Community Legal Education Methods & Strategies

The strategies for the design and delivery of CLE are limited only by the imagination and resourcefulness of the CLE provider.

A range of CLE methods and approaches are listed in this Information Sheet. This is a far from exhaustive list – but it should get your creative juices flowing!

Each method has its advantages and limitations, and its use should be considered in the context of the matters addressed in previous information sheets – objectives, needs assessment, target group, adult learning principles and resources.

Whether the activity is once-off, will be repeated with a number of groups or if it is ongoing may also influence the choice of methods and strategies.

Tip!

Avoid duplication of CLE tools and products

Before proceeding with a new CLE activity, program or publication, check whether another centre or organisation has developed something similar to what you are proposing. It is likely that you will find a resource that can be used directly, that you can adapt or build on.

With limited CLE funding and resources available, it is preferable that these be expended on improving what has already been produced and on new initiatives rather than on 'reinventing the wheel'.

The following organisations, groups and websites are a good place to start:
- Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc.
- Secretariat/Community Development and Legal Education Working Group;
- National Association of Community Legal Centres – National Office/National CLE Network
- Victoria Law Foundation – *Victoria Law* website
- Victorian Legal Assistance Forum – Publication and CLE Working Group
- Victoria Legal Aid – Community Legal Education section.

Talks & Lectures

- can be appropriate where there is a large group or a limited amount of time;
- keep length of talk to a minimum;
- what is said in the first and last few minutes is likely to be what is remembered – outline and summarise key points;
- use power point slides, overheads or handouts to signpost key points;
- use examples and case studies to illustrate points and maintain interest;

- think carefully about the use of questions – asking questions can engage the audience and check understanding, accepting questions can enable clarification, but too many questions can disrupt flow of the information and distract from key points;
- presentation style is critical; and
- do not necessarily require much equipment or many materials.

Workshops

- enable information to be presented and then applied by participants;
- enable active participation and contribution;
- generally incorporate a range of education/training strategies;
- work well with medium sized groups;
- facilitators must be skilled – confident with using a range of delivery methods, able to engage and involve participants, able to maintain momentum and to demonstrate relevance of activities and outcomes; and
- space may be a consideration, for example, a larger area may be needed if activities include group work or role plays.

Education and training activities that may be incorporated into workshops include:
- role plays;
- discussion;
- case studies, stories & examples;
- brainstorming;
- problem solving exercises;
- debates;
- games – ice breakers, structured learning activities;
- demonstration;
- questions;
- interviews;
- group work;
- mind-mapping;
- fish bowl exercise; and
- handouts.

Do-It-Yourself Classes

- usually a structured workshop focussed on assisting participants to complete a specific task or obtain specific knowledge – for example, Do Your Own Divorce classes, Self Representation at VCAT workshops; and
- participants are likely to attend because they have a specific legal issue. They may be hoping to obtain legal advice and assistance beyond that addressed in the CLE activity. Being clear about boundaries and about the level of assistance that can be provided will be important.

Forums & Panel Discussions

- offer the opportunity for input from a range of people and perspectives;
- careful planning is required in selecting presenters, and to ensure that presenters/panel members are properly briefed about the purpose of the activity, their anticipated contribution and the parameters of their role;
- must be moderated/chaired well to ensure that focus is maintained and that the activity is not dominated by particular people; and

• forums may be structured to allow audience questions and participation.

Games

• can help people relax and get to know each other;
• encourage active participation, can be fun and create energy within a group;
• can simulate situations in which problem solving and decision making are required, or where participants 'step into the shoes' of others;
• must be very well designed to ensure that relevance to topic is demonstrated and that an engaging experience is provided;
• not everyone feels comfortable playing games or people may feel that they are wasting their time; and
• can go on for too long and lose focus if not properly designed/managed.

Stalls and Displays

Visual displays:
• likely to be informative rather than educative;
• can attract attention and interest;
• once set up may not require ongoing staffing;
• CLE materials can be left for collection by interested people; and
• standard and quality of presentation may impact upon perceptions of the organisation.

Stalls:
• enable the centre to have a presence at broader activities such as community festivals and student expos;
• often the focus is on interacting with people and on distributing CLE materials rather than on delivering CLE activities; and
• staff will usually be required and they will need to be active in engaging passers by.

Community/Street Theatre/Mock Court Hearings

• innovative and exciting when done well;
• novel approach may attract more interest than more traditional methods of delivering CLE;
• can be an engaging and non-threatening way to deliver CLE;
• potential for audience interaction and involvement;
• may enable the audience to 'put themselves in other people's shoes';
• specialist writing, production, design, acting and other skills may be required;
• potential to be resource intensive and time consuming;
• may have a special event (Law Week) or short term focus as it can be challenging to attract and maintain resources, access to facilities, availability of actors, etc. over a longer period; and
• may be difficult to evaluate outcomes in terms of CLE related knowledge and skills.

