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BOOK REVIEW: REIMAGINING CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION

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Francina Cantatore^{1*}

This edited collection of contributions by academics, lawyers, and industry stake-holders addresses recent developments in Clinical Legal Education (CLE) in England and Wales and concludes with a final chapter by Australian CLE expert, Professor Jeff Giddings. The book comprises fourteen chapters in all, dealing with diverse issues in this field (including a chapter written by a clinical student), based on a selection of presentations given at a workshop of the Birmingham Law School's Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research, held in March 2015, entitled 'Reimagining Clinical Legal Education'. It focuses on the following broad issues:

1. The extent to which clinical legal education has been (or should be) responding to the changing legal services market and higher education sector, and the opportunities and threats presented by those changes;
2. Whether cuts to legal aid prompt (or should prompt) a re-evaluation of the role and purpose of clinical legal education;
3. Investigating CLE practices in England and Wales and whether those involved in CLE see it as preparing law students for legal practice; and
4. The relationship of CLE with other forms of teaching and student experience; and the approaches to, and quality of, CLE scholarship.

In the book the editors define CLE as 'a method of legal teaching which is centered on the pedagogical benefits of exposing students to practical legal experience, rather than the more traditional model of lectures and reading,' and 'the learning of the law and its implementation in the real world through action and reflection that has educational, public interest and employability

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benefits'. In the final chapter, Giddings approves of this inclusive definition which seeks to understand 'rather than exclude'. The book therefore traverses a broad range of CLE models and experiences, with interesting observations on reflective practice, community partnerships and supervision in CLE.

The topics covered in the book range from professional insights (specifically pertaining to the UK legal profession requirements) to interdisciplinary practices in clinical teaching, as well as social justice aspects of CLE. In addressing these topical issues, the book attempts to respond to the changing legal services market and higher education sector in England and Wales, and the opportunities and threats presented by those changes.

A brief summary of the chapters contained in the book follows below:

Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter setting out the background, history and role of CLE in law schools and legal practice and provides an overview of the topics covered in the book. In **Chapter 2** the authors set out the advantages of pro bono collaborations between universities and community organisations. **Chapter 3** deals with the mechanics of the CLOCK project, an innovative model for collaborative work between universities and the third sector; while **Chapter 4** proposes future partnerships and highlights advances in third sector funded CLE in the United Kingdom. In **Chapter 5** the authors consider the future of CLE in a changed professional environment; aptly followed by **Chapter 6**, which contains viewpoints on CLE by practitioners in legal practice. The connection between theory and practice-based learning is explored in **Chapter 7**; whilst **Chapter 8** reimagines the role of the teaching-practitioner in casework partnerships, pointing out the associated challenges of this role. This is followed by an exploration of the role and profile of the academic clinician in **Chapter 9**, raising the issue of the importance of CLE scholarship. **Chapter 10** offers an examination of the divisions that persist within the discipline between the practice of law and academia. This is followed by a student's perspective in **Chapter 11** on the scope and potential of postgraduate CLE Programs and her personal reflection on the experience. In **Chapter 12** the focus shifts to the USA for a different perspective on CLE; followed by trends in Continental Europe, explored in **Chapter 13**. Finally, an Australian perspective on CLE and commentary on preceding chapters is provided in **Chapter 14**.

In conclusion, the book provides interesting and diverse viewpoints on a number of contemporary issues in CLE. Although dealing with UK based clinical strategies and models, the final chapter by Giddings provides pertinent insight and relevance in relation to CLE in the Australian context.