

# **The First Annual National Moot Court Competition – An Appraisal**

## **Introduction**

Moot courts and mock trials are included in various ways in law curricula in different jurisdictions<sup>1</sup> to aid in the development of legal reasoning and advocacy skills and to prepare students for a career in law. The benefits and advantages of the use of simulation activities as a pedagogical tool are highlighted to a great extent in legal education literature.<sup>2</sup> However, such activities have not been particularly prominent in the curricula of undergraduate law programmes in Ireland to date. While such simulation exercises are seen as a vital component of the training of law students in other jurisdictions, the emphasis in Irish law schools is laid on the theoretical to the detriment of the practical. It is understandable that law schools in jurisdictions such as the United States, where students study law as a postgraduate degree without any further vocational training, place a much greater emphasis on mooting and other simulation activities than Irish law schools. However, Ireland still lags far behind other similar jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, that require vocational training in addition to a law degree for qualification to practice as a barrister or a solicitor, when it comes to the inclusion of simulation activities in undergraduate law curricula. In order to analyse and redress this gap in the curriculum, a project was undertaken in the Socio-Legal Research Centre (SLRC) in Dublin City University (DCU) in 2010. The project had two related aims: (1) to gather empirical research on the use and benefits of simulation activities from Irish undergraduate law students and (2) to organise and run a National Moot Court Competition. This article provides an analysis of the results of this project, through an account of the current use of moot court activities in undergraduate legal education in Ireland and a description of the process of organising and running the First Annual National Moot Court Competition. Section I of the article analyses the use of moot court activities, and the perceived benefits to law students who undertake such activities, outside of Ireland through a review of literature. This section also describes the current

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<sup>1</sup> See Charles R. Knerr, Andrew S. Sommerman and Suzy K. Rogers, “Undergraduate Appellate Simulation in American Colleges”, 19 *The Journal of Legal Studies Education*, (2001), pp. 27 - 62.

<sup>2</sup> See Michael V. Hernandez, “In Defense of Moot Court: A Response to ‘In Praise of Moot Court - Not!’”, 17 *The Review of Litigation*, (1998), pp. 70 - 89.

situation in Irish law schools with regard to the inclusion of such activities. Section II then provides details of the First National Moot Court Competition 2010 and the final section provides a conclusion on how future moot court activities should be incorporated into law curricula in Irish universities.

### **Section I: The Benefits of Mooting as a Pedagogical Tool: Lessons from Abroad**

Knerr *et al* provide a succinct summary of moot court and similar simulation activities which are included in law curricula in numerous universities around the globe.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of such activities as highlighted by Knerr *et al* illustrates a belief on the part of law schools worldwide that such activities are an important aspect of legal education. A wealth of literature exists, particularly from the United States, which provides descriptions and analyses of how individual lecturers included moot court activities into core law modules or how a moot court module was run in specific universities. If lecturers are looking for examples of how to incorporate simulation activities into their course or curriculum, a myriad of ideas can be garnered from academic journals such as *Journal of Legal Education*, *Journal of Legal Studies Education* and *Law Teacher*, to name but a few. For example, Germain<sup>4</sup> details the running of Moot Court activities as part of a Legal Writing-Oral Advocacy Programme in the University Of Kentucky College Of Law in 1971-72. Germain describes the pitfalls and benefits of designing and administering such a programme, and provides some advice for lecturers considering taking on the running of such a programme. Better still, Germain describes how such a programme can be done on a budget, such information being vital in today's economic climate. Botein sets out how he utilised simulation activities in his teaching of administrative law,<sup>5</sup> in an attempt to improve on his previous attempts at teaching this subject through the case book and case method, which had resulted in a "federal disaster area",<sup>6</sup> providing guidelines on his course design and organisation. He concludes that he himself was pleased with the new pedagogic approach and his students were even

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<sup>3</sup> Charles R. Knerr, Andrew S. Sommerman and Suzy K. Rogers, "Undergraduate Appellate Simulation in American Colleges", 19 *Journal of Legal Studies Education* (2001), pp. 27-62.

