

FOREWORD: TEACHING-RESEARCH NEXUS IN LAW

The nexus, or conflict, between teaching and research will resonate with many legal academics. The existence of a positive nexus cannot be assumed. Many of us have had to deal with conflict between our teaching commitments and our research, such as when a deadline for marking and a research submission clashes, or when we have to decide whether to prepare for a class or finish an article.

In 2013 the connection between teaching and research in law was the focus of a special edition of the *Legal Education Review*. This provided an opportunity for an in-depth consideration of the issues raised by the connection, which confirmed that there was a common, but not universal, individual and institutional perception that there is a conflict between teaching and research commitments. For example, Marina Nehme pointed to the culture in many universities that has historically valued and rewarded research at the expense of teaching.¹ Sarah Ailwood, Patricia Easteal, Maree Sainsbury and Lorana Bartels considered the positive contribution that research-led education ('RLE') could make and examined the ways RLE was used at the University of Canberra Law School.²

This special edition of the *Adelaide Law Review* continues the examination of the connection between teaching and research in law. The articles are drawn from a 2013 Symposium on the theme jointly presented by the Adelaide Law School, the *Legal Education Review*, and Bond University's Centre for Law, Governance and Public Policy. The articles are unified not only by the common focus on the nexus between teaching and research, but also by the positive approach that is taken to it. In each case the author explores a strategy to ensure a productive nexus between research and teaching.

In his article 'Let's Talk About Lex' Leon Wolff explores the utility of using narrative analysis to bridge the teaching-research divide. By integrating a research methodology into andragogical practice, Wolff's analysis presents an opportunity for creating a productive nexus between these two spheres of academic work even when the substantive legal content of teaching and research may differ. As a consequence,

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¹ Marina Nehme, 'The Nexus Between Teaching and Research: Easier Said Than Done' (2012)22 *Legal Education Review* 241, 246–7.

² Sarah Ailwood et al, 'Connecting Research and Teaching: A Case Study from the Law School, University of Canberra' (2013)(2) *Legal Education Review* 317,

his article offers a practical suggestion for those of us whose teaching and research are not in the same field. Wolff also convincingly argues that harnessing narrative analysis as a teaching-and-learning technique can be an effective tool to empower novice law students, and engage them in the diverse, challenging and complex legal world.

Molly Townes O'Brien takes a very different approach. She posits that teaching and research are complementary aspects of learning, and that if we 'take our students with us' on our research journeys both research and teaching will profit and prosper. This approach, of considering academics and students as being on a common quest for knowledge, creates hope that a positive and productive link between research and teaching can be developed.

In their article 'Bridging the Divides' James Arvanitakis and Ingrid Matthews take a multi-disciplinary approach to the problem of bringing research and teaching together. They begin by reconceptualising the traditional academic focus on teaching and research and suggest that community engagement is a necessary third leg to the tripod, which cannot and should not be neglected. Arvanitakis and Matthews go on to suggest that by applying 'design thinking' principles to each of these areas, academics facilitate the development of a positive and reciprocal relationship between teaching, research and community engagement which benefits their students, the community and the academic as well. Their analysis is informed by a case study of Arvanitakis' own prize-winning work involving young people and civic engagement.

We recognise that the challenges to maintaining a balance between teaching and research, and, indeed, to the very assumption that all academics should engage in both teaching and research, remain valid and real. However, we have found these articles both informative and inspiring. We hope other academics in Australia and internationally who face these challenges can also draw encouragement from these innovative ideas and approaches.