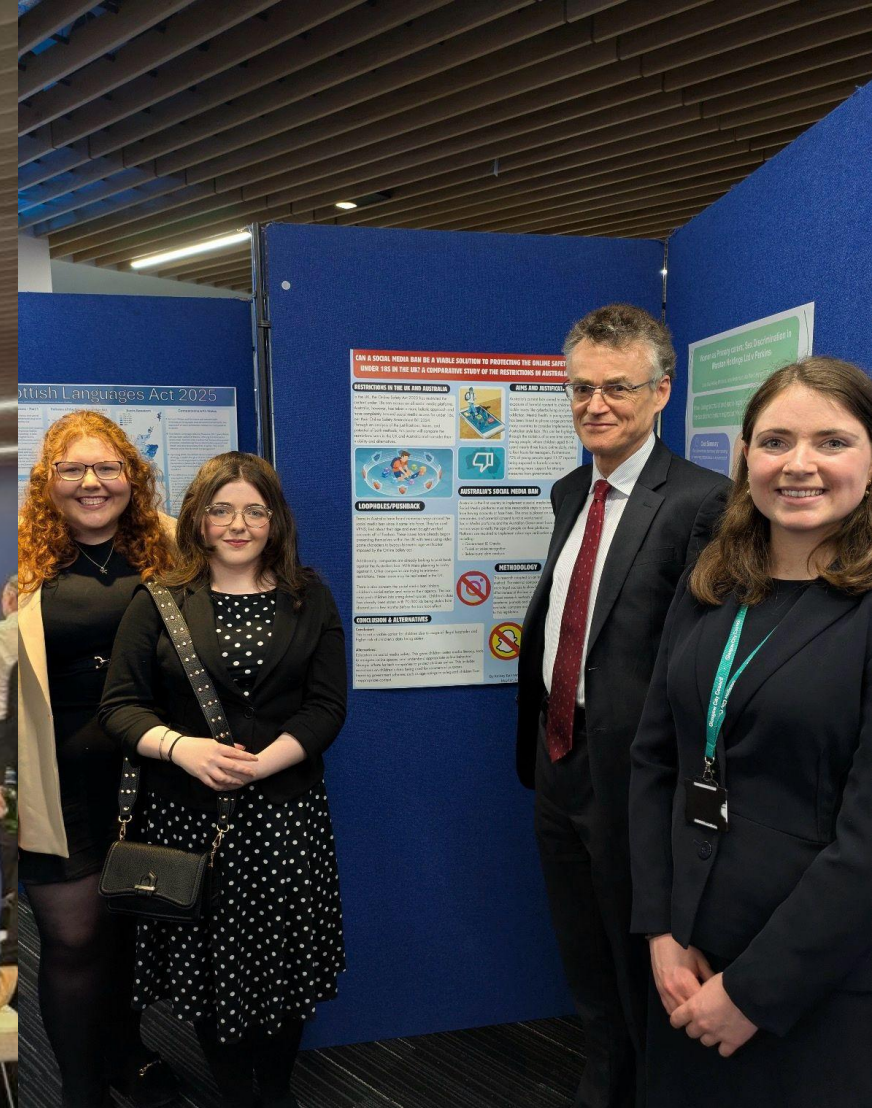




Implementing Reflective Practice in Legal Education: Designing the Third Year Reflective Report Module in the Strathclyde LLB Curriculum



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A (Modified) Exercise From the Module

- You have some stickers and some colour markers
- During the presentation, you have (approx.) 15-20 minutes to sketch a out a poster on a case that is familiar to you
- This should be accessible to a non-expert audience
- What information are you including, or excluding?
- Why have you presented the information in the way you have?



Aims and a Caveat



To outline what the reflective report entails



To convey the early development of a compulsory reflective report as part of the Strathclyde Law LLB



To highlight some initial reflections and seek support on what comes next



Caveat: Explaining decisions taken to develop the module is not criticism of work of colleagues

Background

- Law School introduced a new curriculum in September 2023
- Adds in compulsory element in 3rd year – M7301 Third Year Reflective Project
- Mixture of lectures and workshop groups
- 2024-25: Approx. 25 Grad Entry Students – 1 x workshop group
- 2025-26: 137 Students – 5 x workshop groups
- 2026-27: 200+ Students
- Students work to develop contemporary legal research posters and present them
- Also write a 1,500 reflective report on the experience



Why does this matter?