<sup>4</sup> See Kenneth B. Germain, "Legal Writing and Moot Court at Almost No Cost: The Kentucky Experience 1971 - 72" 25 *Journal of Legal Education* (1972-71), pp. 595-612

<sup>5</sup> Michael Botein, "Simulation and Role Playing in Administrative Law", 26 *Journal of Legal Education* (1973-74), pp. 234-241.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Botein, "Simulation and Role Playing in Administrative Law", 26 *Journal of Legal Education* (1973-74), pp. 234-241, p. 234.

happier, stating “[t]hus if courses, like television programs, were rated solely upon audience appeal this one’s option definitely would be renewed.”<sup>7</sup> Numerous other academic articles on legal education extol the virtues of the inclusion of simulation activities, including moot courts, in legal curricula<sup>8</sup> and provide anecdotal evidence on how such activities have enhanced student learning, and in some cases, have enriched lecturers’ teaching experiences. Maranville,<sup>9</sup> for example, discusses how experiential learning techniques, including simulations, can help to (re)ignite students’ passion for the law, which is obviously a common challenge for law lecturers. She discusses how she has managed to successfully integrate experiential education into traditional law programmes. Hernandez highlights moot court, in particular, as a simulation activity worthy of a prominent place in legal education. He answers critics of moot court activities,<sup>10</sup> by underscoring the many skills which are honed by mooting practices, especially analytical skills, the ability to be succinct and clear, and persuasiveness.<sup>11</sup> These anecdotal records of the benefits of mooting are also found in numerous other articles.

While subjective comment on the benefits of experiential learning and mooting programmes far outweighs empirical evidence on the issue in the literature, it is interesting and important to note that empirical research substantiates the claims made in many anecdotal records of the benefits of simulations and mooting activities as pedagogical tools. Indeed, empirical research highlights the honing of legal reasoning and advocacy skills, in addition to the promotion of confidence and morale among

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Botein, “Simulation and Role Playing in Administrative Law”, 26 *Journal of Legal Education* (1973-74), pp. 234-24, p. 240.

<sup>8</sup> See Kenneth B. Germain, “Legal Writing and Moot Court at Almost No Cost: The Kentucky Experience 1971 - 72” 25 *Journal of Legal Education* (1972-71), pp. 595-612; Bryant G. Garth and Joanne Martin, “Law Schools and the Construction of Competence”, 43 *Journal of Legal Education* (1993), pp. 469-509; Jay M. Feinman, “Simulations: An Introduction”, 45 *Journal of Legal Education* (1995), pp. 469-479; Michael V. Hernandez, “In Defense of Moot Court: A Response to ‘In Praise of Moot Court – Not!’” 17 *Review of Litigation* (1998), pp. 69-89; Deborah Maranville, “Infusing Passion and Context into the Traditional Law Curriculum Through Experiential Learning”, 51(1) *Journal of Legal Education*, (2001), pp. 51-74; Ann Scully-Hill, Paul Lam and Helen Yu, “Beyond Role Playing: Using Drama in Legal Education”, 60(1) *Journal of Legal Education* (2010), pp. 147-156.

<sup>9</sup> Deborah Maranville, “Infusing Passion and Context into the Traditional Law Curriculum Through Experiential Learning”, 51(1) *Journal of Legal Education*, (2001), pp. 51-74.

<sup>10</sup> See Alex Kozinski, “In Praise of Moot Court – Not!” (2(1) *Columbia Law Review* (1997), pp. 178-197.

<sup>11</sup> Michael V. Hernandez, “In Defense of Moot Court: A Response to ‘In Praise of Moot Court – Not!’” 17 *Review of Litigation* (1998), pp. 69-89, p. 71.

students, as advantages of the experiential approach. Lynch has provided data on the use and benefits of moot court activities for Australian law students,<sup>12</sup> and a recently completed project, undertaken in the SLRC in DCU, also provided empirical evidence of the positive impacts of simulations on the learning experience of law students.<sup>13</sup> In spite of both the anecdotal and empirical research to date on the benefits of mooting as a pedagogic tool, there has been some reluctance in Irish law schools to embrace mooting as an essential element of the law curriculum.

#### Simulations Activities in Legal Education in Ireland

While traditionally simulation activities were generally left to the vocational training stage of legal education in King's Inns and Blackhall Place, recently there has been a rise in interest in, and practice of, simulation activities in Irish law schools.<sup>14</sup> A review of simulation activities and practices across law schools and units in the seven Irish universities illustrates, however, that the manner in which simulation activities, specifically moot courts, are employed varies greatly. Two of the seven universities currently incorporate stand-alone compulsory moot court modules into their undergraduate law programmes. A third Irish university law school operates a compulsory module in legal procedure/legal research which includes a moot court element. Some law schools formally incorporate a moot court activity into substantive law modules. Other schools informally incorporate moot court activities into other modules and many law schools train and support moot court teams for both internal and external mooting competitions on an extra-curricular basis. It is clear from this brief analysis that a significant element of adhocery attaches to the use of moot courts as pedagogical tools in undergraduate legal education.

