

# Problem-based learning and clinical legal education: What can clinical educators learn from PBL?

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This paper originated as a session at the Society of Legal Scholars conference in Leicester in September 2002. The writers<sup>4</sup> have been teaching in Northumbria University's Student Law Office for a number of years. We knew the practical benefits of clinical legal education but two particular problems presented themselves. The first was articulating the rationale for doing it beyond the fact that it exposes students to real practice. Given the fact that the UK already has a training contract regime whereby trainee solicitors spend the first two years of their professional life being supervised and supported by qualified professionals, what is the purpose of clinical legal education? The second problem we had arose when we looked at our Year 3 training programme<sup>5</sup> and then student attitudes and ability when they reached the Year 4 programme.

We found that many of our new Year 4 students did not engage in our firm meetings to discuss other students' cases very well. That once the client had been interviewed many of them simply approached their supervisor for the next step. That they effectively expected the supervisor to tell them where to look for the law, or just tell them the law. In short that they had some way to go in becoming effective problem solvers.

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<sup>5</sup> *In Year 3 of the degree students run a simulated case study. They are required to interview an actress about a legal problem and then undertake certain simulated tasks: writing to the client and opponent, keeping attendance notes, managing the file etc. In Year 4 students run cases fully for members of the public under the supervision of qualified lawyers.*

It was these difficulties that drew us to the theory of Problem Based Learning (PBL) and its methodology. This paper explores this element of what we are trying to achieve through the clinic experience, the basic theory of PBL<sup>6</sup>, a description of the problems that we have encountered with our programme, the implementation of PBL in our Year 3 programme and some research conducted into the student experience in our new Year 3 programme.

## Clinical Legal Education at Northumbria

Unlike other providers of professional education, both for the barrister's qualification – the Bar Vocational Course – and solicitors – the Legal Practice Course, Northumbria University places the activities of the students in the Law Office at the heart of the professional training that students are being given. There can be many claims for the positive role that the clinic can play. It has been argued that the clinic experience can encourage students to undertake *pro bono* work<sup>7</sup>, that it can orientate some students towards social welfare law<sup>8</sup>, that skills can more effectively be taught through real cases.

We believe that all of these are true but that a key goal of clinic training should also be to assist students to bridge a gap. The gap between on the one hand being taught discrete law subjects in the classroom and reproducing that knowledge for examination and on the other assisting a client in real life whose problem stretches across several areas and encompasses law that they may not have encountered before.

The clinic at Northumbria is one of the longest running clinical programmes in the UK<sup>9</sup>. It started in 1981 based in a room in the University (then Polytechnic) and was offered to small numbers of students taking a Legal Methods and Institutions course. Because of the constraints of the then professional practice rules for solicitors and a general concern about a possible threat to local solicitors it was limited in what it could do. The clinic could only advise students in the University, it could not go on the court record as acting and could not apply for legal aid for eligible clients. The programme was motivated entirely by educational objectives and, as student enthusiasm for it grew, the University expanded its provision.

In the early days it appears that no one thought of the Clinic as having a role to play in provision of legal services in the area and because of the above limitations its contribution was restricted. Indeed, in 1988 the Clinic was based in a local Law Centre<sup>10</sup> in order to increase the number of cases in the clinic because at that time there was a struggle getting enough appropriate work.

It was only in 1992 when the Student Law Office as it now is, opened in the University. The professional rules had changed to allow us to act for members of the public and the local profession had been reassured that we would not jeopardise their practices. In the same year the

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6 While it has been described many times we believe a brief description of the theory is necessary due to the fact that PBL has seen very little take up in law schools.

7 Including for example the Attorney General for England and Wales

8 see for example "Beyond Skills Training" Stephen Wizner *Clin. L. Rev* 7/2 2001 and see also "Striving to Teach Justice, Fairness and Morality" Jane Harris

Aiken, *Clin. L. Rev.* 4 1997

9 The first CLE programmes in the UK were started in the mid 1970's at Warwick and Kent Universities. By 1980 only four clinics remained in existence at Birmingham, Warwick, South Bank and Northumbria.

10 Gateshead Law Centre hosted an advice session run by students from 1988 to 1991

University enrolled its first year of students on a new four year exempting law degree course<sup>11</sup> which combined the academic and professional requirements for legal training in one integrated course. Clinical legal education was an obvious contender for delivering some of the skills elements required by this new degree<sup>12</sup> and the change in the rules gave us the opportunity to offer a much more intense programme.

The exempting degree from its outset aimed to incorporate the development of skills with the learning of academic law. The degree meets all the necessary academic requirements for the qualifying law degree<sup>13</sup> together with the more practice orientated areas covered by the current Legal Practice Course for those wishing to become solicitors and the Bar Vocational Course for those wishing to become barristers. However, the course is unique in that it integrates the two elements from day one of the 4 year degree and does not distinguish between them. Consequently in year 1 students cover some of the more traditional subjects such as contract and property law but will also study a combination of criminal litigation, crime and evidence in a series of concurrent and interlinked lectures and seminars. In year 2 students study tort, civil litigation and procedure using a similar method. From the outset legal skills will be incorporated where appropriate, so year 1 students start to practice and develop their advocacy skills in criminal litigation seminars by presenting mock bail applications. Students are introduced to the Student Law Office Programme in year 3 when they undertake a training programme. In year 4 the Student Law Office real client programme is a substantial part of their final year programme. Although year 4 students also study additional options, the core of the year is the student law office programme and a project. This combination gives students enough flexibility in time to manage their Student Law Office case load professionally and complete their other academic commitments<sup>14</sup>.

The motivating force behind the development of the clinical programme to its current form at Northumbria was Hugh Brayne, who following a visit to a clinic at the University of Connecticut in 1990, realised the potential of clinical education 'I was able to see what law students were really capable of...they took almost total responsibility for big cases, including serious crime and appeal cases, and were clearly doing it well'<sup>15</sup>. He also saw the benefits of proper training programmes to prepare students for clinical work.

Clinical work at Northumbria has had the luxury of being driven primarily by educational and not practical objectives. From the outset the real client programme was backed up by a training programme concentrating on the more widely recognised lawyers' skills; interviewing, research, drafting, negotiation and advocacy<sup>16</sup>. By 1994 the Student Law Office was a compulsory element for all year 4 students taking the exempting degree and we provided a training programme based on a simulated case study to year 3 students with the aim of preparing them for their real client work.

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11 *The University of Northumbria remains the only provider of the integrated course which combines all the elements required for a qualifying degree and the requirements of the Legal Practice Course or Bar Vocational Course.*

12 *The contents of the law degree Legal Practice Course and Bar Vocational Course are determined by the Joint Announcement of the Council for Legal Education and the General Bar Council 1995 and 1999 and the LPC written standards or the Bar Vocational Course Core*

*Specification Requirements and Guidance.*

13 *Ibid*

14 *For more detailed breakdown of the 4 year curriculum for the exempting degree see the Appendix E.*

15 *Hugh Brayne 'Law Students as Practitioners' Teaching Lawyers Skills Webb and Maugham 1996 Butterworths*

16 *Referred to by the acronym DRAIN skills. These skills were originally identified as key skills to be assessed as part of the Legal Practice Course*

With a few permutations on the way we have broadly retained this approach but it is the Year 3 programme that we have subsequently changed.