- Curriculum review identified a need to:
 - Assist transition to honours
 - Improve student knowledge and awareness of research methods and ethics issues
 - Introduce an opportunity for creativity and flexibility
 - Give opportunities for experiential learning for all students
 - GE Students/non-honours student recognition of skills developed

“This project aims to encourage independent learning by allowing the student space to design their own project on a matter of legal import that interests them: it is not tied to any particular area of law, legal practice or legal study. It seeks to ease the transition from years 1-3 to year 4, which we have long recognised as being unhelpfully steep for most students. The Honours Dissertation is especially challenging for LLB students as it counts for one third of the overall honours classification and yet is the first experience most students have in designing and implementing their own course of study. The Third Year Reflective Project will give them some experience in doing so, in a context with far lower stakes. The “reflective” element of the project will tie in with another overall theme of the LLB Curriculum Review Report: developing an awareness of the ethical dimensions of legal issues. And its flexibility of content is designed to further our “inclusivity” agenda by allowing students to design a project that best suits their own methods of study.”

Sustainability and the Need to Change

Excerpt from minutes of a special law school meeting September 2021

“5.3 M Randall liked the sentiment of making the transition between 3rd and 4th year, but thought the project sounded like a free for all. We would need more guidance on what students can and cannot do. He was disappointed that the report had little on Graduate Entry students. A wider range of electives would help. He was also disappointed that the current third year electives are described in the report in a way that undervalued them. We could tap into placement and entrepreneurship across the University. [Person A] responded by accepting the danger that the project becomes a free for all. We will be finding our own way with this new project – a co-ordinator will build up experience and learn what is misguided or not possible.”

- Concerns around effective comparative moderation and review for listed options
- Different student circumstances mean unequal opportunities in picking reflection
- “Subject expert” – unpredictable workload demand and possibly high-demand for one subject/omission of others
- “Worth of the project” – can be slightly subjective

MICHAEL

JANE

**LEGAL EDUCATION
PEDAGOGY/DESIGN/
ASSESSMENT**

**3RD YEAR
REFLECTIVE
REPORT**

**RESEARCH METHODS
AND ANALYSIS**

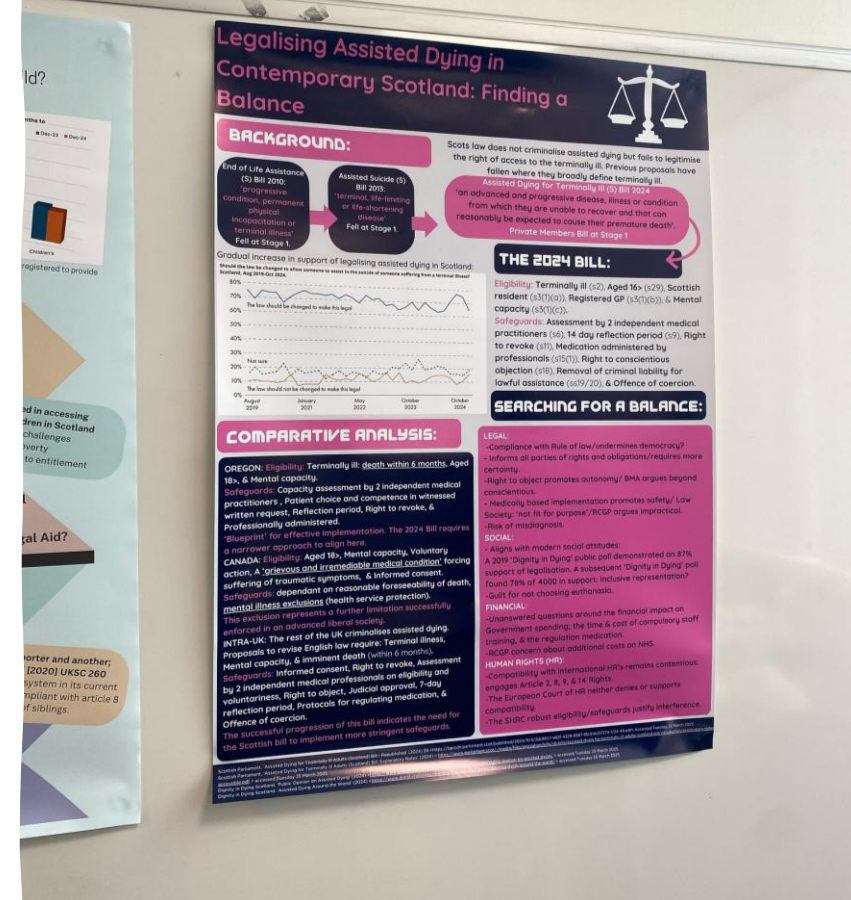
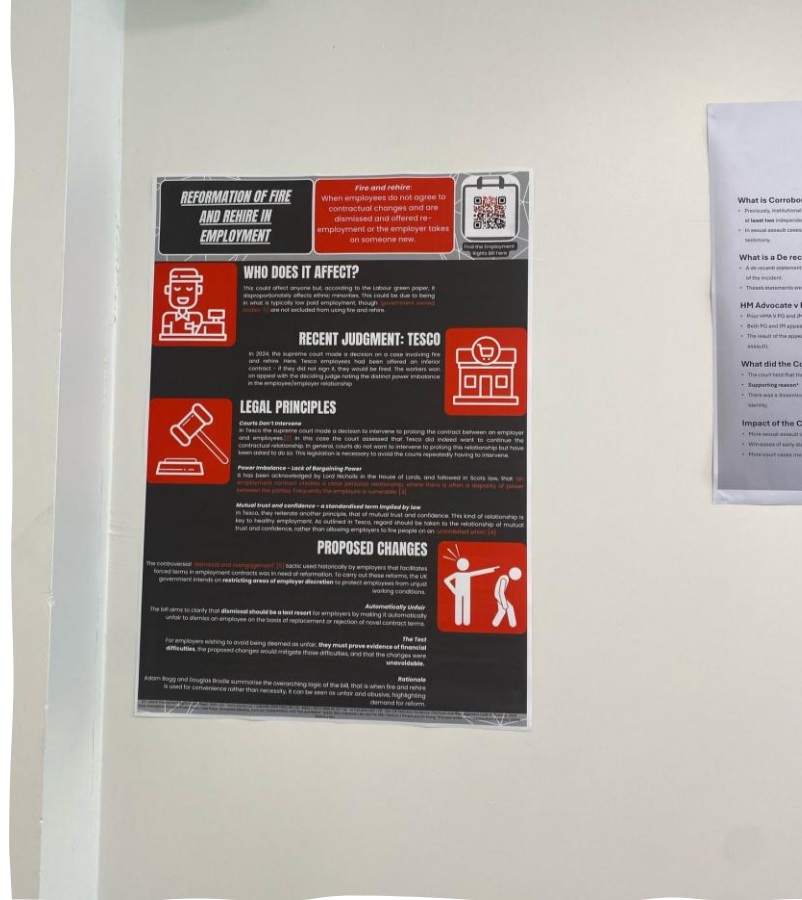


