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# Foreword

## Introduction

Welcome to the Winter 2007 edition of the International Journal of Clinical Legal Education and my apologies for the slightly late publication of the Journal, which comes out just as we gear up for the 2008 Cork IJCLE conference. The response to the Call for Papers for this conference has been overwhelming, with papers from almost all the major clinical jurisdictions, including a series of papers from Central and Eastern Europe. I am obviously delighted to see the IJCLE conference developing in its role as the major annual conference for clinicians to share experiences across jurisdictions and for us as clinical teachers of Law to share best practice and to develop in our roles as we draw on the widest range of models of clinical practice and reflection.

## This edition:

This edition brings together three papers from very different jurisdictions. Myrta Morales Cruz uses her experience – and the experience of her clinical students – in fighting expropriation of land in Puerto Rico through legislative change as a springboard for a wider reflection on the lawyering process, and the lessons for clinics. It is always good to see Paulo Friere revisited. The principles of empowerment must, it seems to me, always underpin our work as clinicians – after all, clinic is itself a model of empowerment of students, and thus an ideal opportunity for young lawyers to reflect on the nature of professionalism and the social (and political) expectations intrinsic in the role that they are growing into.

One of the justifications for an international journal of clinical education is that it serves to analyse not only the contexts which are unique to each jurisdiction – and sometimes to each law school – but also to identify what is common in the experiences of clinicians. Like Morales Cruz's article, Willem de Klerk's article similarly considers the different educational imperatives inherent in clinical education – and uses his own experiences to consider the wider role of clinic within the South African context. There is much in the article that will strike a chord with clinicians in every country – the ambiguous status of clinic, the difficulty of explaining who and what we are and what we do – but it is also an article that is rooted in the unique South African experience. One telling footnote makes the point about the difficulty of addressing problems in a context where there may – in practice – be little effective implementation of purely legal solutions.

In the last of the pieces Liz Curran also considers clinical education and client empowerment, here in the context of her clinical programme at La Trobe in Australia – and looking at the potential for law reform work in the Australian context. Curran argues that by giving the (otherwise) marginalised in society a voice, law reform which is grounded in casework has a sense of reality which often sways hard-line decision-makers. Curran also, however reflects on the risks that may arise from such case-work based law reform projects and argues that clinics provide one route by which universities can play their role in the wider public life of the community, as well as educating students in the nature of professional roles.

### **Other matters:**

This is my final edition of the Journal as Editor. I am moving on within Northumbria University to become Dean of the Law School – a role that I am delighted to assume since it allows me to continue to ensure that our clinical programmes remain central to everything that we do within the School. I am equally delighted to be able to leave the Journal in the very capable hands of my colleague, Kevin Kerrigan. Kevin is a Reader in Law at the Law School, and has been a key player within our clinical programmes for many years, developing a successful and well-regarded criminal appeals clinic. He has also been involved in helping to organise our IJCLE conferences – as well as publishing in the Journal – and he will be known to many of you already.

I wish Kevin every luck with the Journal. It has been a pleasure to serve as Editor – and to build on all the work done by my predecessor, Cath Sylvester. I have been assisted to a huge extent by my eminent – and ever helpful – Editorial Board, and by all of those who have submitted articles – and (equally critically) have kindly agreed to serve as referees.

Thank you to everyone who has helped to make the Journal such a success and I look forward to reading future editions of the Journal – and to continuing to attend the conferences, from which I always learn so much.

*Philip Plowden*

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