Both year 3 and 4 programmes have evolved. In 2002 the year 4 programme expanded to play a more significant role. In terms of staffing we have been able to establish some academic staff as being entirely Law Office based and have retained and increased a group of staff who are enthusiastic about clinical work. We currently cater for intakes of over 120 students on each of years 3 and 4. We have 3 members of staff based full time conducting cases in the Law Office, two trainee solicitors and 12 other staff members who supervise Law Office work. In addition we have quality marks from the Legal Services Commission for providing specialist advice in housing and employment law.

Over the years we have become very skilled at identifying appropriate cases for clinic and have become more adventurous about what students can do. Our programme forms a compulsory element of the exempting degree and is an assessed course integrated into the curriculum. The aims of the Law Office were not only to develop traditionally recognised lawyers' skills<sup>17</sup> and to give the students a taste of real practice. From the outset we also wanted to encourage a shift in approach to tackling legal problems; one that took into account all the complex influences that affect the outcome of every case. We wanted students to solve problems not just by reference to text books but also by reference to the other factors affecting legal decisions.

Central to this was that there should be time within the programme for students to reflect upon what they do. The idea of the reflective practitioner, established by Donald Schon's work<sup>18</sup> is widely recognised as an important element of experiential learning. Schon talks of a 'professional artistry' whereby experienced practitioners 'frame new problems' with reference to their past experiences. Our undergraduate students didn't have much past practical legal experience but they had legal knowledge and general knowledge and a range of personal experiences all of which could help frame the problems presented by the Law Office work.

The year 4 programme aims and learning outcomes<sup>19</sup> set out clearly some of the wider educational aims behind the development of the Law Office programme. It comes as no surprise that the document refers to the development of skills of research, interviewing, negotiation, drafting and advocacy. However, this is just one of ten aims the majority of which support the overall aim of 'shifting the emphasis of student learning from a subject centred to a client centred approach'<sup>20</sup>. The objectives embrace the necessity of reflective work<sup>21</sup> as part of the experiential learning cycle, they also refer to development of students' analytical skills and of their abilities to plan, progress and action cases and to identify and respond to the a particular needs of the client.

These were ambitious objectives, but we hoped that the integrated nature of the exempting degree would prepare students for the year four programme. In addition all students taking part in the year 4 programme had to participate in a programme in year 3 which was to prepare them for the live client work.

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17 *Ibid*

18 Donald Schon – *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* 1987

19 SLO Aims and Learning outcomes, see Appendix A

20 see Appendix A.

21 See Donald Schon's work on the reflective practitioner and Kolb's learning cycle for the part played by reflection in experiential learning

The mechanics of the year 4 programme are that students are split into small 'firms' of six students. Each firm is supervised by a qualified member of staff and specialises in a subject area<sup>22</sup>. The firm members are not selected with reference to any criteria and many students will be specialising in an area of law they may not have learnt in lectures or seminars prior to the Law Office programme. Within the firms the students usually work in pairs on a case and typically will have two to three cases on the go at any one time. Cases are not pre-selected; indeed the only indication of what is in store is a brief enquiry form which gives a short statement of the problem described by the client. Students initially undertake an information gathering interview and it is at this stage that the students and the supervisor take a decision whether to accept the case or not.

The firms meet once per week for an hour meeting. The contents of the meetings are not prescribed. They may be used to review skills work, to plan ongoing cases and discuss tactics, to review the entire case load of the firm or to concentrate on one particular case. The day to day work on the file is carried out by the students, individually or in pairs, when they prepare letters, research and carry out interviews. A lot of work progressing the file is done individually and then checked and discussed with the supervisors.

Students are assessed on their work though the year. Assessment is not only on the basis of the development of the DRAIN<sup>23</sup> skills and reflective ability but also on their input in practical sessions through the year. Initially the Law Office assessment regime avoided assessment of anything that could not be evidenced in written work, but in 1998 the criteria changed to allow some recognition of the students' participation and development in practical sessions. To reflect this, assessment criteria were prepared for practical work which included some rather cautiously worded requirements for the development of some of the lawyering skills identified in the objectives. One of the criteria we look for when assessing the students practical work is that they 'begin to develop an ability to review case files and to plan the conduct of a case and to begin to develop an ability to manage and analyse factual information on case files'.

The tentative use of the word 'begin' reveals how much of a struggle we felt this would be when we first drafted these criteria. Increasingly we were having conversations with others teaching in the Law Office that, whilst the students were coming into the year 4 programme with a basic understanding of interview skills and drafting procedures, it was an immense struggle to get them to 'think like a lawyer'.

Some of these concerns are obviously shared by the profession who have often bemoaned the compartmentalisation of legal subjects and the inability of students to relate their learning to real problems:

"As lawyers we don't get a set of instructions and say "that is a contract issue. I don't have to think of anything else." So why do we teach law that way?"<sup>24</sup>

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22 In 2002 the SLO yr 4 programme moved towards establishing three specialist areas of work ; employment law; housing law and civil litigation. Whilst other areas have developed through the year these areas remain very fertile sources of appropriate cases.

23 Op Cit.

24 Melissa Hardee Chair of the Legal Education and Training Group "Law Society Gazette," 13th November 2000.

There is concern also about students' ability to research and analyse the law and facts:

"We would not mind the law degree covering less areas of law so long as graduates had good analytical and research skills."<sup>25</sup>

There is also concern expressed about the ability to problem solve:

"A criticism sometimes made of solicitor's training is that it is insufficiently rigorous; that trainees are not taught adequately to manipulate the law and devise strategies to meet the facts of a case and the demands of a client"<sup>26</sup>

We argue that two central aims for professional education have to be to prepare students for continuing education<sup>27</sup> and help them become effective problem solvers.<sup>28</sup>

We believe that clinic can help deliver these aims and that when one looks at other disciplines (most obviously in medicine, engineering and health care) these issues are being tackled through the use of PBL.

## A definition of PBL

"Problem based courses start with problems rather than the exposition of disciplinary knowledge. They move students towards the acquisition of knowledge and skills through a staged sequence of problems presented in context, together with associated learning materials and support from teachers"<sup>29</sup>

The crucial and defining element of PBL is the presentation of the problem before complete subject knowledge is acquired.<sup>30</sup> It cannot simply be the addition of a problem to a single area that students have been taught via the traditional methods.<sup>31</sup> The method of delivering single subject areas through lectures and a textbook and then presenting students with a simulated problem that can be answered by reference to those sources is extensively used throughout England and Wales

25 Andrew Holroyd, Chairman Law Society's Training Committee "Law Society Gazette," 23rd November 2001.

26 "Training Framework Review Consultation Paper" The Law Society, 2001.

