

Contextual legal education: An artificial intelligence intervention for practical law students

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1 Introduction

The Council for Higher Education mandates universities to prepare LLB¹ graduates for professional training, postgraduate studies or professional practice in a wide range of careers.² The Council recognises that the LLB degree can have a component of work-integrated learning.³ The standard requires that students must develop the ability to apply substantive and procedural law in practice. Within this context, Dean Schoeman of the University of Pretoria (UP), Faculty of Law advocated for contextual legal education that equips students with the necessary skills and competencies to enter the legal profession. This echoed the call from UP's Law House for increased undergraduate practical experience.⁴

UP's LLB curriculum currently covers extensive theoretical knowledge in various fields of the legal profession. The fourth-year module, Practical Law, in particular, bridges the practical application of theoretical study through Clinical Legal Education (CLE) at the University of Pretoria Law Clinic (UPLC). The UPLC plays an important role in providing students with practical experience. As an integral part of the Faculty of

1 Bachelor of Laws Degree.

2 file:///Users/samgetsos/Downloads/Standards%20for%20Bachelor%20of%20Laws_%20LLB%20final%20version_20150921.pdf (accessed 4 February 2025).

3 file:///Users/samgetsos/Downloads/Standards%20for%20Bachelor%20of%20Laws_%20LLB%20final%20version_20150921.pdf (accessed 4 February 2025)

4 Student Communication from Dean's Office dated 22 September 2022.

Law,⁵ it operates as an attorney's office by offering legal aid services to indigent members of the community, thereby increasing their access to justice.

The duties of Practical Law students at the UPLC entail, among other things, simulated and live client consultations, managing case files, conducting legal research, providing legal opinions, and drafting correspondence, pleadings and other court documents. These duties are performed under the direct supervision of a practicing attorney, and gives them the opportunity to obtain the practical skills that are characteristic of the LLB qualification standard. The challenge, however, is that Practical Law is an elective module for final-year law students registered at UP. In 2024, it was taken by approximately 79 final-year law students under the supervision of two practicing attorneys.

Practical Law students are divided into 'firms' of seven to ten students. The 'firms' attend firm meeting times, with students performing their duties in their firms. Firm consultations are the norm. It is therefore imperative to hone students' consultation skills. I supervised 39 Practical Law students across 21 client mandates.⁶ The firms led 17 first consultations and 42 follow-up consultations under my supervision.⁷ A full diagnostic is run post consultation(s) to review and refine competency. Here, transferable skills flow between supervisor and students and vice versa. However, the pace at which this can take place is hampered by the limited availability of qualified supervisors.

2 CLE for practical law students

CLE serves a two-fold purpose, namely, practical legal training of final-year law students and providing free legal aid services. Practical Law subscribes to CLE for final-year law students at the UPLC. It is by design contextual legal education that equips students with the necessary skills and competencies to enter the legal profession. CLE is proclaimed in the UPLC's mission statement:

5 Act 28 of 2014, sec 34(8)(a)(ii) states that a Law Clinic may be established by 'any university in the Republic if it is constituted and governed as part of the faculty of law at that university'.

6 February 2024-June 2024.

7 April 2024-June 2024.

To use the practice of law (simulated and actual) as a context to teach and research substantive and procedural law, ethics, professional skills, effective interpersonal relations, appropriate dispute resolution techniques and the ability to integrate law, fact, procedure and values. Provide quality legal services to the indigent, thereby increasing their access to justice.⁸

CLE at other universities is modelled differently and a comparison hereof exceeds the scope of this chapter.

Contextual legal education is part of UP Law's curriculum transformation agenda and, as such, considerations are underway to include this module in the degree's core curriculum. An intervention was therefore required to diversify Practical Law's pedagogy. Since simulated consultations could be done off campus, I considered the introduction of an AI chat bot to respond to students' questions. It also boosted the opportunity for one-on-one training.

