

EDUCATION IN THE FIELD: A CASE STUDY OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

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ABSTRACT

Australian and international law schools are increasingly focussed on experiential learning as a means of promoting student engagement and developing graduate attributes. In this article, existing forms of experiential learning are reviewed and a course design is presented that combines elements of internships and simulations with an intensive collaborative learning experience. This course design has been developed and evaluated over the past five years in the teaching of an international law course *Institutions in International Law*. Its effectiveness in engaging students and achieving high level learning outcomes led to its adoption this year in a second elective law course focussed specifically on legal professionalism in a global context: *Global Lawyer*. Both courses are taught primarily through two weeks of intensive seminars outside Australia, visiting a diverse range of institutions and practitioners. This intensive experience ‘in the field’ creates a raft of opportunities for enriching students’ learning. It is also a rewarding experience for teachers, although it creates a number of challenges not faced in a typical law school classroom. The article concludes that while this form of experiential learning entails significant administrative and financial costs, these must be balanced against the significant educational and institutional benefits available from this teaching mode.