Current Class Schedule

Week Number	Session	Session Lead
0	Intro	Michael/Jane
1	Identifying Research Areas & Reflective Writing	Michael
2	Research Methods	Jane
3	Workshop 1 – Group selection, sample poster critique and initial discussion of ideas	All
5	Workshop 2 – Initial feedback on ideas, group working, and progress	All
8	Workshop 3 – Feedback on developed ideas, methodology, and progress	All
11	Poster Presentation	All (in pairs)

2024-25 Differences:

- 4 x Workshops
- Workshops 1 & 2 Michael only; Workshops 3 and 4 Jane only



Poster Assessment

- Our 'Great British Bake Off' moment of asking students to explain their work
- Structured as informal chat leading into presentation (approx. 10 minutes)
- Some initial feedback given on the poster (things we liked, possible adjustments)
- Some accessibility adjustments were required at short notice
- 2025-26: returning leads were paired with new workshop staff for the presentation/Q&A

Initial Student Responses

2024-25

- Cohort understanding and fair in review/assessment
- Clinical students indicated repetition of assessment
- Students largely not progressing to honours

2025-26

- Mixed – some responses indicated a misunderstanding of elements of assessment
- Volume of guidance/materials didn't suit all students
- Disconnect between some module comments and the reflections on methodologies
- Scaling up means majority of comms directed to students progressing to honours – Graduate Entry cohort saw limited value
- Some students viewed the Workshop 1 sticker/marker pens exercise negatively
- Some encouraging comments on value/preparation and evolution in students understanding their roles in group work

Further Considerations and Opportunities for Development

- Lack of available prior examples and 2024-25 submissions not provided
- Group work = Personal circumstances, uneven workload etc.
- Facilitating reasonable adjustments (e.g. group work, deaf, visually impaired)
- Guidance on poster development and available software
- Printing costs – posters initially projected for 2025-26 Q&A
- Finding feet on specific instructions of what to reflect on
- 2024-25 experience led to development of reflective marking guidance for 2025-26
- Scaling up with new staff on the module and workload for reflective marking
- Communication of rationale to students (particularly GE)
- What do we do if a student consciously tells us that they didn't gain from the module?
- Introducing required action tracker for group work?
- Introducing right to re-submit and reassess poster in short time frame?
- Potentially shift to including poster Q&A in assessment?

thanks