
**THE POTENTIAL OF CAPSTONE LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN ADDRESSING
PERCEIVED SHORTCOMINGS IN LLB TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA****G Quinot*****SP van Tonder******SUMMARY**

Current debates about legal education in South Africa have revealed the perception that the LLB curriculum does not adequately integrate various outcomes, in particular outcomes relating to the development of skills in communication, problem solving, ethics, and in general a holistic view of the law in practice. One mechanism that has been mooted as a potential remedy to this situation is capstone courses, which will consolidate and integrate the four years of study in the final year and build a bridge to the world of practice. A literature review on capstone courses and learning experiences (collectively referred to as capstones) indicates that these curriculum devices as modes of instruction offer particular pedagogical advantages. These include inculcating a strong perception of coherence across the curriculum and hence discipline in students, providing the opportunity for students to reflect on their learning during the course of the entire programme, creating an opportunity to engage with the complexity of law and legal practice, and guiding students through the transition from university to professional identity. An empirical analysis of the modes of instruction used in LLB curricula at 13 South African law faculties/schools indicates that there are six categories of existing modules or learning experiences that already exhibit elements of capstone-course design. These are clinics, internships, moots, research projects, topical capstones and capstone assessment. A further comparative study into foreign law curricula in especially Australia and the United States of America reveals four further noteworthy approaches to capstone-course design, namely problem-based learning, the virtual office, conferences and remedies courses. The empirical study suggests that capstones indeed hold the potential as learning experiences to address some of the challenges facing legal

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education in South Africa but that further development of this curriculum-design element is required.

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