27 see for example Moskowitz: "Doctors (like lawyers) spend their careers trying to solve problems and to do so they must learn how to learn" in "Beyond the Case Method, It's Time to Teach with Problems," M Moskowitz, *Journal of Legal Education*, Vol 42 (1992) and citing Barrows and Tamblyn: "No medical student can learn all the scientific knowledge she might need in practice, and much of what she does learn will soon be forgotten or obsolete. When she gets into practice, she must be able - without the help of any teacher - to read what she needs to read in order to learn how to solve a patient's current problem. The problem method is the best way to get a medical student headed in that direction." from "Problem Based Learning: An Approach to Medical Education", HS Barrows and Tamblyn, Springer Verlag, New York 1980.

28 In fact some of the key components of this skill are contained in the Joint Statement Issued by the Law

Society and General Council of the Bar (1999) relating to qualifying law degrees in England and Wales:

"b. General Transferable Skills

Students should be able:

i. To apply knowledge to complex situations;

ii. To recognise potential alternative conclusions for particular situations, and provide supporting reasons for them;

iii. To select key relevant issues for research and to formulate them with clarity;

iv. ...

v. To make a personal and reasoned judgement based on an informed understanding of standard arguments in the area of law in question;

vi...."

29 "The challenge of Problem Based Learning," Boud and Felletti eds, Kogan Page, (1997)

30 Programmes appear to differ upon how much traditional teaching there is prior to presentation of the problem

31 *ibid.*

on the Legal Practice Course and Bar Vocational Course. This is not PBL and limits, in our view, the learning process while of course providing some opportunities for students to imitate expert's skills.<sup>32</sup>

PBL pioneers Barrows and Tamblyn<sup>33</sup> described the detailed steps involved in PBL:

1. The problem is encountered first
2. The problem is presented in the same way as presented in reality
3. The student works with the problem in a way that permits ability to reason and apply knowledge to be challenged and evaluated appropriate to his level of learning
4. Learning areas are identified in the process of work with the problem and used as a guide to individualised study
5. Skills and knowledge acquired are applied back to the problem to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and to reinforce it
6. Learning that has occurred is summarised and integrated into the student's existing knowledge and skills

Boud added the following:

1. Students take an active part in planning, organising and evaluating their own learning
2. Problems are multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary courses – this is far closer to real life where problems are not encountered in neatly packaged subject areas.
3. Focus is on the process of knowledge acquisition rather than the products of such processes – for our clinic experience the focus on the process of knowledge and acquisition and of producing a solution is even more important than in PBL courses designed to deliver knowledge and understanding of substantive areas
4. Staff are facilitators not instructors
5. Students learn to assess their own learning rather than relying on others for this<sup>34</sup>

For an example of PBL on a law course the reader is referred to the examples given and explanation by Jos Moust<sup>35</sup> of Maastricht University which remains the pioneering Law School in Europe which has embraced the method.

A brief summary of the process used is that students are presented with a problem and work in groups. In his article Moust describes this as the “seven steps” method:

“Step 1 Clarify terms and concepts not readily comprehensible

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32 *“In fact, most teachers use problems to test, or promote, application of previously acquired knowledge. The problem is not posed first in the sequence. There is no independent inquiry outside of the assigned materials or resources. The teacher remains the expert who eventually provides a solution to the problem. Students may learn by imitating the expert's steps some problem-solving skills”* David A Cruickshank *“Problem-Based Learning in Legal Education,”* in *“Teaching Lawyers' Skills”* Webb and Maughan eds, Butterworths, 1996. We discuss some of these problems later in this paper.

33 *op cit.*

34 *“Problem Based Learning in Perspective,”* Boud, in *“Problem-based Learning in Education for the Professions,”* Boud ed, Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australia, Sydney (1985) both cited by Cruickshank *op cit.*

35 *“The Problem-Based Education Approach At The Maastricht Law School,”* Jos Moust, *The Law Teacher*

- Step 2 Define the problem(s) involved
- Step 3 Analyse the problem(s): brainstorm
- Step 4 Analyse the problem(s): make a systematic inventory of the results from the brainstorm
- Step 5 Formulate learning objectives
- Step 6 Collect additional information outside the group (independent study)
- Step 7 Synthesise and test the newly acquired information”<sup>36</sup>

## The Advantages of PBL

Many claims have been made for the advantages of PBL.

One theory is that learning in the context of a problem should improve students' abilities to recall that information at a later stage<sup>37</sup>. However, research findings are at best mixed with some finding no difference or a decrease in performance and others finding increased retention.<sup>38</sup>

This could be explained by the fact that over the same time period students are not just learning the subject but also process skills.<sup>39</sup>

There is clearly a debate that continues about the efficacy of using the PBL method exclusively to impart knowledge to students. The writers themselves have concerns about whether the use of a PBL approach can adequately provide the students with the fundamental doctrinal knowledge necessary for the foundation subjects of an English Law degree<sup>40</sup>. We wonder whether it is time effective to always require students to begin with the problem and learn the detail of the discipline by forming their own learning objectives and then meeting to synthesise findings. We have concerns that there can be full coverage of the discipline within the time frame available using this method. On the other hand, if some traditional methods of teaching are inserted at the start of the course will that not defeat the object of the students defining their own learning objectives and taking responsibility for their own learning?

In the context of clinical legal education at Northumbria University we are not primarily focussing on the acquisition of knowledge however. Before entry into the Student Law Office students on

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p.17

<sup>37</sup> “PBL forces the students to learn the fundamental principles of the subject in the context of needing it to solve a problem. Hence, the subject knowledge is learned in formats different from those from the traditional subject-based format. We hope (and are yet awaiting irrefutable evidence) [our emphasis] that this makes a significant improvement in a student's ability to recall and later use the subject knowledge.” “Problem-based Learning: Helping your students gain the most from PBL” D.R. Woods, Waterdown, Canada (1995)

<sup>38</sup> see summary of findings in “Students' evaluation of a learning method: a Comparison Between Problem-Based learning and More Traditional Methods in A Specialist University Training Programme in Psychotherapy,” Sunblad et al “Medical Teacher, Vol 24, No.3, 2002, pp.268–272.” On measures of knowledge, the latest reviews of research in the medical field point to

little or no difference between students in traditional programmes and those in PBL ones. See “Effectiveness of problem-based learning curricula: theory, practice and paper darts,” Geoffrey R Norman and Henk G Schmidt, *Medical Education* 2000; 34:721–728 and “Effectiveness of problem based learning curricula,” J Colliver, *Acad Med* 2000; 75:259–66.

<sup>39</sup> D.R. Woods *op cit.* citing the view of Albanese and Mitchell that about 20% less subject knowledge can be covered in a PBL course compared to a conventional course “Problem-Based Learning: a Review of the Literature on outcomes and Implementation Issues.” 1993, *Academic Medicine*, 68, 52–81.

<sup>40</sup> As required to practise as a barrister or solicitor with a qualifying law degree (“Schedule 2 Joint Statement Issued by the Law Society and General Council of the Bar” 1999)

our law degree learn through a blend of what might be termed the case method and through what might be termed teaching using problems.