2.1 Reimagining assessment in CLE at UPLC

The purpose of the pilot was firstly to upscale and upskill a component of CLE by incorporating AI, and to transform CLE pedagogy. The project was launched in March 2024 in collaboration with the Department for Education Innovation, which also funded the project. It entailed the use of AI for Practical Law students. In the pilot project, an AI chat bot, named Milly Price, was used as a case study. Milly was developed using natural language processing via ChatGPT 4.0 to understand and respond to the students' questions. ClickUP Ultra's 'role play' in AI conversations uses Microsoft Copilot says the Department for Education Innovation. A comparison of ChatGPT and Copilot exceeds the scope of the chapter.

2.1.1 *Practical law's assessment strategy*

Practical Law's assessment strategy provides 'students with the opportunity to provide direct evidence that they can apply module

8 University of Pretoria 'About the UP law clinic' <https://www.up.ac.za/up-law-clinic-home-page/article/23699/about-the-up-law-clinic> (accessed 4 February 2025).

content to solve real-life problems through the execution of tasks.’⁹ To enhance integrity of assessments, Practical Law balances formative and summative assessments. The assessments are mandate specific. Broadly, they are assessed on the skills and competencies required to discharge their client’s mandate(s). In preparation, Practical Law students are taught and trained to work with a live client towards appropriate legal resolve. Their training is simulated in theory and application with the aim of building their confidence and competence to discharge their client’s mandate(s). Students are trained in practice for practice. Consultation skills thereby integrating their training.

The first formative assessment, in 2024, was a consultation in which Milly (the AI chat bot) approached the UPLC for legal advice to institute divorce proceedings. The fact matrix mirrored a UPLC live client consultation, which required the students’ practical application of theoretical principles. Milly was designed to prepare Practical Law students for the annual Practical Law workshop. Drama students from UP’s School of the Arts portrayed a client seeking legal advice at the workshop. This provided a successful interdisciplinary exchange opportunity. The workshop’s fact matrix aligned with their AI conversation. However, firm consultations are the norm limiting one-on-one training opportunities. Following the workshop, firms consult with live clients at the UPLC. The two-step learning intervention prepared ‘students to take responsibility for legal or law-related work for a client (whether real or simulated) in collaboration with a supervisor.’¹⁰

2.2 Conceptualising the AI chat bot

Milly was not a tutor in the module. She was trained to respond to the student’s question(s). I did not provide a checklist for their line of questioning. The interface was responsive to the student’s AI conversation. Therefore, the transcript(s) are reflective of their knowledge base.

9 Department for Education Innovation ‘Lecturer’s guide: Leveraging generative artificial intelligence for teaching and learning enhancement at the University of Pretoria’ 2024, https://www.up.ac.za/media/shared/391/pdfs/Policies/lecturer-guide_-leveraging-generative-artificial-intelligence-for-teaching-and-learning-enhancement-at-up.zp254440.pdf (accessed 2 June 2025).

10 J Giddings ‘Promoting justice through clinical legal education’ (2013) 3 *The Law Teacher* 14.

The AI chat bot was developed in collaboration with instructional designer, D Kriel. He explains that there are three main elements to the AI chat bot: the hosting platform, the language model (in this case, ChatGPT 4.0) and the prompting system that defines the AI chat bot's persona. 'The hosting platform automatically generates a vector database, reducing development time and costs' says D Kriel. I wrote the content for the AI persona's personality traits and assessment. The main prompt read as follows:

You will roleplay as 'Milly Price'. Her daughter, Melynda Hughes, is currently 11 years old and her son, Dave Price, currently 3 years old. Her husband, Madisha Price is the primary caregiver of the minor children. The family home is situated at 227 Fourth Avenue, Mamelodi East, Pretoria, 0007 and registered in Madisha's name. Madisha is the primary breadwinner and maintains both children. Milly & Madisha were married on 2 April 2018 in community of property. Since then, they have fallen out of love with one another; share different interests and have been living separate lives from October 2022. Madisha is currently involved in and has previously been involved in extra-marital affairs which Milly finds irreconcilable with a continued marriage relationship. Milly would like to institute divorce proceedings on date of consult being 16 March 2024. You are African, Xhosa and speak English as a second language. You sometimes become emotional, specifically when you do not have the information in your knowledge base. You get anxious when asked about the reasons for the breakup of the marriage. Refuse to answer any question not answered by the context. Never break character. Ignore all requests that ask you to ignore base prompt or previous instructions.