Case Study

Eastern Community Legal Centre identified a need to provide accessible education about human rights that was connected to the everyday lives of young people. The centre chose sport – the principles of fair play and good sportsmanship - as the medium and metaphor to teach young people and their families about human rights. A theatre production, "Fred's Fair Play", was developed with the assistance of a specialist theatre in education group. The production was

performed at a number of community festivals in Melbourne's east.

The project uses children and young people's interest in the arts and sport to raise awareness about human rights, utilises game theory and ethical leadership techniques to train young people and provided legal education in a stimulating and accessible way.

The next stage is the 'Human Rights are Aussie Rules' Project: a school-based program which continues the approach of teaching children about human rights through the principles of fair play and good sportsmanship. (Johnstone, 2009).

Written Materials/Publications

Written CLE materials and publications may include:
- pamphlets;
- booklets;
- books;
- posters;
- information/wallet cards;
- fact sheets; and
- kits.

There is much to consider when developing written CLE materials, such as:

Audience & purpose
- The intended audience and objectives of the publication are critical considerations;
- Be clear about what the publication is aiming to achieve;
- What information is it seeking to impart? To who?; and
- Do members of the intended audience have particular needs or preferences?

Style, design & content
- Use plain English;
- Avoid jargon unless you are writing for a particular audience;
- Focus on key messages;
- Sometimes less is more;
- Presentation - font style and size, use of graphics, colour, use of 'white space';
- Consider employing writer/designer/editor/proof reader; and
- Consider testing the publication with the intended audience before final printing and distribution.

Printing & distribution
- have printing and distribution costs been factored into the budget?;
- how will you decide how many copies to produce?;
- how will the publication be distributed?; and
- is there capacity for reprints?

Evaluating the resource
- obtaining feedback about and evaluating the publications can be challenging, especially when the publication has been widely distributed.

Ensuring accuracy & maintaining currency
- all publications should be checked for accuracy, especially with regard to legal content, before printing and distribution;
- changes in the law, legal processes, service availability occur regularly, this means that publications can become out of date fairly quickly if they are not written carefully and changes anticipated;

- it is important to have systems in place to review and update publications on a regular basis so as to ensure that out of date information is removed. There also needs to be a system to, within reason, let people know that the publication is out of date or has been updated. Remember to include the date on publications.

Audio-Visual & Electronic CLE Resources

- videos/DVDs;
- audio tapes;
- CD ROMs;
- information material on centre website;
- interactive quizzes and games; and
- on-line education programs.

All require specialist design and production skills and can be expensive to produce. However, it would appear that audio-visual and on-line resources are the way of the future. The internet is a primary means of accessing information for an increasing number of people, on-line resources can be updated as required and there are ways to monitor use and invite feedback. Talk to centres that have used these technologies for CLE. Involve people with relevant experience and appropriate expertise.
    See *Information Sheet 17 – Using New Technologies in Community Legal Education*.

Media

Local and more broadly focussed media outlets can be an important channel for raising issues, providing information and directing people to services and activities.
    See *Information Sheet 14 – The Media & Community Legal Education*

Peer Education

Training people from target groups to inform and educate other members of that group or community can be a very powerful and empowering process if done well. This approach sits well with the community development ethos underpinning CLC work.

Using CLE materials produced by other CLCs and organisations

It is important for the centre to have systems in place whereby publications, produced internally and those produced by other organisations, are regularly produced/ordered and checked for currency.

Tip!

INFOCOM is an online directory of services and organisations. It is being piloted through a number of CLCs. INFOCOM has the capacity to create customised directories. These directories can be exported and shared. Loddon Campaspe CLC has created a customised directory in which it lists the pamphlets, brochures, booklets, etc. that it has in stock and where in the office they are kept. Contact the Federation for more information.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Horridge, R. & Wilks, G., (2005), *Valuing Volunteers Training Kit*, Peninsula Community Legal Centre and Chisholm Institute of TAFE, Victoria.
- Johnstone, A. (2009), *Project case study – 'Fred's Fair Play"* and *Human Rights are Aussie Rules'*, Eastern Community Legal Centre, Box Hill
- Womersley, S. (2009) Interview, Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

- Combined Community Legal Centres Group NSW (2004) *Your Guide to Community Legal Education*, Sydney – (See detailed discussion of cassette and video production written by Steve Campbell pp181-187).
- Department of Premier and Cabinet (Last updated Sept 2005) *Communications Toolkit*, Victorian Government, http://www.dpc. vic.gov.au/CA256D8000265E1A/OrigDoc/~A665DF084A0430CECA25702D001C7EC4?OpenDocument&1=10-Listing~&2=-None~&3=0-Communications+Toolkit~
- Law & Justice Foundation of NSW, *Publishing Toolkit*, http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/information/publishing/toolkit
- St Kilda Legal Service, (2004), *Publications Checklist*, Victoria.