The intended learning outcomes of the Student Law Office experience are not primarily focussed on coverage in a discipline in the way that a more traditional lecture seminar course would be. This would not be possible anyway given the fact that the law the students encounter is dependent upon the types of cases that come into the office. Our important aims and learning outcomes include:<sup>41</sup>

- Shift the emphasis of student learning from a subject-centred to a client-centred approach.
- Develop skills of problem solving by analysing factual information arising from your case, applying the results of legal research and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of your case.

The power of the clinic experience to assist students to become better problem solvers has been recognised for some time. Indeed, Moskovitz recognised this when he advocated moving to the “problem method”: “Problem solving is the single intellectual skill on which all law practice is based...” Law School clinics can give students this training, but clinics are at the fringe of legal education, usually reserved for a small number of third-year students.”<sup>42</sup>

We believe it to be true that clinics, as with PBL, can develop some of the attributes of problem solving. We also recognise that problem solving as a skill of itself is ill defined and there is much doubt about whether it can be taught. Cruickshank<sup>43</sup> argues that a less ambitious case can be made for PBL. That PBL can provide:

- A basis for trial and error use of problem-solving strategies and hints
- A connection for the individual between the specific knowledge base and best personal approaches to typical problems
- An exposure to how others, peers and experts, solve the same problems
- A potential for learning and articulating an individualised method of problem-solving that will shorten the time span between novice and expert skill attainment

The question is whether clinical legal education, and in particular the model used in our SLO Year 4 programme is PBL as defined? They share some of the same attributes. The problem is of course posed first in the sequence, the students never have full knowledge of the law on which the problem is based (sometimes they have none). Students discuss the problem collaboratively (in pairs at least) and will identify the areas for research. They will feedback this research at the weekly firm meetings and discuss it with their peers and their supervisor. They will go on to identify new learning objectives (fact gathering and legal research) and they are required to reflect on the learning experience.

However, while some of the elements of the PBL approach were present in the Year 4 programme, they were not being utilised in a way that fully assisted students with problem solving.

Of course some students did develop these skills to a high level and others to lesser degrees. We considered what it was that appeared to be restricting the universal development of problem solving skills in the year 4 programme and identified the following issues:

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41 A full list of the aims and learning outcomes appears in Appendix A

of problems without some of the other methodology usually associated with PBL.

42 *op cit.* Although this article appears to advocate the use

43 *Op cit.*

## The nature of the problem

Whilst clinical programmes always produce a wealth of raw learning materials in the form of client instructions these can be overwhelming to students. Barrows and Tamblin<sup>44</sup> identified the complexities brought by using real clients as a source of learning material, 'the available patient may present complexities or unrelated problems that can distract or confuse the learner. ...although important at some time, these may detract from the immediate value of the patient as a learning experience in certain stages of the student's education'. We were providing students with tools to refine their interviewing techniques and their research but we did not seem to be providing them with techniques for problem solving. Some students were failing in the basic steps in organising the material given to them by their clients. They were failing to identify the issues or problems arising from the case and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant. They had difficulties processing and analysing information in such a way as to develop a case plan or theory and in reviewing each step of the case in the light of their previous case plans and findings.

## The tunnel vision approach to problem solving

One of the benefits of the exempting degree is that from the outset practice and procedure are taught in such a way as to highlight the links between the areas. So, for example criminal litigation is taught in conjunction with evidence and criminal procedure. Nevertheless the teaching methods are typically through the traditional lecture/seminar method.

Of course the typical seminar poses a problem, having provided students with the necessary information and references through prior lectures. Problem solving in this form is quite rightly, at the heart of the degree. However, some of the techniques required for seminar preparation are not necessarily useful for clinical work, indeed they can militate against developing a technique for solving problems in a clinical setting.

The significant differences are that the seminar problem has been written to test the students understanding of a subject area. The scenario is fixed and students preparing for the seminar learn very quickly to 'interpret' what is being asked for from the particular set of facts presented by the problems. The problem contains a series of cues which will send the student off to research the relevant area and come back with a range of answers. There is rarely any wholly irrelevant information in the question or any information which draws in knowledge from another areas or even general knowledge. The information is usually already presented in an organised and logical way, in fact usually the first stage of any problem solving approach has already been done for the student – the information clearly defines the problem. Indeed both lecturers and students alike find it very disturbing when students do go off on tangents. Everyone likes to feel that there is a finite number of possible answers to the question.

In a clinical setting problems are client centred. The problem itself comes from the client and may include much unnecessary information. It may disguise a number of different problems not all of which will necessarily be legal. It will almost certainly cut across subject boundaries and will require interpretation and investigation of the factual information before students can even ascertain what the problem is. Add to this an undercurrent of non verbal information such as whether the client would make a good witness, what are the client's real motives behind this – just defining the problem

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<sup>44</sup> Barrows and Tamblin *op cit*.

is a huge step. Generally, early first interviews with clients are over very quickly. Students don't appreciate the range of information they need, for example that it is as important to know whether your client can afford to pay the court fee as whether their case demonstrates all the legal elements of a claim in negligence. Students struggle to understand their role in identifying the problem and expect the client to do this for them in a much more coherent way.

In addition students are not prepared for the fluid nature of the case. Having identified the issues in the case they are often positively annoyed when the client changes what they say or is confused. When the students have found their range of answers they are not just putting them to their clinical supervisor to approve they are putting it to the client who has the ultimate say in which way the case will progress. 'Many fail to recognise that the information they can learn only from the client – the client's perceptions, opinions and concerns, as well as her strengths and resources – is vital to building and executing a litigation strategy that will constitute success in the client's eyes.'<sup>45</sup>

### **The problem of the preconceived roles.**

The study of law does not necessarily explain to students what the role of the lawyer is. 'Whilst the student has vivid images of dealing with court, staff, negotiating with the opposing counsel and arguing before judges, the relationship with a client is often abstract and minimised'.<sup>46</sup> Often traditional teaching methods reinforce this. The lawyer is the expert, just as the lecturer is the expert. The lawyers' job is to find the range of legal answers to the problem and to present them persuasively to the relevant legal tribunal and to manipulate the adversary system as far as possible to the client's advantage. In the same way the seminar tutor takes an answer and uses it to throw up different aspects of the same subject area or to challenge the students' response. Problem solving tends to be approached from the stand point of how the court would interpret the facts. Whilst this is a necessary skill for student to master in order to advise properly, it is not necessarily the same approach as that required to assess the best solution for this particular client with these particular circumstances.

Students have never had a client at the centre of the case determining its development and this may come as a shock. Some thrive on the motivation of representing a real person others never accept that the client is king; 'We have to put up with too much rubbish from client's not turning up. We are expected to be there at their beck and call, at the end of the day we are doing them a favour – it would be nice to be treated with more respect'<sup>47</sup>.