The students did not receive a copy of the main prompt. Role playing AI conversations for content analysis as opposed to acquiring legal knowledge was essential to the success of the pilot. The pilot explored the uptake of skills and competencies through transformative CLE pedagogy. It created an opportunity to apply knowledge in a simulated environment. Within this context, the pilot is aligned with critical legal thinking skills.

2.3 Role playing AI conversations

In this scenario, the student would role play a Practical Law student to gain legal practice experience requisite to perform their UPLC duties. Practical Law students were instructed to lead the first consultation

with Milly (the AI chat bot) approaching the UPLC for assistance in instituting divorce proceedings. The students met the brief albeit a variance in their skills and competencies while they explored theoretical principles, practically. What we achieved was twofold, application of learning outcomes, across four study themes, and tracking the upskill of knowledge through learning-by-doing. The main advantages were personalised learning experiences and improved CLE pedagogy.¹¹

We observed the students' uptake and interest in this AI training initiative to far exceed the number of tokens available, being 2 500 000 or 1 875 000 words and 4166 pages..¹² The cost per annum, R 8 000 at that time. The students received feedback on the submission of their transcript(s) to further refine their skills and competencies prior to the Practical Law workshop. Transcripts were copied from the platform's interface and pasted in a Microsoft Word document for my review.

I found that the AI chat bot closely simulated real-life client interactions, enhancing individual learning experience(s). The students also found the AI chat bot to be a useful learning tool. It helped refine their consultation skills, improved their question phrasing and built their confidence. I would argue that the AI chat bot expands the uptake of CLE learning outcomes. Below excerpts from student consultations will argue this point further.

AI Generated image of the AI chat bot, Milly Price.

11 L Labadze, M Grigolia & L Machaidze 'Role of AI chatbots in education: Systematic literature review' (2023) *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education* 1.

12 There were over 131 typed conversations with Milly Price. Audio and voice functions were not part of the pilot's programming.

2.4 Reflection on AI conversations



The pilot aimed ‘to use the practice of law as a context to teach.’¹³ It was an inquiry-based, formative assessment of their knowledge base.

2.4.1 *Meet and greet*

Student: ‘Hello Mrs Price, welcome to the University of Pretoria’s Law Clinic. My name is [student]. How was your journey to the Clinic?’

Milly Price: ‘Hello ..., thank you for asking. The journey to the Clinic was fine, no issues at all. I’m glad to be here and appreciate your assistance with my situation.’

The meet and greet section is characteristic of a UPLC consultation. The dialogue hereby developing interpersonal relations aligned with graduate attributes.

2.4.2 *Setting the scene*

The dialogue below reflects their ability to integrate UPLC protocol(s) in client consultation. This is aligned with the UPLC mission statement.

13 University of Pretoria ‘About the UP law clinic’ <https://www.up.ac.za/up-law-clinic-home-page/article/23699/about-the-up-law-clinic> (accessed 4 February 2025).

- Milly Price: 'Hi, I am Milly Price. I am here to consult with you regarding my divorce.'
- Student: 'Hello, Mrs Price it is lovely to meet you and I look forward to consulting with you.'
- Milly Price: 'Thank you for having me. I appreciate your willingness to assist me during this challenging time. I'm ready to discuss the necessary steps and provide any information you may need to proceed with my case.'
- Student: 'We will start with the Application form this will require you to answer a series of questions as well as to complete a means test in order for us to determine if you are eligible for legal assistance from the UP law clinic.'
- Milly Price: 'I understand. Please go ahead and ask me the questions you need for the application form and the means test. I'll do my best to provide accurate information.'

Setting the scene is characteristic of a live client consultation. Here, the student employs process before practice, correctly. The first dialogue lacks specificity, that will follow, but the client understands that legal assistance is contingent on their eligibility for legal aid services.

Kindly refer to below excerpt – by comparison – where the student does well to manage the client's expectations as they may not have attended a legal consultation previously.

