles and Blueprint for action?

Transition

- Testing our assumptions about students: A most significant ground for this at Newcastle Law School is our Law School Orientation, all of our staff, but especially our foundation staff, are actively involved in the activities and meeting our FY students.



- A transitioning course co-ordinator? I have reflected on assumptions I may have about my foundation colleagues. I have sought new ways to engage them individually and collectively, both informally and formally eg joint poster presentation, informal meetings about students, discussions about classroom activities, team teaching, peer observation of teaching.
- For our foundation team, I have introduced the idea of **transitioning to FY law teaching**. This is facilitated by the self-reflection and assessment audit which will be conducted at our Foundation Team development day (see attached).
- Role modelling for FY teachers and students: What kind of role model can a foundation teacher be in the classroom and outside it? Where does a foundation teacher seek mentors. Is serendipity best?

Diversity

Composition of our team

Team Member	Gender	Experience at Law School	Length of teaching experience	Teaching responsibilities	Experience in this course
Metella	F	School leaver, combined degree	20+ years	First year (FY), Senior UG – compulsory & elective, Honours PG Research supervision LLM and PhD	15 years in class + course co-ordination
Sempronia	F	Graduate	10 years	FY	10 years +

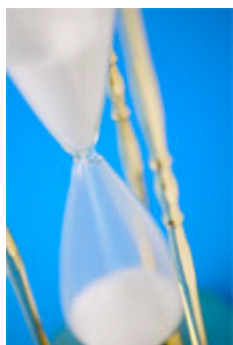
		entry LLB, external study		Senior UG – compulsory & elective	1 semester course co- ordination
Constantine	M	Graduate entry LLB	> 5 years	Clinical legal education FY	c. 1 year
Marcus	M	Graduate entry LLB	10 years +	FY Limited SenUG – compulsory Limited honours + PG supervision	> 5 years
Julius	M	Graduate Foreign jurisdiction	20+ years	Senior UG – compulsory & elective Limited honours	< 1 year (last FY teaching 1992)
Livilla	F	Graduate entry LLB	3 years	FY specialist	3 years
Attica	F	Specialist librarian – no LLB	c. 10 years	Legal research specialist	c.10 years

• Learning Styles – Kolb Inventory of Learning Styles

David Kolb, an educational theorist, is known in particular for his Learning Style Inventory (LSI). He posits that an individual's learning preferences can be plotted across two planes: active experimentation-reflective observation and abstract conceptualization-concrete experience. His inventory identifies four types of learners: converger (active experimentation-abstract conceptualization), accommodator (active experimentation-concrete experience), assimilator (reflective observation-abstract conceptualization), and diverger (reflective observation-concrete experience). The LSI enables individuals to plot their own learning preferences and understand better how they learn most effectively. At Newcastle Law School, the LSI had been administered in Teaching and Learning workshops on two occasions and the results served as the basis for lively discussion of teaching practice.

For a foundation teacher, understanding his or her own learning style can have an impact on classroom practice in seeking to support a range of learning styles and preferences amongst the students.

Engagement



- Our foundation team is **ideas rich, but time poor**. This has meant that the opportunities for collective discussion and regular conversaciones have remained an aspiration in semester 1. We have had several collective discussions about the course, but these discussions so far have involved only the women in the team. In semester 2, the Foundation team development day will involve all team members.

- Peer observation of teaching, team teaching and peer feedback have begun and this has proved a fruitful process for some members of the team.

Design

- The biggest change in my approach to design of the first year law teacher transition has been the shift from thinking about co-ordinating a first year teaching team to co-ordinating a Law School Foundation team. There is a clear qualitative difference in these titles, which we can seek to implement in our teaching practices.

FYTT >>>>>>Foundation team

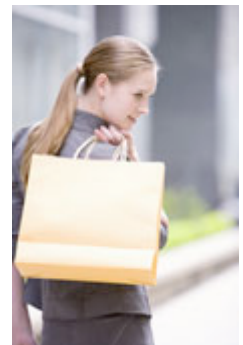
- Staff development opportunities: T&L seminars are planned for semester 2 which will be open to all law teachers.

- **Foundation Team Retreat/Development Day 2009**

Probably August 2009

Features of the program:

- facilitator external to the Law school
- show bags, t-shirts
- Reflection exercise: My FY at Law School
- Focus on our students: role play
- Inside “Hidden sources of law School Stress” and “Getting to Maybe”
- Sharing Classroom practices
- What about Learning Objectives and Graduate Attributes? (see attached)
- Chewing over the curriculum: Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and drinks



- **Graduate Certificate in tertiary teaching: first year teaching module.**

I have discussed with the Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University, the inclusion of a new module for the Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching, which focuses specifically on first year teaching. The suggestion was to building the module around the 6 first year curriculum design principles. This suggestion has been received warmly.

Assessment

- Self-reflection and journaling has been a fruitful technique for some in the team and facilitates more effect mentoring.
- We will administer the student evaluation instrument in semester 2, which was administered in the course in 2006 and compare results as part of an end of semester staff reflection and evaluation.

Evaluation and monitoring

- The Newcastle Law School foundation team is working at building an inclusive learning community within our school.
 - A community of practice?



Legal System & Method Course Objectives / Learning Outcomes

Legal System and Method Parts A and B are introductory courses which serve as the base for every other course in the LLB programme. They are designed to introduce students to the sources of the law, the various component of the legal system, the operation of the legal system and its institutions, and the methods and skills employed by lawyers. During the course of your law degree you will learn to:

- **Think like a lawyer**
- **Read like a lawyer**
- **Reason like a lawyer**
- **Analyse like a lawyer**
- **Argue like a lawyer**
- **Write like a lawyer**
- **Research like a lawyer**
- **Solve problems like a lawyer**
- **Communicate like a lawyer**

The assessment and classes in Legal System and Method will help you begin this learning process.

