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Methodology and didactics of legal education in Angolan higher education: challenges, pedagogical practices and innovation perspectives

Metodologia e didáctica do ensino do Direito no ensino superior em Angola: desafios, práticas pedagógicas e perspectivas de inovação

Metodología y didáctica de la enseñanza del Derecho en la educación superior en Angola: desafíos, prácticas pedagógicas y perspectivas de innovación

Pedro Manuel Luís
Doctor of Law; Master's degree in Constitutional Procedure. Faculty of Law, Jean Piaget University of Angola, Luanda, Angola.
ORCID: 0009-0002-8253-4438 E-mail: pedro.manuel.luis@gmail.com

Abstract: Legal education in Angolan higher education faces the challenge of combining scientific rigour with the interpretative, argumentative, critical, practical and ethical competences required for legal practice. University teaching methods and didactics play a structural role because they influence how students understand legal rules, interpret facts, justify solutions and relate legal knowledge to concrete social problems. This article analyses the pedagogical foundations of legal education in Angola, discusses the relationship between theory and practice, examines teaching methods and assessment, and proposes a contextualised pedagogical framework for improving legal education. Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative, exploratory and analytical-reflective approach based on a literature review and documentary analysis of legal instruments relevant to the Angolan higher education subsystem. It draws on university didactics, critical pedagogy, reflective learning and constructive alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment. Its original contribution is the Contextualised Legal Didactics Model (CLDM), structured around six interdependent dimensions: doctrinal and normative foundations; explicit development of legal reasoning; Angolan contextualisation; supervised experiential learning; competence-aligned assessment; and ethical and digital responsibility. The model is presented as a conceptual proposal that requires empirical validation in higher education institutions. The article concludes that pedagogical innovation requires coordinated changes in teaching practices, assessment, curriculum design and institutional culture, while preserving the scientific rigour of legal education.
Keywords: Legal education; University didactics; Active learning; Higher education in Angola; Legal training; Pedagogical innovation.

Resumo: O ensino do Direito no ensino superior angolano enfrenta o desafio de articular o rigor científico da formação jurídica com o desenvolvimento de competências interpretativas, argumentativas, críticas, práticas e éticas indispensáveis ao exercício das profissões jurídicas. A metodologia e a didáctica universitárias assumem, neste contexto, uma função estruturante, pois influenciam a forma como os estudantes compreendem as normas, interpretam os factos, fundamentam soluções e relacionam o conhecimento jurídico com os problemas concretos da sociedade. O presente artigo tem como objectivo analisar os fundamentos pedagógicos do ensino jurídico em Angola, discutir os desafios da articulação entre teoria e prática, examinar as metodologias de ensino e os processos de avaliação e propor um quadro pedagógico contextualizado para a melhoria da formação jurídica. Metodologicamente, adopta-se uma abordagem qualitativa, de natureza exploratória e analítico-reflexiva, assente em revisão bibliográfica e análise documental de instrumentos normativos relevantes para o subsistema angolano de ensino superior. A análise mobiliza contributos da didáctica universitária, da pedagogia crítica, da aprendizagem reflexiva e do alinhamento entre resultados de aprendizagem, actividades pedagógicas e avaliação. Como contribuição original, propõe-se o

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Modelo de Didáctica Jurídica Contextualizada (MDJC), estruturado em seis dimensões interdependentes: fundamentação dogmática e normativa; desenvolvimento explícito do raciocínio jurídico; contextualização angolana; aprendizagem experiencial supervisionada; avaliação alinhada com competências; e responsabilidade ética e digital. O modelo é apresentado como proposta conceptual, carecendo de validação empírica em instituições de ensino superior. Conclui-se que a inovação pedagógica exige uma transformação coordenada das práticas docentes, dos instrumentos de avaliação, da organização curricular e da cultura institucional, sem sacrificar o rigor científico da formação jurídica.
Palavras-chave: Ensino do Direito; Didáctica universitária; Metodologias activas; Ensino superior em Angola; Formação jurídica; Inovação pedagógica.