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<sup>12</sup> Andrew Lynch, "Why do we Moot? Exploring the Role of Mooting in Legal Education", 7 *Legal Education Review* (1996), pp. 67–96. In relation to the lack of empirical research on the use of simulations in legal education, see Charles R. Knerr, Andrew S. Sommerman and Suzy K. Rogers, "Undergraduate Appellate Simulation in American Colleges", 19 *The Journal of Legal Studies Education* (2001), pp. 27-62.

<sup>13</sup> See Noelle Higgins and Yvonne Daly, "Learning the Law: Simulation in Legal Education", *Teaching Reflections*, Issue 2 (2010), pp. 3 – 5, available at: <http://www.dcu.ie/ovpli/liu/Teaching-Reflections/Issue-2/TR-2-learning-law.shtml>.

<sup>14</sup> Interest in clinical legal education has also increased in recent years, with an annual legal education symposium taking place in Ireland since 2006. In relation to this field of education see Lawrence Donnelly, "Irish Clinical Legal Education *Ab Initio*: Challenges and Opportunities", 13 *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education* (2008/2009), available at: [http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/law/entunit/norlawpress/jour/IJCLE\\_2/ijcle2008/ijcle2008e](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/academic/law/entunit/norlawpress/jour/IJCLE_2/ijcle2008/ijcle2008e)

### *Mooting Competitions*

Internationally, huge importance is placed on participation in interscholastic, national and international mooting competitions as an element of legal education. In the United States, for example, the National Moot Court was established in 1950 and has been an incredibly important event in the legal education calendar since that date, with 180 accredited law schools taking part.<sup>15</sup> A National Moot Court Competition was founded in the United Kingdom in 1972 and has continued annually with participants from all of the top-ranking law schools taking part each year.<sup>16</sup> Knerr *et al* detail mooting competitions in other jurisdictions, both common law and civil law.<sup>17</sup> Numerous international mooting competitions are also run annually. One of the most popular international competitions is the Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Competition, which was established in 1959 and sees teams from around the world, representing their home states, moot on an international law issue.<sup>18</sup>

The Irish National Moot Court Competition 2010 drew on a pre-existing foundation of extra-curricular intramural and interscholastic moot court competitions, which had been popular in Irish law schools for a number of years. Teams representing Irish law schools and vocational institutions take part in the Jessup Moot Court Competition, the Telders International Moot Court Competition,<sup>19</sup> the European Law Moot Court Competition<sup>20</sup> and the Stetson International Environmental Moot Court Competition<sup>21</sup> every year, with an increase in interest in such competitions in recent years. In addition, a number of intervarsity mooting competitions are organised annually. Previously in Ireland, a

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<sup>15</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.actl.com/Content/NavigationMenu/AboutUs/AwardsandCompetitions/NationalMootCourt/default.htm>

<sup>16</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.esu.org/mooting/>

<sup>17</sup> Knerr *et al* detail mooting competitions in national jurisdictions, in both common law and civil law countries. See Charles R. Knerr, Andrew S. Sommerman and Suzy K. Rogers, "Undergraduate Appellate Simulation in American Colleges", 19 *Journal of Legal Studies Education* (2001), pp. 27-62.

<sup>18</sup> See Harry H. Almond, Jr., "Strengthening the Philip C. Jessup International Moot Court Competition", 4 *ISLA Journal of International and Comparative Law* (1997-1998), pp.635-667. See the competition's website at: <http://www.ilsa.org/jessup/>.

<sup>19</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.grotiuscentre.org/TeldersMootCourt.aspx>.

<sup>20</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://zealot.mrnet.pt/mootcourt/>.

<sup>21</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.law.stetson.edu/tmpl/academics/bio/internal-1-sub.aspx?id=4642>.

mooting competition, open to all law students including those in vocational training at the Honorable Society of Kings' Inns or the Law Society of Ireland, was organised by the Bar Council of Ireland and usually sponsored by a legal publishing house, e.g. Butterworths. This competition no longer runs, although in-house mooted competitions and a competition between the two vocational institutions continue.

