

An Interdisciplinary Approach to
Advocacy Teaching

Kevin Crawley

*Senior Law Lecturer & Programme Leader of the
BPTC ~ Northumbria University*

Barrister ~ Trinity Chambers, Newcastle upon Tyne

May 2014

What is it?

- Using students and professionals of other appropriate disciplines, acting as witnesses, to aid in the development of advocacy skills.
- Providing exposure to students and professionals of other appropriate disciplines to court proceedings.

A Simple Idea

- How to enhance the student experience?
 - Approaches from others!
- Initiatives from within the Bar Teaching Team

Enhancing the Student Experience

Institutional obsession with the '*student experience*' taken as a given!

- Giving students the opportunity to practice advocacy outside the formal teaching and assessment structure of the Bar Course.
- Expanding student experience of professional and expert witnesses

Positives

- *Enthusiasm and engagement levels are high throughout the process.*
- *The quality of the advocacy has been good to outstanding.*
- *Positive reporting from students involved.*

Positives

- *Students do report feeling more confident about advocacy following such exercises.*
- *Allows a degree of freedom for students to develop their own style of advocacy.*
- *Students' self-analysis of their advocacy appears to be more detailed and incisive than during more formal teaching.*

Positives

- *Students gain an insight into an area of practice which they may not cover through their formal studies.*
- *The feedback from the academics and students from the other disciplines is very positive*

Concerns

- *Are students more inclined to pick up/perpetuate bad habits in a non-formalised/non-assessed advocacy exercise?*
- *Is reflection on good and poor advocacy more limited than in more formal teaching?*
- *Limited ability to correct mistakes during the process.*

Concerns

- *Compatibility with other more formalised teaching methods, Hampel for example?*
- *Are those who volunteer the ones who would be good in any event?*

Case Studies

- *Forensic Science Students.*
- *Social Work Students and newly qualified social workers.*

Future Plans

- Evaluation.
- Continuing with what we have started.
- Adding to and varying the types of ‘experts.
- Formally contributing to the undergraduate/post graduate social worker training programmes within Northumbria.