Resumen: La enseñanza del Derecho en la educación superior angoleña afronta el desafío de articular el rigor científico de la formación jurídica con el desarrollo de competencias interpretativas, argumentativas, críticas, prácticas y éticas indispensables para ejercer las profesiones jurídicas. La metodología y la didáctica universitarias asumen, en este contexto, una función estructurante, pues influyen en cómo los estudiantes comprenden las normas, interpretan los hechos, fundamentan soluciones y relacionan el conocimiento jurídico con problemas concretos de la sociedad. Este artículo tiene como objetivo analizar los fundamentos pedagógicos de la enseñanza jurídica en Angola, discutir los desafíos de la articulación entre teoría y práctica, examinar las metodologías de enseñanza y los procesos de evaluación y proponer un marco pedagógico contextualizado para mejorar la formación jurídica. Metodológicamente, se adopta un enfoque cualitativo, exploratorio y analítico-reflexivo, basado en revisión bibliográfica y análisis documental de instrumentos normativos relevantes para el subsistema angoleño de educación superior. El análisis moviliza contribuciones de la didáctica universitaria, la pedagogía crítica, el aprendizaje reflexivo y la alineación entre resultados de aprendizaje, actividades pedagógicas y evaluación. Como contribución original, se propone el Modelo de Didáctica Jurídica Contextualizada (MDJC), estructurado en seis dimensiones interdependientes: fundamentación dogmática y normativa; desarrollo explícito del razonamiento jurídico; contextualización angoleña; aprendizaje experiencial supervisado; evaluación alineada con competencias; y responsabilidad ética y digital. El modelo se presenta como propuesta conceptual que requiere validación empírica en instituciones de educación superior. Se concluye que la innovación pedagógica exige transformar coordinadamente las prácticas docentes, los instrumentos de evaluación, la organización curricular y la cultura institucional, sin sacrificar el rigor científico de la formación jurídica.
Palabras clave: Enseñanza del Derecho; Didáctica universitaria; Metodologías activas; Educación superior en Angola; Formación jurídica; Innovación pedagógica.

1 Introduction

Legal education holds a relevant position in higher education, as it helps prepare professionals called upon to interpret rules, resolve conflicts, defend fundamental rights, participate in the administration of justice and critically engage with the organisation of social life. The quality of this education depends on the conditions under which knowledge is constructed, understood, discussed and applied to concrete problems, as well as the amount of legal content transmitted.

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Legal education has an epistemological particularity: its subject matter extends beyond knowledge of rules. It requires understanding legal concepts and principles, interpreting statutory provisions, legally characterising facts, identifying legally relevant issues, comparing divergent positions and justifying decisions. Legal education therefore cannot be assessed solely by students' ability to reproduce definitions or recall statutory provisions. It must also consider their ability to use knowledge in a reasoned, critical and responsible manner.

In Angola, reflection on legal teaching methodology and didactics is particularly important in the context of institutional consolidation, the evolution of the justice system and the need to train professionals capable of responding to social, economic, political and technological changes. The quality of legal education concerns higher education institutions, courts, Public Administration bodies, the legal profession, scientific research and society as a whole.

The Angolan legal framework provides relevant references for this reflection. Law No. 17/16 of 7 October, establishing the general foundations of the Education and Teaching System, was amended by Law No. 32/20 of 12 August. Presidential Decree No. 193/18 of 10 August approved general curricular standards for undergraduate courses in the higher education subsystem, while Presidential Decree No. 310/20 of 7 December established that subsystem's legal framework. These instruments provide normative references for organising and operating higher education and should be interpreted in conjunction with other applicable legislation and each institution's specific rules.

The existence of standards governing curricular organisation and institutional operation does not, however, automatically guarantee the quality of learning experiences. Between formally defined objectives and actual outcomes lies a space for pedagogical decision-making that depends on teacher preparation, course-unit organisation, available resources, appropriate assessment and academic culture.

The central problem of this study is to understand how higher education methodology and didactics can help improve legal education in Angola, reconciling scientific rigour, practical application of law, social contextualisation and pedagogical innovation.

The general objective is to critically analyse the foundations and methodological challenges of legal education in Angolan higher education, proposing pedagogical guidelines suited to developing legal competences.