### **Reluctance to draw their own and on others' wider experience in the problem-solving process.**

Students are rarely required to work collaboratively during their studies. Whilst students probably do so informally in preparation for seminars there is no encouragement of a sharing of ideas. Obviously all contributions will inform a seminar discussion but there is no sense of working together to produce the complete range of responses. In clinical work it is the working out process that is as important as the conclusions. If students don't understand how the decision was reached

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45 *Who's Listening? Introducing students to a client centred, client empowering and multidisciplinary problem-solving in a clinical setting – V Pualani Enos and Lois H Kanter. Clinical Law Review, Fall 2002 . Vol 9 no. 1*

46 *Ibid P86*

47 *Extract from an anonymous feedback sheet from a year 4 student at Northumbria participating in the clinical programme*

they can't monitor the ongoing conduct of the case and respond to unexpected developments. Therefore the concept of being a 'firm' – a group with a common interest and of the meeting being a venue to try out ideas with a view to developing a case theory, is totally unknown to our students.

In addition there is a feeling of inhibition about expressing their own views or bringing to bear their own experiences. In some firms this happens naturally usually led by one student who takes the lead by being very open about their thought processes which reassures the others that this is acceptable. In other firms students remain focussed on their own cases, looking for acknowledgement from their supervisor that their proposed course of action is the right one. When the firm meeting works well collaboratively it is widely appreciated by students and this is often referred to in student feedback.<sup>48</sup>

### Creative and co operative thinking

This is all part of the reflective process; the idea of framing each new enquiry against the experience we already have. Student's found this relatively easy when assessing the strengths and weaknesses of an interview but much harder when trying to frame the issues in their cases with reference to their wider knowledge. Of course students often do lack a wider understanding in which to put the issues in context and this may inhibit creative and expansive thinking but it can be a benefit too 'once acclimatised to the context, the student's lack of experience can be a boon, ...by making them less jaded and more open to thinking 'outside the box'<sup>49</sup>.

### Conflicting pressures

Of course one of the pleasures of teaching in a clinical setting is that student motivation is usually very high. Students normally take very seriously their responsibility to their clients and take ownership of their cases. On entry to the clinical programme their main priority is to have their own case load. This in turn places pressures on what can be achieved in a firm meeting. There is a law of diminishing returns; when the firm is handling only one or two cases it is easier to get all the students to focus on all the issues of that case and to participate in decisions on it. However, when the firm is handling 12 to 15 cases it is not possible to focus on each case in the same way and students become territorial about what they do. They do not always see the need to contribute to other cases when they have their own to work on. Of course there are ways round this; more complex cases involving a wider group or clinics taking a narrower area of work so that subject matter overlaps more. However, it is hard to justify to students the educational imperatives of progressing in this way when their overwhelming interest and motivation is to have their own case.

The other ever present conflict with legal clinical work is conflict between educational objectives and professional good practice. Whilst all our clients are aware of the educational objectives of the clinic,<sup>50</sup> our aim is to demonstrate to students good professional practice not just the bare minimum of keeping within the professional rules. Students who work efficiently and respond to issues quickly are rewarded. Much of the case work never gets to the firm meeting. It is done by

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48 *In end of year feedback at Northumbria one student identified the most enjoyable aspect of the fourth year course was 'the sense of teamwork and support I gained from being part of such a bonded firm in the SLO'.*

49 *Biting Off What They Can Chew: Strategies for*

*involving students in problem solving beyond individual client representation'. Katherine Kruse, Clinical Law Review, Vol 8 No.2*

50 *All clients sign a form acknowledging the educational priorities of the Law Office*

efficient students realising they need to respond to developments quickly. This hinders developing the problem solving process. In normal circumstances students take instructions and discuss these briefly at the firm meeting. They then go and research issues. There may be no time to bring this back for discussion to the firm meeting as the client cannot wait indefinitely for their letter of advice.

Clinical supervisors, whilst mindful of professional conduct requirements, also have time constraints on their time. The group problem solving process is curtailed or simply overtaken by events, that is not to say that individual students are not going through a problem solving process, but the message sent out to them is that this not a skill prioritised within the Law Office. Each step of the case is not transparent and available as part of the learning process to the whole firm.

### **The supervisor's role – facilitator/partner not teacher.**

The demands of clinical work often make it very tempting to take a very interventionist role in casework, Kruse refers to this as 'the role of expert and expedition leader' which continually threatened the goal of 'giving the students primary and ultimate control over the problem solving process'.<sup>51</sup> This is not surprising as the normal professional requirement for teaching in clinical programmes is a degree of expertise in an area or procedure covered by clinic. In these circumstances it is to be expected that students look to supervisors for guidance in a way that allows them to opt out or not fully engage in the problem solving process. Indeed this division of labour is more comfortable for everyone concerned. At the University of Maastricht tutors are given a number of introductory workshops in the PBL method. They are taught to use questions to assist the problem solving process, to control discussions so that they do not go too far off course and to assist with the group dynamics.

The lecturer is more a facilitator than a lecturer. This is important; if students always perceive the tutor as the expert giving the right answer they will never truly assume responsibility for solving their own case problems. As Kruse identified 'my supervision emerged in some respects as more of a partnership between the students and me than I had experienced in the past. It was not a partnership of equals, because I knew more than the students did. But it was a partnership in which I, like my students, shared all I knew and all the limits of what I knew'.<sup>52</sup>

As a result of our concerns about the preparation of our students for the clinic experience, both through their education generally, and in the specific Year 3 training programme, we turned to the PBL methodology to see what lessons could be learned from it.

For several years, the Year 3 programme had revolved around a problem scenario. However, it appeared to the writers that there were several difficulties with the problem and the approach to the teaching sessions surrounding it. It had not been devised with a view to any of the existing experience and literature on PBL. It revolved around a faulty sofa. The difficulty that we perceived with this was that the problem covered knowledge that the students had previously covered in contract law (Sale of Goods legislation) and on an area that required little research. The legal issues were very straightforward and not multi layered. Little was required from the students in respect of the research. Instead the programme concentrated on the DRAIN skills. This was obviously an important part of the preparation for Year 4 but the skills were being practised in isolation from

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<sup>51</sup> See above note 42 P441

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*

attempts at problem solving. Feedback from students was generally not encouraging. Particularly feedback<sup>53</sup> from students in Year 4 who described the programme as being not good preparation for Year 4 and too easy.

For the year 2002/3 we decided to revamp the course. We introduced a more complex problem which the students would encounter through interviewing a client in pairs. The problem had the following features:

- The client has a disrepair problem with the window in her flat which is causing discomfort and damaging her furniture. Her landlord refuses to repair it
- The next door neighbour is a tenant of the landlord. She is an alcoholic and because of this a waste problem has developed in her flat to the extent that rats have now infested both her flat and the client's
- The client has reported both problems to the landlord who refuses to do anything about it and has told her that if she continues to complain/ goes to a lawyer he will force her to leave the flat

The problem thus encompasses several areas of law including:

- The nature of the particular tenancy
- The law on security of tenure
- The law on unlawful eviction
- The law on disrepair
- The law of nuisance
- Environmental Health Legislation
- The Civil Procedure Rules (CPR)

With the exception of the CPR students were not lectured on these topics. Students had some knowledge that they could build upon in respect of nuisance and property law but had not encountered most of the areas in any detail before.