At the end of this course you will have been required to demonstrate the development of these core legal skills. In particular, you will be required to demonstrate:

1. The capacity to use legal language and terminology, including citations accurately.
2. The capacity to read and analyse case law effectively.
3. The capacity to identify legal principles and apply these to diverse scenarios.
4. The capacity to structure and present a coherent and persuasive argument with confidence using legal data (orally and in writing).
5. The capacity to write coherently using legal data for different audiences (academic and non academic).
6. The capacity to read and analyse statutes and regulations effectively.
7. The capacity to research primary and secondary legal materials both in hard copy and online in a timely and accurate fashion.
8. A capacity to reflect critically on one's own learning and the role of legal institutions and actors the legal system.
9. The capacity to identify ethical issues which arise in practice.
10. The capacity to understand and observe court etiquette.

Matrix linking Learning Objectives and Assessment

Learning Objective	1. Language & Terminology	2. Read & Analyse Case Law	3. Identify Principles & Apply	4. Argumentations	5. Writing Coherently	6. Read & Analyse Statutes	7. Research Skills	8. Critical Reflection	9. Identify Ethical issues	10. Understand & Observe
Legal Exercises	✓						✓			✓
Research Quiz	✓						✓			✓
Legal Institutions Reflection	✓				✓			✓		
Constitutional Framework Test	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		
Communication 1. Referencing Exam	✓									
2. Reflective Journal					✓			✓		
3. Workbook Exercise	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
4. Moot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Common Law	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
1. Statute Test	✓					✓				
2. Exam	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				

Uni Graduate Attributes mapped against the Newcastle Law School Graduate Profile

<p>i. Professionalism: an attitude or stance towards work and activity. Graduates of the university, through well-founded knowledge and skills within their fields of study will be enabled to act professionally with honesty and integrity. They will have the capacity to act effectively and ethically in decision-making and problem-solving and to work both autonomously and collaboratively. They will have the ability to respond effectively to change, and to seek continuous improvement in practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The graduate of the LLB or LLB/DipLegPrac at the University of Newcastle will be a consummate legal professional. • skills in lateral thinking and problem-solving which enable the provision of appropriate advice and solutions, not only in litigation but over a range of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms • uphold the highest ethical standards in discharging his or her responsibilities to clients, other professionals, the courts and the public • pursue lifelong learning in a dynamic discipline
<p>ii. Community responsiveness: an attitude or stance towards society. Graduates will be enabled to play effective and responsible roles as members of local, national and global communities. They will have a capacity for perspective forming and an appreciation of the philosophical and social contexts of their disciplines. They will have the ability to engage in constructive public discourse to sustain communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide high quality service to employers, government, and individual clients • act as an advocate for the rule of law • accept responsibility to play a constructive role in the maintenance and reform of the legal system • understand, evaluate and critically reflect upon the interaction of law and society
<p>iii. Scholarship: an attitude or stance towards knowledge and learning. Graduates of the university will have a scholarly attitude towards knowledge and learning, demonstrated in a commitment to the expansion of knowledge and a respect for intellectual integrity and the ethics of scholarship. As scholars, they will be enabled to apply logical, critical and creative thinking to the advancement of knowledge and understanding through a capacity for rational enquiry and self-directed learning. They will be able to communicate their knowledge effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capacity to engage in legal research • high level ability in analysis, including legal analysis and synthesis • superior verbal and written communication skills • critical thinking and reflective engagement with legal material. • pursue lifelong learning in a dynamic discipline

A self-reflection and assessment audit for foundation teachers: knowledge, skills and attitudes

“A Group of 8”

Knowledge

1. How much do I know about the students who I will be teaching, individually and collectively (internal, external, school leavers, mature age, domestic, rural and remote background, international, students with disabilities, carers' responsibilities)?
2. How can I find out more – in class and outside class?
3. What generic and discipline skills for students are central to this teaching assignment: research, writing, reading, note taking, reflection, observation and reporting, oral presentation, problem-solving etc? What do I already know about these, and what do I need to learn?
4. What topics/content will I be teaching and what resources and support are available? How do I know when I need these and how do I access them?

Skills

5. As I approach the teaching sessions, what am I about: transfer of information, opportunity for active engagement and participation, dialogue, debate, performance etc etc?
6. What techniques am I planning to use (eg clickers, powerpoint slides, buzz groups, printed lecture notes, casebooks in class, IT resources, puppets, props, costumes etc etc) and why? How can I contribute to students' achieving the learning objectives of the course and the development of graduate attributes?

Attitudes

7. How do I really feel about this teaching assignment: am I
 - a “conscript”,
 - a “foot soldier”,
 - a “commando”,
 - a “career professional”,
 - “a clown”,
 - “a five-star general”
 - other?
8. What will I do with this understanding of my knowledge, skills and attitudes:
 - Nothing
 - Next to nothing
 - Check in with my fellow first year teachers informally
 - Make contact with my course co-ordinator informally or formally
 - Organise a peer evaluation of my teaching, informally or formally
 - Organise a team teaching opportunity this year
 - Seek out a T&L mentor
 - Follow up with some formal T&L development: seminar(s), workshop(s), Graduate Certificate of Tertiary Teaching?