For the past two years, one of the premier solicitor firms in Ireland, McCann Fitzgerald, has run a moot-like competition entitled *The Advocate*<sup>22</sup> for all third-level students. This competition brought mooted into the technological age by requiring the uploading of student submission videos to youtube.com in the first round. The second round progresses in a traditional moot court format

*Bréagchúirt Uí Dhálaigh*, an Irish-language moot court competition which is organised by *Gael Linn* also runs annually, with the Grand Final of the competition being held in the Supreme Court and presided over by sitting judges and practising barristers.<sup>23</sup>

The decision to organise the National Moot Court Competition 2010 was made against this background of an increase in empirical evidence of the benefits of mooted activities for law students and an increase in interest in participation on the part of students, combined with the absence of a Faculty-run domestic moot court competition,

## **Section II: The National Moot Court Competition 2010**

### Background

The idea for the National Moot Court Competition 2010 was conceived in the SLRC in DCU. The idea followed on from a research project undertaken in the SLRC into the use and effectiveness of simulations as a pedagogical tool,<sup>24</sup> the results of which illustrated the benefits of mooted and mock trial activities for law students. Centre members applied to the Learning Innovation Unit in DCU for funding for a project entitled “The

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<sup>22</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.mccannfitzgerald.ie/knowledge/events/the-advocate-2010-11.aspx>.

<sup>23</sup> See the competition's website at: <http://www.gael-linn.ie/glinn/ir>.

<sup>24</sup> See “Assessing Experiential ‘Techniques’ in Modern Law Curricula”, available at: <http://www.dcu.ie/socio-legal/legal-education/assessing-experiential-techniques-in-modern-law-curricula>

Use of Simulation Activities in Irish Legal Education” in order to further progress research into simulations beyond the bounds of DCU.<sup>25</sup> The project itself had two parts, the first part of the project focused on gathering and analysis of information on the use of simulation activities in legal education in third level institutions in Ireland, and the second was the running of the National Moot Court Competition. Money from the Learning Innovation Unit was used to employ a barrister to help with the preparation of the competition materials and to correct the written submissions.

### Writing the Problem Question

It was decided that the problem question for the National Moot Court Competition ought to be of a criminal law nature. This decision was made partly because the organisers thought it might be an attractive subject matter for student participants and also because criminal law is often neglected within mooting. In American law schools, childrens’ fairy tales are sometimes employed as the basis for moot problem questions and the organisers took their cue from this, basing the National Moot Court Competition problem question on the tale of Hansel and Gretel, with enough blood and gore to excite the students’ imaginations!<sup>26</sup> The problem question detailed the tale of an old lady who took pity on two young children and offered them shelter. The old lady gradually turned somewhat nasty and began to make comments leading Hansel to believe she was going to kill them. Hansel killed the old lady and the two children disposed of her body. Hansel was convicted of manslaughter in the Central Criminal Court and a 10 year sentence with 5 years suspended was handed down. The moot problem then centred on the case of *People (DPP) v Hansel Murphy* where the Central Criminal Court’s decision was appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeal.

Efforts were initially made to insist on proper pleadings for the written element of the competition, rather than allowing for more general memorials to be submitted. Such pleadings would have included a Notice of Appeal against Conviction and Sentence (on

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<sup>25</sup> Information on the Competition is available online at: <http://www.dcu.ie/socio-legal/legal-education/national-moot-court-competition-2010>

<sup>26</sup> The full problem question can be found online at : <http://www.dcu.ie/socio-legal/pdf/Moot-Court-Content-Pack.pdf>

behalf of the appellant) and an Application for Review of Sentence (on behalf of the respondent DPP). However, it became clear that the complexities of criminal appellate procedure (e.g. the DPP would not initially be appealing conviction, only sentence) would have a restrictive effect on the functioning of the competition, and accordingly, the more straightforward approach of having participants submit memorials relating to the arguments of both the appellant and the respondent on both conviction and sentence was ultimately preferred.

A substantial information pack on the competition was sent to the Heads of Law Schools in all third level institutions, as well as a number of law lecturers engaged in moot court / simulation activities in their respective institutions in September 2010.<sup>27</sup> The information packs contained the problem question and registration forms along with information on deadlines and marking schemes, substantive information relating to the powers of the Court of Criminal Appeal, and mooting tips. The problem question consisted of:

- An outline of the facts;
- The original indictment;
- A copy of the learned trial judge's decision in respect of the admissibility of hearsay evidence as put to him in the course of a *voir dire* application;
- A copy of the learned trial judge's decision in respect of treatment in custody as put to him in the course of a *voir dire* application;
- A copy of the learned trial judge's charge to the jury; and,
- An approved copy of the learned trial judge's final judgment and sentence in respect of the accused.