We had also foreseen possible difficulties for the students in determining the type of tenancy and so had had an introductory workshop which students had prepared for by researching the facts of the client's agreement to ascertain the type of tenancy (the difficulties that were encountered with this are discussed later).

Students were given prior instruction in interviewing technique and in research methods.

Following the interview the students met in a workshop<sup>54</sup> having prepared an attendance note (note of the interview). They then worked in firms of 6 to identify the facts of the case (some students having got more detail than others). They were then asked to identify the problem as they perceived it and identify the learning objectives<sup>55</sup> including both legal and factual research.

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53 Admittedly the feedback referred to here was not gathered in a systematic way

54 Workshops generally had 1 tutor and 18 students. Occasionally 2 tutors were used

55 A copy of the form used can be found in Appendix B. The design of the form borrowed heavily from an example given by Jos Moust *op cit*.

The tutors' role was to go amongst the students assisting them by asking pertinent questions. Tutors attempted not to give answers but to guide the students through prompting.<sup>56</sup>

The students then worked in pairs in their own time to research the problem. Each pair was allocated a different area by the firm. This tended to be along the lines of the basic 3 areas: environmental health/ private law nuisance, disrepair and security of tenure.

Having researched the allocated areas the students returned to the workshop with a research report<sup>57</sup> which all the members of the firm were given and the firm discussed the outcome. Their task was to formulate further legal and factual research objectives arising from their learning and to begin to agree what the advice to the client should be – in preparation for each pair drafting a letter of advice to the client. The research reports were taken in by the tutors and commented upon within 7 days in order to provide the students with formative feedback.

At the next workshop letters of advice were discussed by the firms with tutor feedback at this stage also. The firms were also required to begin to draft a letter of claim to the landlord and in the final workshop students considered the response of the landlord and the action and further factual research that was necessary in respect of that.

Throughout this sequence students were identifying disputed factual issues. Where these were identified and requested relevant evidence would be provided to the students. Where they were not identified by certain firms they were not provided. At least 1 student commented that he realised that he had to be more proactive in thinking about the case and what was necessary because if he did not then he would not receive the information and his client would potentially suffer.

## **Assessment**

The case study file that the pair kept was marked on a competent/ not yet competent basis. To a large degree this was in order to ensure that the students could keep a file properly, draft letters to a reasonable standard etc in order that they can function in Year 4 and be able to develop skills in Year 4 without being a liability or being unable to proceed. The assessment of the file was also in place to ensure student participation throughout the year.

We also set an additional coursework assessment that was on an entirely different problem. This problem was again on an area largely unknown to the students and required research of the legal issues which spanned several disciplines. The work was completed by the students individually. It was designed to test the process of Practical Legal Research rather than knowledge acquisition.

## **Tutor Assessment of the Impact of the Course and Strengths and Weaknesses**

Tutors discussed these issues. All 3 tutors were surprised at how well the students took to the group discussion. Students often discussed the issues as if the tutor were not there. It was also felt that most of the students engaged with the problem and took finding out about the law seriously.

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<sup>56</sup> So, for example, when the students had simply decided to look at the possibility of the neighbour being forced to deal with the rat problem the tutor might ask if the students felt anyone else might take action

<sup>57</sup> A template for this is to be found at Appendix C. We note that the research report template (invented by others not involved with the PBL programme) has some similarities to the process the students are going through when they are working on the problem in the PBL format

There were several perceived difficulties however. The most important of these revolved around the nature of the tenancy and security of tenure. It was found that the students found it incredibly difficult to navigate this area without significant input from the tutors. On a PBL course that is designed to deliver subject knowledge these difficulties may have been surmountable by allowing for several workshops on the subject to help the students slowly find their way through it. Our course is not built with this objective in mind. We wanted students to gain Practical Legal Research skills across a range of legal areas over a relatively small number of workshops. Textbooks and practitioner texts concerning the nature of the tenancy at English law are a minefield for the uninitiated. We discovered that it was too difficult for the students to understand without a guide through the area. This is not to say that Environmental Health legislation and the law on disrepair is simple. Merely that students can research these areas and then be assisted with further guidance to a good level of understanding without being given much more heavily interventionist traditional teaching in order to assist them.

The above is all rather impressionistic of course. Having put this new course into place we then decided to research the effect that it had had on the students from their perspective.

## **The research design**

A questionnaire<sup>58</sup> was given to all students in SLO Year 3 after they had completed the PBL course, comprising five point Lickert scale questions designed to elicit students' feelings about the format of the PBL element, their levels of confidence about their learning and the desirability of this format compared to more traditional methods of instruction.

Sixty-five of 112 students completed the questionnaire when they came to collect their case study files. This response rate is in part due to the files being the joint work of two students – frequently only one of the pair came to the office. The responses were analysed using SPSS software.

## **Results**

### **Structure of the PBL element**

The PBL elements of working in a pair, working in a group to identify problems and working in a group to discuss research were all rated favourably by the majority of students, though the question of how much time was taken on group and pair work was less clear cut.

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<sup>58</sup> A copy can be found at appendix D

Table x: Positive statements about PBL element

	Was enjoyable			Helped my own learning			Contributed to the progress of the case		
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Working in a pair	82.3%	3.2%	14.5%	81.2%	6.3%	12.5%	81.2%	4.7%	14.1%
Working in a group to identify problems	79.1%	6.5%	14.5%	76.2%	7.9%	15.9%	75.3%	7.7%	16.9%
Working in a group to discuss research	77.7%	3.2%	19%	85.9%	1.6%	12.5%	81.5%	1.5%	16.9%

Table xx: Negative statements about PBL element

	Was frustrating			Was too time-consuming		
	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Working in a pair	19.7%	63.9%	16.4%	27.4%	38.7%	33.9%
Working in a group to identify problems	9.8%	67.3%	23%	16.4%	52.5%	31.1%
Working in a group to discuss research	8.2%	65.6%	26.2%	12.9%	50%	37.1%

The case study was deemed to be more realistic than the examples used in other parts of the course and most students did not feel that it was too confusing or tried to cover too much. Students were evenly split, however, in terms of the complexity of the case in relation to other example cases given in other subjects. Again, the heavier workload of PBL is acknowledged by most students, though it is important to note that there is no significant relationship between considering the workload heavy and a more negative attitude to the PBL element.

***The case study – overall***

The case study	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Was more realistic	83.1%	3.1%	13.8%
Was more confusing	7.8%	56.3%	35.9%
Was more complex	36.9%	30.8%	32.3%
Tried to cover too much	7.8%	46.9%	45.3%
Required more preparatory work	66.1%	10.8%	23.1%

Most students (58.7%) reported that they would have preferred to be lectured on housing law before the element began. Although some students felt that there might be a danger of superficiality, this did not have a significant relationship with their levels of confidence about knowledge of the law.

