

Editorial

I am delighted to introduce this fourth issue of the European Journal of Legal Education. The fourth issue follows the 2023 ELFA annual general meeting in Lausanne on the topic of “interdisciplinary approaches to Legal Education” and is in keeping with the ELFA mission “time for renewal, inspiration and dialogue”. The issue finds itself in the global context of a year of political, economic and climate crisis, as well as a deepening humanitarian crisis. As a positive, we seem to have turned a corner following the first global pandemic of the century. However, Higher Education faces pressing challenges such as student wellbeing, barriers to research collaboration, challenges to equal opportunities, competition and financial squeeze.

Our fourth issue is set in this context and is inspired by the ELFA mission and themes. It includes interdisciplinary and multi-level research on legal education, offers innovative and renewed approaches to delivering legal education, inspires the consideration and calibration of mental wellbeing and emotions. It can broadly be distributed into three major themes: wellbeing, transformation – deepening/improving of legal education, achieving equality (gender).

In particular:

Michael Fay and Yvonne Skipper “The relationship between the sense of belonging, mental wellbeing and stress in students of law and psychology in an English University” explore how a sense of belonging impacts on mental wellbeing and stress in students of law and psychology in an English University. They propose targeting mental wellbeing interventions at the School group level, focussing on increasing sense of belonging and positive norms, as a potential tool to improve the mental wellbeing of all students.

Emma Jones “Incorporating an affective framework into liberal legal education to achieve the development of a ‘better person’ and ‘good citizen’” presents a theoretical basis for the contemporary development and enrichment of liberal legal education. The suggested novel framework incorporates four

core aspects: experiential thinking, emotional authenticity, affective empathy and emotional reflexivity.

Rasmus Grønved Nielsen “Law Teaching for Sale - Legal Shadow Education in Denmark from Historical and Current Perspectives” examines the use of supplementary private teaching (‘shadow education’) within the field of legal education in Denmark, specifically why law students chose to pay for private teaching services during their legal education. The results of this study are relevant for future debates on enhancing legal education, especially, as the author highlights, because these private providers tap into the student’s negative emotions related to exams and preparation, adding to first-year students’ sense of insecurity.

Edana Richardson, Brian McKenzie, Brian Flanagan, Neil Thompson and Maria Murphy “Democratising Case Law while Teaching Students: Writing Wikipedia Articles on Legal Cases” demonstrate to us how Wikipedia can be used as an educational tool by highlighting pedagogical benefits for students and providing a guide for educators, including preparatory steps and student support throughout. We are shown how article-based Wikipedia assignments can encourage students to deepen their understanding of a topic and consider how knowledge can be communicated effectively.

Dorothea Anthony and Colin Fong “Teaching Legal Research Subversively”, present a novel approach to teaching the law degree subject Legal Research (compulsory in NSW, Australia) by reconceptualising the technique of teaching legal research. The authors highlight the opportunity for providing law students with a deeper social education in the law, if it is taught in a way that encourages law students to think critically about legal institutions and the broader social context that gives rise to them.

Louise C. Druedahl “Assessing change of traditions: teachers’ insights on a legal education under transformation” analyses progress in legal education reform. This study investigates faculty’s views, ambitions, and experiences with teaching practices while moving away from traditional learning methods towards approaches characterized as student-focused, active, collaborative, and reflective in a Danish Law Faculty.

Raúl Sánchez “The Application of procedural law at the Spanish law clinics” considers the role of law clinics in Spanish legal education. In this article, the

author argues that the American model is not transplantable to Spanish legal education, with a broader focus on social benefit and human rights in Spanish law clinics. This article makes a strong case for the value of procedural law in legal education.

Barbara Pozzo “Innovative teaching methods to achieve mainstreaming gender equality in legal education” analyses various initiatives to incorporate gender awareness into legal education, including innovative teaching methods. She takes a comparative approach, contrasting initiatives in the US and Europe.

The articles presented in this volume are interesting and diverse. The pieces demonstrate a variety of methods: through the use of quantitative and qualitative data as well as theoretical and historical approaches. This is also the most geographically diverse issue since the journal re-launched in 2020 – with contributions from Australia, Denmark, England, Ireland, Italy, Scotland, and Spain. I hope that you will enjoy reading this issue as much as the editors enjoyed producing it.

Greta Bosch
Editor-in-Chief