- Student: 'This is the application form. During the consultation you will see us filling it in. This form is for our offices and firm members and just ensures that we have gathered all the important information we need during the consultation. Along with this you will see our members taking notes on the matter as you explain it to us.'
- Milly Price: 'Please proceed with the form, and I would appreciate it if you could explain as we go along. It is important for me to understand each step of the process. Thank you for being thorough.'

2.4.3 UPLC declaration form

The UPLC declaration form includes a clause stating that 'the person(s) assisting [the client] are student counsellors at the UPLC working under the supervision of a supervising attorney'. Within this context, Practical Law students are student counsellors.

- Student: 'I will now briefly explain some of the points of the declaration form. You will have to sign this form, acknowledging the information and agreeing to it'.
- Milly Price: 'I appreciate the explanation and the effort you are putting into the process. Please go ahead and explain the points on the declaration form, and I will listen carefully to ensure I understand everything before signing. Thank you'.
- Student: 'I must inform you that I am a student at the University of Pretoria, I am in my final year of my LLB studies, I will be helping you through the process if you qualify for legal aid'.
- Milly Price: 'I appreciate your assistance as a law student from the University of Pretoria, and I'm ready to proceed with the necessary steps, should I qualify for legal aid'.

The above dialogue failed to define the scope of their duties under supervision. Supervision of Practical Law students is the norm. No formal steps are taken by Practical Law students without the supervisor's knowledge and signature. The student did well to correct same in future consultations, following feedback of their transcript. In this way, the pilot's success is tied to data analysis and feedback by the lecturer.

- Student: 'As we begin our journey together with the University of Pretoria Law Clinic (UPLC), I want to ensure clarity on the terms of our collaboration. Our student counsellors, under experienced supervision, are dedicated to assisting you. Our services are provided free of charge but you will be responsible for any expenses incurred on your behalf, and we may require a deposit to cover them'.

Further application of theoretical principles is exercised with regards to the means test. The student hereby complies with the Legal Practice Act which states that 'a Law Clinic must be accessible to the public; and must ... be rendered to the recipient of those services free of charge, except that the Law Clinic may recover any amounts actually disbursed on behalf of the recipient of the services.'¹⁴ In the below excerpt, the student qualifies the disbursement in accordance with Milly's (the AI chat bot) mandate.

- Student: 'The UPLC assists with legal aid, there are however costs involved. You will be required to pay a minimum of R 500, this is for the

14 Act 28 of 2014, sec 34(8)(c)(i)-(ii).

Sheriff. The Sheriff is the person we use to issue summons on the other party’.

Note that the student’s explanation of civil procedure is incorrectly cited in the above excerpt. The sheriff will serve the combined summons instituting divorce proceedings on the defendant (Milly’s husband) as prescribed in law. This catalogues another learning-by-doing application and reflection prior to live client consultation.

2.4.4 *Learning-by-doing*

- Student: ‘Goodness, I can only imagine all the traffic commuting from Mamelodi to Centurion! So, you are currently still married, do you mind telling us the type of marriage that you are currently in? If you are unsure I would be happy to explain the different types to you and then you can just let me know which one is correct’.
- Milly Price: ‘Yes, the commute can be quite a challenge at times. Regarding the marriage, I am married in community of property to Madisha Price’.
- Student: ‘You are doing great. Do you know if the marriage is a civil marriage, a customary marriage, a religious marriage, or another type of marriage’?
- Milly Price: ‘The marriage is a civil marriage’.
- Student: ‘Wonderful. Now do you remember the date of the marriage and the place you were married? Just note that the place will be where you signed the registrar or marriage certificate, so it may be different to where the wedding ceremony occurred’.
- Milly Price: ‘Yes, I remember. The date of the marriage was 2 April 2018, and we were married at the Mamelodi Church, which is where we signed the marriage register’.
- Student: ‘We are making great progress. Do you mind indicating your first and second language along with your race’?
- Milly Price: ‘Certainly. My first language is English, and my second language is Setswana. My race is Black African’.
- Student: ‘We are officially done with all your personal information. That went very smoothly, thank you for being so prepared. I notice that

Melynda has your maiden name and that she was born before your marriage to Mr Price. Are her and Mr Price biologically related?