**The case study – learning the law**

The case study	Agree	Disagree	Neutral
Led to an overly superficial study of the legal issues	12.5%	50%	37.5%
Did not cover general issues of landlord and tenant law	18.8%	46.9%	34.4%

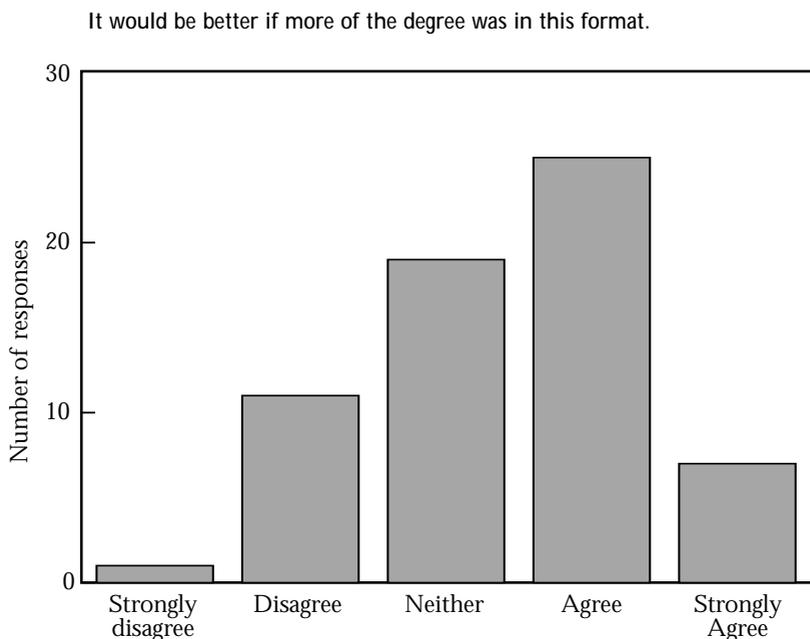
**Student confidence**

Research	Confident	Un-confident	Neutral
Using textbooks	77.7%	1.6%	20.6%
Using practitioner texts	79.3%	0%	20.6%
Using Halsburys	82.6%	1.6%	15.9%
Using the Internet	82.6%	3.2%	14.3%

Knowledge	Confident	Un-confident	Neutral
Disrepair	50.8%	3.2%	46%
Security of Tenure	46.1%	6.3%	47.6%
Environmental Health law	47.6%	4.8%	47.6%

Practical legal research	Confident	Un-confident	Neutral
Applying all aspects of the law to the case	81%	0%	19%
Identifying further legal research	77.8%	1.6%	20.6%
Identifying further factual research	79.4%	3.2%	17.5%
Integrating own research with others in the firm	82.5%	4.8%	12.7%
Understanding of procedural issues	69.8%	3.2%	27%
Client relationships	79.4%	1.6%	19%
Tackling a similar problem in the future	77.8%	3.2%	19%
Readiness for SLO Year 4	66.7%	6.3%	27%

Overall, while PBL appears to have had positive impacts on students' confidence and enjoyment of the course, there is a breadth of opinion about whether more of the degree should be taught in this way, with just over half of students welcoming more PBL, just under 20% actively disagreeing and the remaining group undecided.



PBL in this instance appears to have

- Been an enjoyable experience for students, even though time-consuming and hard work relative to more traditional methods
- In particular, sharing research in groups was a particularly good experience for students (positive aspects of all making individual contributions contr. normal seminar format)
- Been an experience that around half of students would like to repeat
- Encouraged students to develop high levels of confidence in research skills and practical legal skills
- Had a positive, though not so strong effect on students confidence about their knowledge of the law
- Made the majority of students feel that they can cope with real cases in year 4

## **Conclusions**

If nothing else, we believe that the students will come better prepared for firm meetings in Year 4. Given the positive responses of the students to working in groups to identify problems and learn from each other we believe they will come to the weekly firm meeting with more of an idea of what is expected from it. We believe that this will be a success in itself. We also believe that the generally good levels of confidence in legal and factual research, and the application of the results, bode well for Year 4. Good levels of student enjoyment and confidence should help to ensure a positive start to a challenging year for our fledgling lawyers.

We believe that the PBL methodology has improved the Year 3 experience. The question remains about whether it can better inform our teaching in firms in Year 4. The writers attempted to use the “seven steps” model<sup>59</sup> in initial firm meetings with all 6 students at the beginning of Year 4. This did promote student discussion, cooperation and interest. The model was not persevered with however partly because the students then have to work in pairs on their cases. It became much more difficult to involve the 4 who were not running the case in the model beyond the initial meeting because they were not researching and running the case. One way forward may be to involve all 6 students in one case throughout the year while allowing the pairs to continue with running their own individual cases. The difficulty would be using cases sufficiently complex to warrant 6 students spending their time on it. We still have to continue to consider how PBL might further inform our Year 4 programme.

## **Appendix A**

### **Student Law Office Year 4**

#### **“Aims**

Introduce students to real legal practice in a supervised environment and to encourage their development as reflective practitioners.

Shift the emphasis of student learning from a subject-centred to a client-centred approach.

Develop the skills required to become effective legal practitioners and in particular the skills of interviewing, research, drafting and case management.

To develop students’ awareness of the professional responsibilities and obligations of solicitors and to foster a culture of client care and adherence to the rules of professional conduct for solicitors and the Student Law Office procedures.

To develop students’ abilities to analyse factual material, gather evidence and plan in order to progress their client’s case.

To further develop file management, time management and recording skills.

To encourage students to discuss, plan and action cases both collaboratively and individually.

To prepare students for the training to be given in training contract.

To facilitate an awareness of wider social, cultural, ethical and political forces that shape the legal system and are affected by it and to appreciate some of the differences between law in theory and law in practice

#### **Learning Outcomes**

Students should be able to

Assume responsibility for the conduct of one or more student law office cases.

Attend and contributed to discussions in weekly firm meetings.

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<sup>59</sup> See Moust *op cit*.

Plan and interview a client and accurately record and analyse the information provided by the client.

Identify your client's needs and concerns and conduct your case in such a way as to address those needs.

Identify and research legal issues arising from your casework and present your research in a clear and effective way.

Develop skills of problem solving by analysing factual information arising from your case, applying the results of legal research and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of your case.

Develop both oral and written communication skills through preparation of written correspondence, client interviews and, when appropriate, representing clients at hearings or in telephone conversations with opposing representatives or third parties.

Organise, record and file information, correspondence, documentation and telephone information received in connection with your case in such a way as to comply with Law Office procedure and good file management.

Conduct your case so as to comply with the rules of the Student Law Office and the rules for the professional conduct of solicitors.

Learn to work with your supervisor and other students in your firm to achieve the most effective way of conducting your case.

Develop time management skills so as to conduct your case efficiently and comply with all deadlines required for the proper disposal of the case.

Draw on your experiences from casework and your discussions within your firm meetings to analyse the skills required by live client work and to develop those skills through the SLO programme.

Draw on your experiences from casework and discussions within your firm meetings to assess what factors affect the conduct and progress of your casework including the wider social, cultural, ethical and political considerations that might be relevant.