Teams consisting of 3 undergraduate law students were invited to submit written memorials to the competition organisers and to take part in the oral rounds of the competition. Two members of each team would be allowed to present oral submissions on the day of the competition, with the other member working as researcher on the day.

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<sup>27</sup> The information pack can be found online at: <http://www.dcu.ie/socio-legal/pdf/Moot-Court-Content-Pack.pdf>

The organisers felt that the competition participants would benefit from holding the competition in a real courtroom and were accordingly very grateful to the Courts Service, who allowed them to use court rooms in the new Criminal Courts of Justice Complex on Parkgate Street, Dublin.

### The Competition

Thirteen teams from seven third level institutions submitted written memorials to the competition organisers on Friday, 12 November 2010. These submissions were anonymised and were corrected and graded by an independent barrister. Written memorials were given a mark out of 50, consisting of up to 30 marks for “command of the issues, including application of the relevant law to the facts” and up to 20 marks for “structure and clarity”.

The oral rounds of the competition were held on Saturday, 20 November. In Round 1 each of the teams presented the case for either the appellant or the respondent (with the need for one *ex parte* oral submission due to an odd number of teams) and switched sides for Round 2. Each team was given the opportunity to peruse their opposing team’s written submission for fifteen minutes prior to the commencement of the oral presentation. Each speaker had seven minutes to present his/her oral arguments to the “court”, with two minutes for rebuttal and surrebuttal. These rounds were presided over by practicing barristers and legal academics who were aided by DCU students and associates who took on the part of judges’ clerks. Each individual speaker on a team was awarded a mark out of 100 for their oral presentation. The breakdown of the marks available is as follows:

- Command of the Issues, including application of relevant law to the facts 30
- Persuasiveness 30
- Ability to answer questions/respond to points made 20
- Structure and Clarity 10
- Courtroom Manner 10

The final team mark was based on the addition of the marks for the written memorial and each of the individual speakers' marks for the oral presentations (and was out of a total of 500). The final individual mark was based on the average marks of the speaker in the preliminary oral rounds.

Following the preliminary rounds and a short lunch break, the four teams with the highest overall marks progressed to the semi-final. These teams represented Trinity College Dublin (TCD), National University of Ireland, Galway, Waterford Institute of Technology and DCU, with the two Dublin teams gaining victory. After a short break, the Grand Final took place between these two teams, with the TCD team representing the appellant and the DCU team representing the respondent. The organisers were incredibly grateful to the Hon. Mr Justice Roderick Murphy, Mr Mícheál O'Higgins, SC, and Dr Michael Doherty from DCU, who presided over the final leg of the competition. The presence of such high profile judges contributed immeasurably to the competition. The two teams represented their institutions very well and illustrated excellent advocacy and legal reasoning skills. After the oral presentations, the judges conferred and the Hon Mr Justice Roderick Murphy, while commending the performances of both teams, announced that the TCD team had emerged victorious from the loquacious battle with DCU. The Hon Justice Mr Roderick Murphy presented the winning team and the Best Speaker (Diarmaid Murphy, TCD) with trophies and prizes.

### **Surveys**

Following the National Moot Court Competition, the organisers circulated an online survey to participants, requesting feedback on their experience and their views on the benefits or otherwise of participation in such a competition to them. From a total of 39 participants (13 teams of three) just 11 responded to the online survey: this is a 28% response rate. While the response rate is somewhat low, most respondents (R) provided very similar answers to the questions posed and the data collected can accordingly be viewed as sound. It is interesting to note that the evidence gathered from these surveys further highlights the anecdotal evidence supplied in legal education literature concerning the benefits of moot court activities for students.

While students found it difficult to gauge exactly how much time they had spent preparing for the National Moot Court Competition, their answers were consistent in suggesting that they had put a significant amount of time into their preparation. Two students estimated that they had spent 20-30 hours preparing (R4 and R5), while more said it was 50 or more hours (R2, R3, R7, and R9). One suggested that preparations had taken approximately 100 hours (R8) and another stated that it involved about two or three weeks work (R6).

