

# TRANSITION FROM LEGAL EDUCATION TO PRACTICE: EXTRA-CURRICULAR COMPETITIONS OFFER THE MISSING LINK

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## ABSTRACT

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many law graduates complete university with a notable lack of practical lawyering skills. Practical lawyering skills are vital to performing effectively in the profession. They include oral communication skills, dispute resolution and problem-solving skills. The present research study hypothesised that extra-curricular legal competitions such as mooting and client interviews would provide students with the opportunity to develop and refine these practical skills. 266 LLB students at Macquarie University completed self-report online questionnaires. These questionnaires were completed at three time points across a semester, tracking the students' skill development. A case study focusing on 54 students who completed all three questionnaires was also assessed. Overall, the students who participated in a legal competition reported a significantly higher improvement in their perceived skills than the control group, whose members did not compete but were also enrolled in an LLB course. Consequences of the findings for current educational practice and limitations of the study are considered.