Experiments with research integration in teaching
- *Artificial Intelligence and Legal Disruption*

Name
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Course Name
Artificial Intelligence and Legal Disruption Course code JJUA55235U
Study Board
Law.
Level and class size
Master's. The entire class (22)
Description of the experiment
Originally, the proposed idea was to try to see how to bring AI-LeD approaches to the undergraduate level. This was based on earlier student feedback indicating that exposure to this way of thinking would have been much more beneficial earlier in their education. Unfortunately, reaching the bachelor cohort proved next to impossible (because of language requirements and the rigidity of the system based on mandatory courses mainly). I tried reaching out to student associations, got some way with Foreningen Argument, but ultimately these initiatives have also failed. *I took a radically different course of action, and sought to cultivate my existing students into researchers. It's difficult to say what I did since most of it was soft-touch and extra support and encouragement (often times, Master's students are capable of producing work of publishable quality, but they are not aware of this and their teachers do nothing to guide them). I laid bare my research processes, and was candid about failures and reasons why in my papers that were part of the course readings. We discussed each other's ideas openly and thoroughly and fostered a strong community in the course, and I showed them that their predecessors had published their papers before (in a Special Issue of Retskraft (available at: https://www.retskraft.dk/udgivelser). This is what the website has to say about the Special Issue:* *'The Spring 2021 issue of Retskraft is out now. This issue is a Special Issue concerning Artificial Intelligence and Legal Disruption created in collaboration with Dr. Hin-Yan Liu of the "Artificial Intelligence and Legal Disruption" master's elective at the Faculty of Law at the University of Copenhagen.* *The issue contains five articles, which, despite the common topic of artificial intelligence and legal disruption, span a wide range of issues:* *Robbe van Rossem uses the issues that arise when proxies for protected characteristics exist in the datasets used by AI, to critically examine the limits of discrimination law.* *Karen M. Richmond uses the history of national litigation concerning probabilistic genotyping in DNA analysis to examine questions of opacity that might arise in the use of forensic artificial intelligence, with a focus on these questions as they relate to international criminal justice.* *Laure Helene Prevignano examines how the use of artificial intelligence might blur the public/private law distinction central to most legal systems.* *Anna Kirby examines how artificial intelligence will affect the field of international diplomatic law.*

Caroline Serbanescu examines whether manipulation enabled by artificial intelligence will disrupt, and therefore threaten, the concept of democracy'.

My main objective was then to see whether I can keep this as an ongoing and recurring feature rather than a one-off. I toyed with several ideas, but landed on starting a student law review with former students, publishing primarily the work that they collectively produce. This gives them experience of both sides of the editorial process, which is obviously a key aspect of research-related activities.

Since this initiative was started only at the end of January, we are still at the drawing board. We have six former students willing to put in the extra time and energy into setting this up and getting it off the ground. The journal will be called 'Legal Disruption!' and adopt a counter-cultural/punk approach to legal scholarship, and will focus on reviewing, revising and publishing the first round of student work (coming primarily from the course) in the coming months. This sort of thing takes a while to start up and get established, but once it gets running they do tend to last (I ran the [King's Student Law Review](#) when I was a student and it's still going strong).

Outcome for the students

The outcome for students has been a very high proportion of 12s – one student wrote in saying that 42% 12s must be a first for the Faculty. In reality, the grade distribution is bimodal: those who participate fully and get immersed in the research integration got good scores; but there were those who took minimal interest and undertook minimal work, and those got the lowest grades.

The best students get a chance to publish their work and to be involved backstage in the editorial process, as student law reviews have always done. The fundamental difference here with 'Legal Disruption!' is that this is unlike any law review or journal that I have come across since it serves a very counter-cultural and counter-disciplinary function. This actually gives students a very different perspective, which is also important for research (to not just perpetuate orthodoxy). It's hard to describe without going into an article-length piece on it, but I will be happy to provide more information if you need it.

Outcome for the research

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Interaction between teaching, research and exams

The exams have always been a self-directed and executed research paper, and there have always been papers of publishable quality in each class. In that sense, only the proportion has changed. It could be that, with the possibility of writing something that could be published more students put in the effort. Or it could be that treating them as a group who could produce publishable material and guiding them according changed things. Or it could be something completely random or an association that I do not fathom. But yes, it seems as though things are working well and fitting together.

Adapting of the experiment

I have addressed this above, in realising that integration with the bachelor level studies was futile, and to go the other way instead.

Strengths and weaknesses

This was not an experiment in that I had no control group, no independent variables, nothing of the scientific method. I would actually say that this is more artistic tinkering, having a feel for what would work in a given situation, of trying and failing and testing out certain intuitions. A lot of tacit experience, not a lot of rational deliberation.

I have no idea if what I am doing actually makes a difference as a result. The students seem very satisfied with the course, and the outcomes look very good. But maybe the best students are

drawn to the course anyway, such that doing nothing would still result in satisfied students and good-looking outcomes. It's impossible to say…

Experienced challenges
None really! Except maybe the class splits into two groups (this has always happened). One group of students I don't see in class after the few sessions, and I assume these do poorly in the assignment. The other group are there religiously, participating with fervour and immersed in the process. I assume that these are my strongest performing students.
The most important experience
I don't know if any of this is broadly transferrable, at least within Law. The trouble is that Law is a professional course of study, and as such, there needs to be imparted a certain body of knowledge which must be somehow certifiable. Research-orientated thinking of the sort that I cultivate here does not, and can not, fit with those sorts of course goals since too much out-of-the-box thinking does not fit with the stated aims of mastering legal doctrine within a given legal area.
Will the experiment be conducted again?
My aim is to establish 'Legal Disruption!', and to staff it with a changing roster of former students in the course. Former students' work will populate and lead the journal, and former students will do the review and editorial work. So it will be an ongoing and significant commitment that we (myself included) will make, and so it will be a permanent fixture for the course into the future. *I am not sure if, or whether, course credit should be given for participation, or if it should remain a voluntary endeavour. I think it should remain voluntary, and thus educational in the purest sense of the word. There should be no ulterior motives for participating in the research processes to do with the journal.*