The specific objectives are:

a) to examine the relationship between legal knowledge and learning;

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b) to analyse university didactics' role in educational quality;
c) to discuss the connection between theory, practice and legal reasoning;
d) to reflect on participatory methodologies, learning assessment, teachers' pedagogical training and digital technologies;
e) to propose a contextualised pedagogical model for legal education in Angola.

The study's scientific relevance lies in connecting legal science and educational sciences. Its original contribution consists of formulating the Contextualised Legal Didactics Model (CLDM), conceived as a framework for pedagogical organisation linking doctrinal and normative mastery, legal reasoning, Angolan realities, supervised experience, assessment, and ethical and digital responsibility.

The fundamental argument is that modernising legal education does not mean abandoning theoretical explanation, doctrinal systematisation or rigorous study of legislation. It means integrating them into a learning process enabling students to understand, apply, discuss and critically assess legal knowledge.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Legal education and comprehensive legal training

Legal education has its own requirements, because understanding law demands a permanent relationship between rules, principles, facts, institutions, legal scholarship and argumentation. Students must know the legal system while also developing the ability to identify relevant problems, select applicable sources, interpret legal texts and justify proposed solutions.

Comprehensive legal education therefore extends beyond accumulating information. It presupposes the progressive development of intellectual, methodological, communicative and ethical abilities. These include statutory interpretation, factual analysis, source research, argument construction, identification of opposing positions, legal drafting and the ability to recognise a conclusion's limits.

Biggs and Tang (2011) advocate alignment between learning outcomes, teaching activities and assessment procedures. Applied to legal education, this perspective means that a course unit's objectives should determine the learning experiences and instruments used to assess student performance.

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If a course unit aims to develop legal problem-solving ability, assessment should go beyond reproducing concepts. It should provide situations in which students identify issues, select rules, construct arguments and substantiate conclusions. Consistency between objectives, activities and assessment makes learning more transparent and allows verification of whether the stated competences are actually being developed.

Comprehensive legal education also requires an ethical dimension. Applying law has consequences for people, institutions and communities. Professionals must recognise the importance of legality, human dignity, fundamental rights, impartiality, integrity and the responsibility inherent in legal practice.

2.2 University didactics as an instrument of academic quality

University didactics concerns the intentional organisation of teaching and learning, considering educational objectives, scientific content, methods, available resources and assessment procedures.

Zabalza (2004) highlights the importance of planning and organising university teaching. Teaching work extends beyond mastery of a scientific field: it also requires the ability to select content, formulate objectives, structure activities, anticipate difficulties and monitor students' progress.

In legal education, this distinction is especially important. In-depth mastery of a legal discipline is indispensable, but does not by itself ensure that teachers can transform that knowledge into a clear, progressive and intellectually stimulating learning experience.

Pedagogical competence requires teachers to identify students' prior knowledge, establish a logical content sequence, propose problems appropriate to their educational level and use instruments to verify learning. It also requires the ability to explain complex concepts without simplifying them in scientifically incorrect ways.

Freire (1996) emphasises participation, dialogue, autonomy and critical reflection in education. This perspective shows that students should be regarded as active participants in learning, without eliminating teachers' scientific responsibility.

In legal education, pedagogical dialogue must be accompanied by a requirement for justification. Participation cannot be reduced to expressing opinions without normative or argumentative support. Teachers should guide discussion, clarify concepts, compare interpretations and ensure that debate contributes to developing knowledge.

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University didactics should thus be understood as a constitutive dimension of academic quality, rather than a dispensable supplement to legal knowledge.

2.3 Reflective learning and the development of legal reasoning

Schön (1983) stresses the importance of reflection on action in training professionals who face complex, uncertain situations that mechanical application of prior knowledge does not adequately resolve.

This perspective is particularly relevant to law. Legal problems may involve incomplete facts, rules subject to different interpretations, conflicts of principles or practical consequences requiring deliberation. Responding depends on the ability to connect sources, facts and arguments, rather than merely memorising a statutory provision.

Legal reasoning can be developed through case analysis, discussion of judicial decisions, drafting legal opinions, procedural simulations and critical review of arguments. When facing a problem, students should learn to identify relevant facts, formulate the legal issue, determine applicable sources, analyse alternative interpretations and justify their conclusion.