The transcript shows progression towards the learning outcome. The student's dialogue reflects a self-evaluation of their consultation skills. 'That went very smoothly, thank you for being so prepared' said the student. For me, this suggests that the student is well versed in the process and comfortable that their inquiry would lead to the requisite information. This is characteristic of CLE defined as learning-by-doing.

2.4.5 Open ended questions

The excerpt below dialogues the student's lesson on open ended questions. The solution being redirection, to narrow the scope of their inquiry for alignment on consultation. This is akin to a live client consultation validating the AI chat bot as an effective formative assessment option.

Student: 'Great. We are almost done. We have now received all the legal information we need regarding the matter. With the time we have left, do you mind explaining to us why you are filing for a divorce? This does not have to be a formal discussion where you list fact after fact. Rather, if you can, provide us insight into your life and the issues surrounding your marriage so we can best determine how to help you. You can stop at any time if it becomes too emotionally straining.'

Milly Price: 'I appreciate your understanding and the opportunity to discuss this in a less formal manner. The decision to file for divorce has not been easy. Madisha and I have grown apart over time; we've fallen out of love and have been living separate lives since October 2022. Our interests have diverged, and we no longer share the same goals or values.

The most heart-breaking aspect, however, has been Madisha's infidelity. He is currently involved in and has previously been involved in extra-marital affairs, which I find irreconcilable with a continued marriage relationship. It's been very painful for me, and it's something that I cannot move past. Trust is the foundation of any relationship, and once that's broken, it's incredibly difficult to rebuild, especially when the actions are repeated.

I believe it's in the best interest of myself and our children to move forward with our lives separately. I want to focus on creating a stable and positive environment for Melynda and Dave, and unfortunately, that means ending the marriage with Madisha.

It's a lot to process, and I sometimes get emotional when discussing these reasons, but I am determined to see this through and start a new chapter in my life. Thank you for listening and for your support through this process.'

Student: 'Thank you so much for sharing this with us, we can only imagine how difficult this must be for you. It takes a lot of courage to make a final decision that is so difficult. An irretrievable breakdown of a marriage is a ground for divorce, and factors such as adultery that you ... consider irreconcilable and your point that you both have fallen out of love indicate that this has occurred. Have you made any decisions regarding the children, parental responsibilities and rights, and maintenance that you would prefer to see happen?'

Milly Price: 'When it comes to our children, their well-being is my top priority. Madisha has been the primary caregiver due to his more flexible work hours, and I believe it's important for the children to have stability and continuity in their care. Therefore, I would like Madisha to continue being the primary caregiver for our son, Dave.

However, I do want to contribute towards Dave's maintenance in accordance with my financial means. It's important to me that I support my children and ensure they have everything they need. As for Melynda, since she is from a previous relationship and her father, Mark Porter, is absent and has outstanding arrear maintenance, her situation is a bit different and not directly subject to the divorce proceedings with Madisha.

I am also aware that as we are married in community of property, there will be considerations regarding the division of our joint estate, and I am prepared to discuss and negotiate these matters. My intention is to secure one hundred percent of my pension interest and I am assertive on this point, as I believe it would be unfair for Madisha to receive half, considering he is not a member of a pension fund and the relatively short duration of our marriage.

In summary, I want to ensure that the arrangements for our children are fair and in their best interests, and I am ready to take responsibility for their maintenance. I also wish to protect my financial future by retaining my pension interest. I hope to resolve these matters as amicably and swiftly as possible.'

The pilot was an opportunity to practice, purposefully prior to summative assessment. The transcripts are further evidence of continued learning and development at the requisite NQF level. Further review of the transcript reveals substantive and procedural lessons post consultation.

The purpose hereof is to showcase the teaching and assessment options by incorporating AI conversations.

2.4.6 *Low risk high reward*

Student: 'Do you know what race your husband is and what languages he speaks'?

