

*Editorial*

**“I’m so glad that I live in a world where there are Octobers.”<sup>1</sup>**

Sarah Morse

Northumbria University, UK

[sarah.morse@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.morse@northumbria.ac.uk)

The opening quote is from my favourite childhood book and it seems very fitting today because, far more so than January, autumn has long since felt to me like the start of the new year, a time for new beginnings and full of endless possibility. It is therefore with considerable excitement for this new beginning that I introduce the first issue of the International Journal of Public Legal Education. Welcome to this journal which is the creation of like-minded people wishing to celebrate and promote work in this field.

Public legal education (PLE) is the umbrella term we have adopted to cover the many activities carried out worldwide aimed at educating members of the public in relation to legal rights and responsibilities. In different jurisdictions, we appreciate that the term PLE is less well recognised. For example, in the US, these activities fall within the wider remit of law-related education and might also be badged as community legal education or as part of the civic learning movement. In Australia, they might more readily be recognised as community legal services and in other jurisdictions

---

<sup>1</sup> L.M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

simply as legal literacy. Whatever the term of art, in this journal we would like to harness, examine and support this valuable work.

There are also a wide variety of activities undertaken under this banner. A significant part of PLE is of course Street Law and this issue, and I am sure future editions of the journal, will deservedly explore these programmes however our brief is wider and we would welcome contributions regarding any programmes which share similar aims and ideals. For example, your work may utilise interactive methods commonly associated with Street Law or the production of information leaflets or use of technology. PLE activities can involve law students, practitioners, NGOs or others and can be aimed at school pupils or adults within different learning environments. We welcome all incarnations of PLE and would like this journal to embrace a broad remit.

In this inaugural issue, we have a paper by Sean Arthurs, Melinda Cooperman, Jessica Gallagher, Freda Grealy, John Lunney, Rob Marrs and Richard Roe. This is a follow up to their superb article in the July edition of the [International Journal of Clinical Legal Education](#) which evaluates how effectively their unique Street Law orientation programme achieves its aims of building belief, capacity and community. We also have a fitting tribute by May O'Brien to the work of her late husband, Ed O'Brien, who many will know as the co-founder of Street Law in the US. In her article, May also credits the achievements of others in this field. Finally, we have contributions from some of our editorial board describing what role Street Law or PLE has in their own

jurisdictions. We hope that this serves as an introduction to the journal and an illustration of our hopes about the role and importance it could play.

As well as sharing best practice, we wish to examine programmes across jurisdictions, consider the underlying pedagogy and importantly include rigorous research to provide evidence of impact for the stakeholders involved. I hope it can provide a forum for creating a network of colleagues and support our activities such as conferences and workshops- please do let us know of anything happening in your area. We hope this journal will be successful long term and will become a valuable resource which is accessible for all. To achieve this we need your support and we would welcome submissions from you all for our next issue which will be published in Spring 2018. Our next issue will have a particular focus on different models of PLE however all submissions are welcomed.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and look forward to your contributions.