The process should include reflection on one's own mistakes. An incomplete response may reveal difficulties in legally characterising facts, selecting the applicable rule or substantiating a conclusion. Analysing these shortcomings can turn assessment into a learning opportunity.

Legal reflection does not mean that all solutions are equivalent. Interpretative freedom is limited by applicable sources, recognised legal methods, principles of the legal system and the need for rational justification. Didactics should teach students to recognise these limits and construct verifiable arguments.

2.4 The specificity of legal education and professional learning

Legal education should prepare students to understand law as a normative system and simultaneously recognise concrete problems requiring legal intervention. This dual requirement presupposes connections between conceptual knowledge, situational analysis, argumentative practice and professional responsibility.

In Best Practices for Legal Education, Stuckey et al. (2007) advocate legal education oriented towards learning and competences relevant to professional practice. Sullivan et al.

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(2007), in turn, analyse the need to connect legal knowledge, professional practice and ethical education.

These contributions show that legal education should avoid radically separating the study of concepts from learning how they are used. Theory enables understanding and organising law; pedagogically supervised practice allows understanding to be tested, difficulties to be identified and application abilities to be developed.

This connection does not require turning every course unit into professional simulation activities. The intensity and nature of the practical component should correspond to objectives, educational level, scientific field and available resources.

What matters is ensuring that students have progressive opportunities to apply knowledge, receive guidance and improve the quality of their reasoning.

3 Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, exploratory and analytical-reflective approach to examine the pedagogical foundations and methodological challenges of legal education in Angolan higher education.

This methodological choice is justified by the conceptual and interpretative nature of the problem. The objective is to analyse theoretical contributions and relevant normative documents to formulate a substantiated pedagogical proposal, rather than quantify teaching practices or measure student performance.

The research relies on two complementary procedures: a literature review and documentary analysis.

The literature review draws on contributions concerning university didactics, critical pedagogy, reflective learning, pedagogical alignment and legal education, highlighting Freire (1996), Schön (1983), Zabalza (2004), Biggs and Tang (2011), Stuckey et al. (2007) and Sullivan et al. (2007).

The documentary analysis considers, in particular, the Constitution of the Republic of Angola, Law No. 17/16 of 7 October, amended by Law No. 32/20 of 12 August, Presidential Decree No. 193/18 of 10 August and Presidential Decree No. 310/20 of 7 December. These instruments provide a legal framework for reflection on the education and teaching system and the higher education subsystem.

The analysis was organised around four axes: pedagogical foundations of legal education; connections between theory, practice and legal reasoning; assessment and

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competence development; and conditions for pedagogical innovation. The original proposal was developed by integrating these axes into a conceptual framework oriented towards Angolan realities.

The study does not include interviews, surveys, classroom observations, controlled pedagogical experiments or statistical data collected in higher education institutions. Consequently, its conclusions do not demonstrate how frequently a particular practice occurs in Angolan law faculties or establish that the proposed model has already produced measurable results.

The article's contribution is theoretical and propositional: it organises pedagogical and normative foundations into a proposal suitable for experimental application and subsequent empirical assessment.

4 Discussion and proposal for pedagogical innovation

4.1 Theoretical explanation and the limits of exclusively transmissive learning

Lecturing is a legitimate and, in certain circumstances, necessary methodology in legal education. It allows concepts to be presented, legal institutions to be systematised, statutory provisions to be explained, doctrinal controversies to be clarified and extensive subject matter to be organised.

The problem lies in using exposition as an almost exclusive teaching strategy. When pedagogy focuses on the teacher's explanation and content reproduction, students' opportunities to interpret, argue, apply and question knowledge may be reduced.

Quality legal education requires students to learn to use concepts and rules, as well as recognise them. Theoretical explanation can therefore be integrated into a learning sequence including guiding questions, case analysis, comparison of interpretations and substantiation of solutions.

In a class on civil liability, for example, teachers can present the relevant legal requirements, propose a hypothetical situation, ask students to identify legally important facts and guide discussion of applicable rules. The conclusion should be substantiated and compared with plausible alternatives.

This procedure preserves exposition's systematising function while creating opportunities to develop legal reasoning. Participation should be prepared and guided to prevent discussion from becoming a succession of personal opinions without legal support.