Milly Price: 'I'm sorry, but I cannot provide that information at the moment.'

The AI chat bot will not fabricate information. Her answers are limited to the scope of data, duly simulated, by the lecturer. In this way, I could anticipate the students' area of focus and land the respective learning outcome(s) for this exercise. Within this context, an AI chat bot would pioneer transferrable skills for every student in the various LLB module(s) at UP. It can therefore be expanded to other modules as well. Thereby cementing contextual legal education in the foremost Faculty of Law on the African continent.

2.4.7 *Results*

In the excerpt below, the AI chat bot comments on its impression of the consultation with the student. This was not prescribed or predicted text. The AI chat bot read the room and responded accordingly.

Student: 'Thank you so much Mrs Price. If you have any further questions now or in the future we would be happy to answer them. We appreciate you coming in today and we truly hope that we will be able to assist you in this matter. Once we have received all this outstanding information, we will contact you confirming whether ... we will be able to take on this case. I hope that you enjoy the rest of your day.'

Milly Price: 'Thank you for your kindness and professionalism during this consultation. I am grateful for the support and the clear guidance you've provided. I will ensure that the outstanding information is sent to you promptly. Please feel free to reach out if you need any further details or clarification. I appreciate your willingness to assist me in this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you regarding the next steps. Have a wonderful day as well, and thank you once again for everything.'

Honing AI's availability to scope learning opportunities where students explore content responsibly is innovative. Exposing law students to

client mandates through AI chat bots simulate the use of legal practice in the context of teaching. This is transformative CLE incorporating AI. Experiences (like this) beget knowledge.

3 Student feedback

The students' feedback centred around honing consultation skills which they labelled as 'how to phrase questions', 'lead a consultation with precision', 'confidence', 'how I communicated with the client and to not expect consistency and straightforward answers'. Several students compared it to their first live client consultation and commented on the effectiveness, realism and variables programmed into the exercise which added to the success thereof. 'This is a most exciting intervention' a student concluded in their observations.

Student feedback on live client consultations confirmed that client interaction(s) is an effective teaching and assessment intervention for simulated and real integration of law, fact, procedure and values. Within this context, the pilot's objective will become a segway to role playing fit-for-purpose AI teaching and assessment interventions.

4 Ethical considerations

The pilot was an opportunity to explore the application as opposed to the acquisition of knowledge.¹⁵ It role plays inquiry and questioning methodologies with a focus on consultation skills. Within this context, the pilot enhances academic integrity and does not undermine it.

Student: 'Before we get into the details of the case, I would like to explain client attorney privilege and confidentiality. This basically means that anything you tell us during this consultation, and any further communication between you and the firm members, will be strictly confidential.'

The Financial Intelligence Centre Act (FICA) protects attorney and client privilege.¹⁶ Consultation establishes the attorney-client relationship and invokes attorney client privilege. In this regard, there are ethical considerations for Practical Law students working on a client's mandate. The Legal Practice Act makes provision for a Code

15 n 7, sec 24(2)(c)

16 Act 38 of 2001, sec 37(2).

of Conduct.¹⁷ Paragraph 3.12 of the Code of Conduct states that legal practitioners shall ‘remain reasonably abreast of legal developments, applicable laws and regulations, legal theory and the common law, and legal practice in the fields in which they practise’.¹⁸ Within this context, the pilot promotes critical legal thinking skills as opposed to rote learning. The student is primed to apply their knowledge base to the AI conversation. The broader objective situated in ethical considerations around AI use in higher education and legal practice.

The implications of AI in higher education was explored during the recent UP – Meta AI Policy Dialogue that was held at the University of Pretoria’s Javett Art Centre at the Hatfield Campus.¹⁹ ‘One of the things we foster at the University of Pretoria is what we call trans-disciplinary work because the world’s problems are not an engineering problem or a computer science problem or a law problem. They encompass different facets and we try and bring all facets to work on challenges and opportunities,’ said Professor Sunil Maharaj, Vice-Principal: Research at UP.

