

Rethinking Public Law in the Block

Matt Harvey¹ and Tristan Galloway¹

¹*Victoria Law School, Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia*

The block model's intensive nature is beneficial, but increases the complexity of implementing best teaching practice and effectively covering required curriculum. Intensive, complex learning environments may negatively affect student workload and wellbeing, a particular concern in tertiary legal education. To address this, we have redeveloped block model units in constitutional and administrative law to encourage strategic learning. Strategic learning is a learning style involving effort regulation, self-aware learning, and extrinsic motivation. Evidence demonstrates it is consistent with achieving high-level understanding and facilitates the ideal goals of intrinsically motivated deep learning and lifelong learning. Crucially, its emphasis on effort regulation and metacognition addresses complexity challenges inherent in intensive legal studies. This paper presents our model of strategic learning in unit design, and its application to our two law units. Our model adapts the constructive alignment model, focusing on minimal appropriate levels of understanding and minimal curricular scope in setting learning outcomes, and similarly emphasising effort regulation alongside metacognitive skill development in teaching and learning activities. Ultimately, we aim to assess our model's impact on surface or deep learning rates, using before-after SPQ-2F surveys of students undertaking our existing and redesigned block model units.