

Editorial

Although the popularity of comparative and international labour law coursework continues to grow both in schools of law and industrial relations, the academic literature on teaching the subject is sparse. Indeed, to our knowledge, this is the first publication of a group of essays considering the pedagogy of global workplace law. The papers in this issue on the pedagogy of comparative and international labour law grew out of presentations at a conference, “The Global Workplace: Expanding Intellectual Borders with International and Comparative Workplace Law”, held at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, in San Diego, California, in February 2008. That event, sponsored by Thomas Jefferson School of Law, Seton Hall University School of Law and the Paul M. Hebert Law Center at Louisiana State University School, featured a panel titled “Teaching Beyond Our Borders”, which highlighted the instructional techniques available to promote creative, transnational thinking among labour law students. This issue of the *Journal* seeks to preserve and expand the conversation which began at the conference. As Guest Editors we wish to extend our gratitude to the Editors of the *Journal* for agreeing to host this thematic issue.

In the opening paper Timothy Glynn examines how the study of comparative and international employment law can enable students not just to acquire an understanding of other legal systems, but also to bridge the gap between employment law and other regulatory provisions, particularly in corporate law. In this way students are encouraged to reconsider the legal relations between stakeholders in the firm, particularly workers, managers, and investors.

The contribution by Ruben Garcia, on the other hand, focuses on the role of the lawyer as counsellor and problem solver, rather than just as litigator, and the paper considers how the principles of preventive law can be applied to the teaching of international labour and employment law. Ethical issues are a central concern in this study, particularly when the author asks whether in an age of financial scandals it is sufficient for lawyers to simply sign off on actions that, though legal, are morally or financially questionable, underlining the importance of the ethical dimension of legal education.

Michael Zimmer’s paper also places the accent on lawyers behaving in an ethical, professionally responsible and culturally sensitive manner, both in the way they view their own country’s laws and those of other nations. Given the increasing transnationalisation of labour law practice, he highlights the need for the workplace law regimes of individual nations to be seen in relation to the provisions of the International Labour

Organisation and, where applicable, regional structures such as the EU and the NAFTA labour side accord.

The paper by Susan Bisom-Rapp reflects on pedagogic issues relating to an experience in teaching international and comparative workplace law to students as part of a Study Abroad in China Program, which presented a number of challenges, including language difficulties faced by the Chinese students on the program, methodological and cultural issues, since legal education in China is lecture-based rather than interactive, and finally political issues, relating to Chinese and American foreign policy and workplace conditions.

Rafael Gely's paper deals with a topic that is rarely addressed: the role of workplace songs in the employer-employee relationship, with suggestions about how to incorporate workplace songs as a topic of discussion in industrial relations courses. Music, as employed in Gely's classroom, connects students to the distinctive workplace cultures of the national jurisdictions studied.

Finally, in an applied linguistics perspective, the paper by William Bromwich examines the difficult process of acquiring proficiency in academic writing. The role of double-blind peer review is examined, with excerpts from referee reports used to cast light on the key principles of academic discourse in comparative labour law and industrial relations, with a view to helping new researchers in the discipline.

These diverse yet interrelated papers take seriously the task of educating the next generation of professionals in the discipline. It is our hope that this thematic issue on pedagogy represents a collective contribution to that end.

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