**Comenius University / International Journal of Clinical Legal Education Conference**

**ENCLE - IJCLE 2019 Improving the Future: Using Clinical Legal Education to Educate Lawyers for a Just Society**

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| Title of Proposal | Transformative learning in legal education |
| Summary of Proposal | This presentation illustrates the empirical research conducted within the framework of my master dissertation. Since clinical legal education is well-researched in regards to experiential learning, it was decided to conduct a study aiming to explore to what extent transformative learning is happening through clinical legal education. Taking into consideration the concept of transformative learning, that is mainly presented within the adult education area, and the clinical legal education practice, relevant research methodology was chosen and applied. Overall findings proved that not only experiential learning approach can be implemented successfully into clinical legal education but also transformative approach. |
| Abstract Proposal | With academic and professional legal experience under my belt and with two research placement experiences in legal clinics in Glasgow and Malta as part of the International Master in Adult Education for Social Change, where I explored the experiential and transformative learning in the form of clinical legal education, in 2018 I decided to choose transformative learning in legal education as the topic for the empirical study conducted within the framework of my master dissertation. The main aim of the research was to explore to what extent transformative learning is happening through clinical legal education, in particular at the University of Strathclyde Mediation Clinic (Glasgow, UK). The study applied a qualitative research methodology consisting of eight structured one-to-one interviews with students and two observations of mediation sessions where students take an active part.  This study demonstrated the active use of transformative learning and its particular elements within the Mediation Clinic. The findings provided a reach source of information on mostly positive students' perceptions of the learning happening in the Mediation Clinic and the positive impacts it brings. The Clinic, while serving as a continuation of the learning obtained in the classroom, helped students to put theory into practice. Challenging mediation experiences students went through played a significant role in the learning process, by facilitating new conclusions, in regards to mediation procedure, reached by students. The Clinic's staff played a crucial role in the learning process by being supportive and helpful and by providing enough opportunity to students' reflection that, according to Santalucia & Johnson (2010), are necessary prerequisites of the transformative learning approach. The involvement in the Mediation Clinic work had various positive impacts on students, that are in line with the transformative learning objectives, as such changed students’ understanding of a study subject (that is a mediation); reinforced attitudes and beliefs; developed certain student's skills; supported students in taking actions to their everyday life or workplace.  This research proved that not only experiential learning approach can be implemented actively and successfully into clinical legal education but also transformative approach. However, any challenging circumstances perceived by the students, which accompanied the learning process, should be escalated, as the transformative learning reaches its greatest goal, that according to Mezirow (2003, as cited in Babacan & Babacan, 2015, p. 172) is a deep transformation of personal values and attitudes only with a comfortable learning environment provided to students. |