Five of the eleven respondents stated that they were not prepared enough for the Competition (R1, R2, R4, R7, R10) and of the six who said they were prepared enough (R3, R5, R6, R8, R9, R11), one admitted that he/she could have done more “actual practice as in talking through it” (R6). Two of those who considered themselves unprepared said that if they had their time over they would start preparations earlier (R7 and R10). One said that he/she would work with different people if there was another opportunity (R1)!

Ten of the eleven seemed very satisfied with the materials provided to them in relation to the Competition and the complaint from the eleventh respondent (R2) was that the material was ambiguous in places and more information on what was said at trial would have been helpful. While one of the others (R1) stated that there was even perhaps too much information provided in the materials, and one considered that the case contained too many issues to deal with in a “very short space of time” (R7), the overall feedback on the materials was very positive.

The respondents were asked to list the skills, if any, which they themselves believed that they gained from participation in the Competition. All of the students believed that they had gained skills and those listed included the following:

- Analysing cases;
- Finding issues within cases (and prioritising major over minor issues);
- Public speaking;

- Increased confidence in dealing with legal issues;
- Research skills;
- Team work;
- Advocacy;
- Ability to think on one's feet;
- Ability to be concise;
- Persuasive skills;
- Debating/Argumentation skills.

Two students also expressed the view that their participation had increased their interest in future careers in law (R6 and R9).

All eleven respondents stated that they would recommend to others to participate in a competition of this kind. A number of them commented on the fact that the Competition was well-organised, but more generally, the students suggested that this was a good learning experience which was both enjoyable and rewarding.

Respondents were asked what the greatest challenge for them was in participating in the competition. The two most frequent answers related to time commitment (R3, R4, R8, R9, R10) and team dynamics (R1, R6, R7). Others found the oral presentation to the "court" somewhat daunting (R5, R7) and one unfortunate response was that "Comments made on my advocacy skills may have been a knock to my confidence" (R2).

A large majority of the respondents were very positive in relation to their ongoing view of the study of law following their participation in this Competition. One of the respondents stated that he/she felt a renewed motivation or sense of direction in terms of their study of law following their participation in the Competition (R5). Another stated that he/she was more enthusiastic about studying law now and saw the benefit of understanding the different modules (R6). Another respondent stated that "Having undertaken the Moot Court Competition my study of the law has been given a greater meaning" (R9).

All of the eleven respondents were in favour of moot courts playing a greater role in the ordinary curriculum of their law degrees. Although one respondent considered that others might not favour the introduction of a compulsory moot court module, and that the participation of disinterested students would make it “pretty much useless” (R5), all of the participants in this survey favoured the greater use of moot courts in legal education.

Other statements of note from the survey include the following:

- “I would definitely recommend others to partake in this competition. I found the experience thoroughly enjoyable and the opportunity to moot in the Criminal Courts of Justice was one I was truly grateful to have undertaken.” (R9)
- “It made me realise how up to date case law from the Central Criminal Court should be. Most of the case law we used was only a few years old and one team even used a case which had been decided only weeks before.” (R3)
- “...law students should have more continuous assessment and projects like this help me prioritize my time and give you confidence that you are actually learning something other than how to pass exams.” (R7)
- “Interesting to see the law in operation, using the law as a tool, as opposed to learning it” (R11)
- “law in college is taught very sterile, opportunities like this to put it into practice make you learn with out realising it” (R4)
- “...mooting makes what's in your text books seem relevant. Like you're not just studying the law, you are speaking and practicing it.” (R3)
- “Judges could be more understanding that the participants are students and not be as critical of the performance in light of this fact” (R2)
- “Thank you so much to the organisers for a great day. It was one of the best experiences I have had in my study of the law. It would be tough to improve in my opinion.” (R3)

### **Section III: Where to from here?**

The feedback on the Competition and on the mooting experience was overwhelmingly positive and there were also numerous calls on the day of the competition and after to organise a similar competition for next year. Some funding for the future of the competition has been secured from the Irish Association of Law Teachers and from Matheson Ormsby Prentice solicitors so far and it is hoped that additional funds may be forthcoming from other sources. Therefore, the SLRC in DCU has decided to run the competition again in Autumn 2011 and hope to make this an annual event.

It is clear from the moot court competition itself and from the project research that students view moot court activities as a vital element in their education, from which they gain and practice numerous skills which are both essential for careers as legal professionals and transferable, more broadly, to many other areas. This research has highlighted the fact that moot court activities should occupy a significant role in undergraduate law curricula and that additional events, similar to the National Moot Court Competition, would be of benefit to, and welcomed by, our students.