You will be competent in the legal skills of interviewing research and advocacy in accordance with the standards prescribed by the Legal Practice Board."

## **Appendix B**

Firm Notes of meeting in workshop 4. You may want to make rough notes first before filling this in continue on separate sheet if necessary

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM/WHAT THE CLIENT WANTS

AREAS FOR RESEARCH (remember to record who is researching what)

KEYWORDS/PHRASES

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES (eg factual information you think you may need)

## **Appendix C**

Research report

IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM/AREA FOR RESEARCH

KEYWORDS

RESEARCH REPORT

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

CONCLUSION

SOURCES

UPDATING

## **Appendix D**

### Student Law Office Year 3 Questionnaire

This has been the first year of approaching teaching SLO Year 3 in a different way. As part of our evaluation of this experience we need feedback on your experience of it.

We would be very grateful if you would fill in the attached questionnaire before picking up your case study file and manuals. Please hand the questionnaire to the office administrator.

This questionnaire is entirely anonymous. The administrator will simply note that you have completed it so that you can be entered in a draw for a prize (a choice of wine or chocolates to the winner).

Please note that the questions relate to the first 7 workshops only and not the advocacy part of the course.

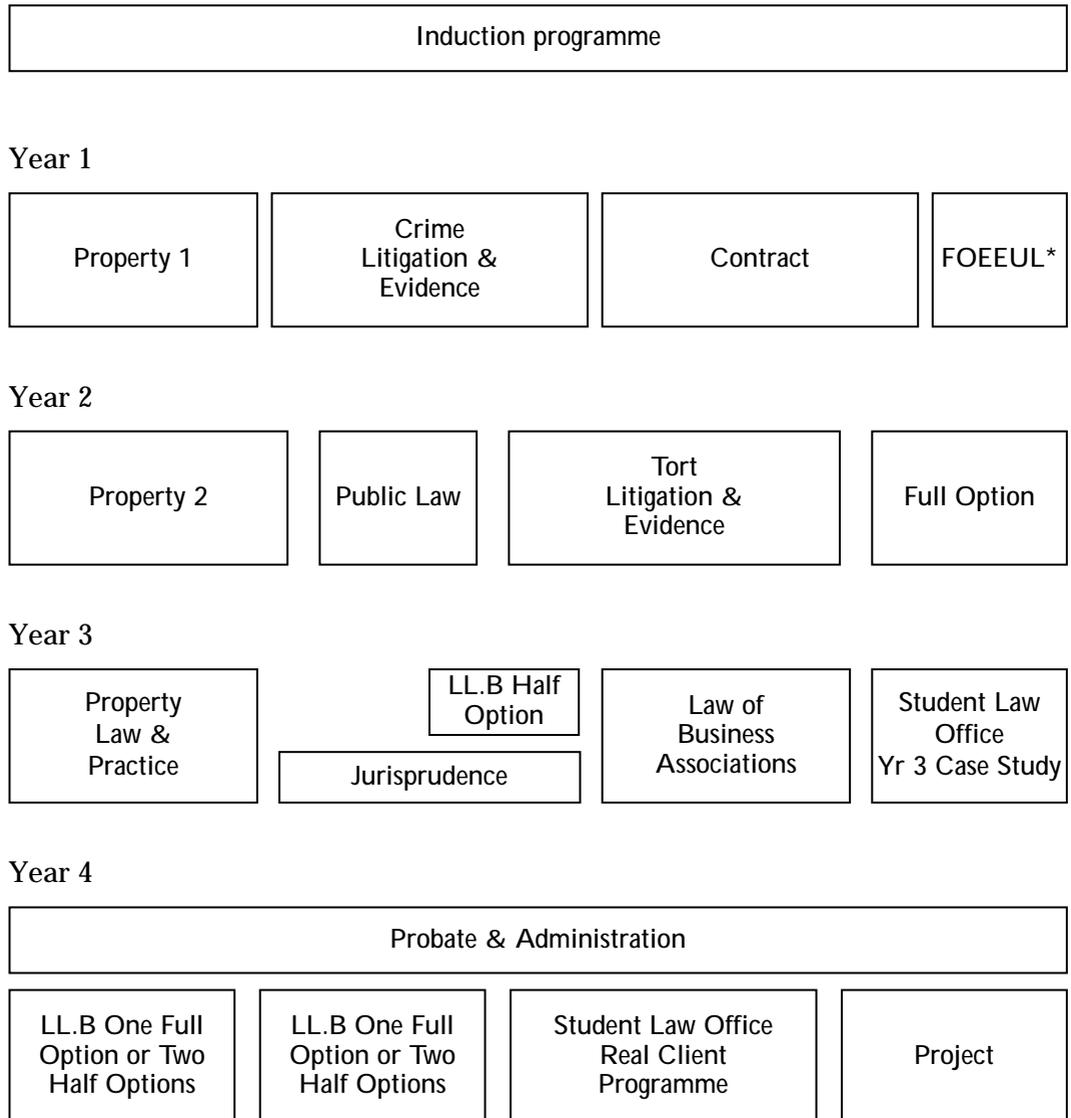
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>I would have preferred to have been lectured on housing law before the case study</i>					
<i>Working in a pair on the case was</i>					
Enjoyable					
Frustrating					
Helpful to my own learning					
Too time-consuming					
Effective in making progress on the case					
<i>Working in a group to identify the problems was</i>					
Enjoyable					
Frustrating					
Helpful to my own learning					
Too time-consuming					
Effective in making progress on the case					
<i>Working in a group to discuss findings and share research was</i>					
Enjoyable					
Frustrating					
Helpful to my own learning					
Too time-consuming					
Effective in making progress on the case					

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>Dawn Lander's case, compared to other seminar examples</i>					
was more realistic					
was more confusing					
was more complex					
tried to cover too much					
required more preparatory work for each session					
led to overly superficial study of the legal issues					
did not cover general issues of landlord and tenant law					
	Very confident	Confident	Neither confident nor unconfident	Unconfident	Very Unconfident
<i>The experience of working on Dawn Lander's case has made me feel</i>					
About researching the law through textbooks					
About researching the law through practitioner texts					
About researching the law through Halsburys					
About researching the law on the internet					
About knowledge of the law on disrepair					
About knowledge of the law on Security of tenure					
About knowledge of the law on Environmental Health Problems					
About applying all the aspects of the law to the case					
About identifying further legal research as the case progresses					
About identifying further factual research as the case progresses					
About integrating my own research with others in my firm					
About my level of understanding about procedural issues					
About my understanding of client relationships/ professional etiquette					
About my ability to tackle a similar problem in the future					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<i>It would be better if more of the law degree was delivered in this format</i>					
<i>I feel confident about working in the Student Law Office next year.</i>					

## **Appendix E**

The structure of the four year exempting law degree at Northumbria University.

### 4-YEAR LL.B (HONS) EXEMPTING DEGREE



\*FOEEUL – Foundations of English and European Legal Systems