

Legal education and technology in Egypt in an era of globalization

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Abstract

Legal education is a necessary step for people working within the legal profession such as training lawyers, judges, prosecutors and other judicial personnel.

For the last years, legal education in the world has been fundamentally unchanged, even while the practice of law has been revolutionized by information technology. And although law offices, most courthouses and some courtrooms, all, are shifting to the use of technology but until now, there has been little effort to contextualize the importance of technology for law students.

For so the use of technology in law practice at Egyptian law schools should be one of the main elements for legal education reform.

Legal education in Egypt

Cairo law school was founded in 1868. Before joining the Egyptian University in 1925, the school was called the School of Management and languages, and later it separated, and has been known by this name until a decision to be named a Law School in 1925, with 980 students in the whole level of study.

The total number of college students in the academic year 2005/2006 was more than thirty-five thousands students in bachelor and postgraduate studies.

With the huge number of students, it is very clear that there is an absence of one of the most important element of modern education “the use of technology”.

On the other hand, Generally speaking, legal institutions can divide into two essential sorts. Public (governmental) university established officially by the government for

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legal research and legal educational purposes such as Alexandria and Cairo Universities. A new public university can be established within a decision issued by the President of the Republic based on a proposal from the Minister of Supreme (High) Education. The second sort is the private university which is set up for profit as the first goal beside the educational.²

With the exception of a small number of private institutions, and despite an elite standing in legal education in decades past, the system of legal education in Egypt appears to be in crisis. The admissions policy for public Egyptian law schools is clearly problematic.

The Egyptian Government has provided free higher education to all Egyptians who possess a secondary certificate. With the increase in population, the number of students admitted to public Egyptian universities has likewise increased. In the 1960s, Alexandria University's College of Law admitted approximately 300 students. This number increased to approximately 7,000 by 1997. Now, up to 38, 000 students are enrolled at the Cairo University law faculty at any one time, and it sometimes takes seven to ten years to complete a law degree. Class sizes reach 6,000-7,000 students, with an average of 5,000 students per graduating class.³

On the other hand, Cairo law school opened two new sections to study law in foreign languages, students have the option to study law and most legal courses either in English or French language. These sections have been created recently since 1999. According to the same law school policy, the internal regulation provides "that the law school contains the following main curriculum: (a) Islamic law (Islamic jurisprudence); (b) civil law (contracts, torts, employment law, family law from Muslims and Non-Muslims, insurance law); (c) commercial law (business law, maritime law, aviation law, and corporations); (d) procedural law; (e) criminal law and procedures; (f) public law (constitutional and administrative laws); (g) public

² Dr.Mohamed Serag, Legal education in Egypt. American university in Cairo,2002

³ Justice at a Crossroads: The Legal Profession and the Rule of Law in ,the New Egypt November 2011 Report of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) Supported by the Open Society Institute This report has been compiled in accordance with the Lund-London Guidelines 2009 (www.factfindingguidelines.org)

international law; (h) private international law and law and economics (financial and tax laws). By the same token, the law school grants the Bachelor (“LL.B.”) degree in law, graduate diploma, Masters (“LL.M.”) and doctoral (“Ph.D.”) degrees in law.⁴

Legal education and technology worldwide

In the era of technology and globalization, legal education should use technology tools to keep updated to all progress happened in education field and to prepare students to 21 century legal field.

Just as technology has revolutionized the way law is practiced, it increasingly has found its way into legal education in a variety of ways. This digital revolution in the way law is taught has engendered a large body of scholarship.

In his article Legal education and technology Professor Pearl Goldman wrote:

“Technology has revolutionized the way law is practiced and thus, by necessity, the way it is taught and learned. Increasingly, legal educators have determined that proficiency in information and communication technologies is one of the essential lawyering skills required to prepare students for law practice.”

Legal Education and Technology: An Annotated Bibliography, Pearl Goldman, 2001⁵

To help legal educators locate materials that inform and enrich their teaching, Professor Goldman offers an annotated bibliography of articles that examine the impact of computer technology on law schools and legal education.⁶

In a collective work an article wrote by **DEBORAH J. MERRITT** called “**LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND ADVANCED CLASSROOM**

⁴ Arafa, Mohamed A.; Attia, Islam; Bastaweesy, Ahmad K.; Salama, Hassan; Arab world’s verdict on legal education: The Egyptian case between status quo, assessment, and some hope (October, 2015); Journal of Social Sciences (COES&RJ-JSS), Vol.4, No.4, pp: 9641005.

⁵ Full article *Legal Education and Technology: An Annotated Bibliography, Pearl Goldman, 2001*, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d322/c14ee561181f0bba9b4105088db3ead55d23.pdf>

⁶ © Pearl Goldman, 2001. Associate Professor of Law and Director of First-Year Lawyering Skills and Values Program, Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The author expresses gratitude to Sarah Tabor for her tireless interlibrary loan efforts

TECHNOLOGY” she wrote about the principles of education and the future of legal education with special regard to the use of technology.

She also wrote: “Change is the new constant in legal education. As law practice, global culture, and the economy shift, law schools struggle to keep pace. But two advances can help professors cope with these challenges. Cognitive scientists have uncovered fundamental principles about how the brain works, allowing faculty to teach, learn, and communicate better than ever before. Emerging classroom technologies, meanwhile, have provided new tools to implement those insights. By drawing upon the discoveries of cognitive science and exploring the potential of new technologies, law professors can enrich their teaching and enhance the intellectual assets that graduates take with them into the workplace.”

In a report issued by Carnegie Foundation in 2007, called “Best Practices for Legal Education, Robert Mac Crate, wrote *“Over the past 25 years, I have been privileged actively to participate in a rich dialogue, among law teachers, lawyers, and judges, regarding the education of lawyers. This report, Best Practices for Legal Education, is a fruit of that dialogue. It was authored by a group, aptly described by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching as “a far-flung network of legal educators.”* The Carnegie Foundation in its own contemporaneous report, Educating Lawyers, views this time as an “historic opportunity to advance legal education,” which it surely is following the dialogue we have had during the past 25 years.

At the end of the report which is of 213 pages, the conclusion came with a title “The Road Ahead” and with a plan for legal education in USA as it was mentioned “**This document contains proposed solutions to many of the problems with legal education in the United States. Three principles of best practices are particularly important:**

1. The school is committed to preparing its students to practice law effectively and responsibly in the contexts they are likely to encounter as new lawyers.

2. The school clearly articulates its educational goals.

⁷ DEBORAH J. MERRITT, LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE AGE OF COGNITIVE SCIENCE AND ADVANCED CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY

3. The school regularly evaluates the program of instruction to determine if it is effective in preparing students for the practice of law.”⁸

Conclusion: The future of legal education in Egypt,

Legal education in Egypt should follow all developments in legal field in an era of globalization.

In seeking a legal system that is sensitive and responsive to the needs of Egypt, the legal training institutions have to reconsider the structure and content of the curricula for legal education in Egypt.

There are many areas for reform, including legal clinics, increased course offerings, and others but the use of technology must be on the top of these areas.

By affording modern technological abilities (libraries and computer labs) to facilitate the study and research process and to accelerate the mutual connection between the various parties to the legal educational process.

Also e-learning should be considered in all law school as a new tool to facilitate the study and research among undergraduate and postgraduate students.

⁸ Best Practices for Legal Education / by Roy Stuckey and Others, University Publications, University of South Carolina 2007.
http://www.cleaweb.org/Resources/Documents/best_practices-full.pdf