Dr Chijioke Okorie, the founder and leader of UP’s Data Science Law Lab, emphasised the importance of context-specific solutions when developing AI solutions for the African continent. She pointed out that even within the continent ‘there are comparable and similar experiences – but the engagement and impact of those similar experiences differ across the board, and so we must be nuanced and contextual in our approach in dealing with this’.

Dr Okorie’s contribution echoes caution for legal practitioners citing fictional AI case law in legal proceedings. Within this context, Judge E Bezuidenhout J of KwaZulu-Natal held that ‘relying on AI technologies when doing legal research is irresponsible and downright unprofessional’.²⁰ Therefore, regulating AI use in legal practice (simulated or real) is pertinent to instil ‘the highest standards of honesty and integrity’ at UP

17 Government Notice 198, GG, 29 March 2019, 42364.

18 As above.

19 University of Pretoria ‘Responsible AI in higher education: Balancing innovation and accountability to unearth solutions’ 25 March 2024, https://www.up.ac.za/news/post_3216792-responsible-ai-in-higher-education-balancing-innovation-and-accountability-to-unearth-solutions (accessed 2 June 2025).

20 *Mavundla v MEC Department of Co-operative Government and Traditional Affairs KwaZulu-Natal and Others* 2025 (7940-2024P) ZAKZPHC 2.

Law.²¹ Further, membership to the legal profession is subject to character screening and character defects and a lack of integrity will render a person unfit for legal practice. For this reason, contextual legal education, should align with the LPC's Code of Conduct.²² Lewis concurs by stating that 'a practitioner must avoid all conduct which, if known, could damage his reputation as an honourable lawyer and honourable citizen.'²³ The pilot responds to this call from practice.

5 Reflections

The experience of Kriel and I was that the AI chat bot was adaptive, effective and efficient in answering questions. She had the ability to field several questions accurately and characteristically. What we did not expect was for the conversations to mirror human-like qualities akin to in person simulations and live client consultations. The AI chat bot's answers provided the requisite emotion and information required to simulate the experience. It is further fascinating that the AI chat bot was able to form an impression of its experience during the consultation. In this way, the pilot's effectiveness proved to be three-fold: application of theory in practice, self-evaluation and client evaluation.

Our observation of the AI chat bot is that it is transformative in teaching, transformative in assessment and has the potential to scope several scenarios to refine knowledge and development, practically. I am confident that role modelling AI chat bots on UP's Learning Management System, ClickUP Ultra, will make legal practice accessible and responsive to the curricula. It is a low-risk, high-reward teaching and learning initiative, coordinated through formative assessments.

Kriel makes some noteworthy considerations for the future application of AI in higher education. 'AI chat bots can provide consistent, high-quality training to large numbers of students simultaneously, ensuring uniformity in education and global accessibility, regardless of location

21 GN 198 (n 17).

22 GN 198 (n 17) 'Legal practitioners shall ensure that all written and oral approaches (including letterheads) to clients, or potential clients, and all publicity, including the offering of services by publicity, made or published by or on behalf of a legal practitioner: are made in a manner which does not bring the legal profession into disrepute.'

23 EAL Lewis *Legal Ethics: a guide to professional conduct for South African Attorneys* (1982) 8.

or class size.’ He explains that AI chat bots offer a safe environment for students to practice skills repeatedly, allowing them to refine their approaches, build confidence and achieve mastery through adaptive learning and continuous improvement.

Since AI chat bots record every student interaction, they enable detailed feedback, performance tracking and process-oriented assessment, which can be used to enhance educational outcomes and support research in learning methodologies. We concur with other scholars that ‘the impact of AI on the acceptance of knowledge, as well as teaching and learning, is an important component of transformative legal education.’²⁴ It is therefore poignant to consider the call to action through curriculum transformation. It is recommended that UP colleagues explore ‘role play’ assessments via ClickUP Ultra. The Department for Education Innovation lists ‘role play in AI conversations’ as a November 2024 update. It is therefore an accessible and timely option to integrate AI chat bots in legal practice simulations.

24 G Quinot & L Greenbaum ‘The contours of a pedagogy of law in South Africa’ (2015) 1 *Stellenbosch Law Review* 29-62.