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The central issue is to establish a combination of exposition and participatory methodologies suited to learning objectives. Exposition provides conceptual tools; application activities allow teachers to verify whether students have understood and can use them.

4.2 Connecting theory and legal practice

Excessive separation between theory and practice is a relevant pedagogical problem, since it can hinder understanding of how legal knowledge is used to solve problems.

Theory enables understanding of concepts, principles, rules and legal institutions. Practice requires identifying facts, recognising legal issues, selecting sources, constructing arguments and justifying solutions. These dimensions are complementary: application without theoretical foundations tends to become intuitive, while theory without opportunities for application may remain abstract.

This connection can be promoted through the case method, judicial decision analysis, drafting legal opinions, writing procedural documents in educational settings and simulated hearings. Each activity should have explicit objectives and be accompanied by assessment criteria.

The case method presents a factual situation and asks students to identify relevant legal issues. Teachers may require students to distinguish proven facts from alleged facts, applicable rules from merely illustrative references, and principal from subsidiary arguments.

Judicial decision analysis examines relationships between facts, rules, reasoning and decisions. Drafting legal opinions develops the ability to formulate a question, select sources, assess alternatives and present a reasoned conclusion.

Procedural simulations can foster understanding of participants' roles, the organisation of procedural acts and the relevance of oral argument. However, they should be appropriate to students' educational level and must not be confused with independently providing legal services reserved for qualified professionals.

Pedagogical practice should therefore be understood as a space for supervised application of knowledge, rather than a substitute for theoretical education.

4.3 Participatory methodologies and active learning

Participatory methodologies seek to engage students in intellectual activities requiring understanding, application, analysis, argumentation and reflection. In legal education, their use should be guided by course-unit objectives and students' level of preparation.

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Problem-based learning can begin with a legally relevant situation whose resolution requires research, source identification and hypothesis formulation. Students learn to organise research and justify their choices.

Legal debate enables comparison of interpretations and develops the ability to respond to opposing arguments. To produce learning, it requires a clearly defined question, preparatory sources, participation rules and criteria that value the quality of justification.

Collaborative work can be used to analyse cases, prepare presentations or compare decisions. Activities should include defined responsibilities to prevent collective work from concealing significant differences in individual participation and learning.

Active learning is not synonymous with constant activity or rejecting teachers' explanations. It is an approach in which students should perform intellectual operations consistent with intended learning outcomes. In some situations, systematic explanation is the most appropriate strategy; in others, problem-solving deepens understanding.

Methodological choice should therefore result from a reasoned pedagogical decision, rather than simply adopting techniques considered innovative.

4.4 Learning assessment and the development of legal competences

Assessment profoundly influences how students study and distribute their effort. If assessment exclusively privileges reproducing information, students may focus on memorisation even when curricular objectives require interpretation, argumentation and application.

Assessment consistent with legal education should use instruments appropriate to the intended competences. Written tests, case resolution, research assignments, legal opinions, oral presentations, portfolios and judicial decision analysis can be used, provided the proposed task corresponds to the learning objective.

Formative assessment deserves particular attention. Throughout the process, teachers can propose short exercises, correct answers, identify recurring difficulties and provide guidance for improving performance. Students should understand the grade obtained, why their answers are insufficient and what measures they can adopt to improve.

In resolving a case, for example, criteria may include: identification of the legal problem; selection of relevant sources; interpretation of rules; factual analysis; consideration of alternative arguments; coherence of reasoning; and clarity of conclusion.

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Disclosing criteria in advance promotes transparency and helps students understand academic expectations. Using common criteria, where appropriate, can also support consistency of assessment across different classes or teachers.

Assessment should also promote academic integrity. Legal research requires correct identification of sources, respect for citation rules and distinction between one's own ideas, legal scholarship, statutory provisions and case-law arguments.

Assessment thus involves gathering information about learning, guiding students and improving teaching, as well as assigning a grade.

4.5 Pedagogical training for law teachers

Scientific mastery of the discipline is indispensable for teaching law, but does not by itself guarantee teaching and learning quality. University teaching requires skills in planning, communication, guidance, assessment and reflection on one's own practice.

Pedagogical training can cover formulating learning outcomes, constructing lesson plans, using participatory methodologies, developing assessment criteria, supervising scientific work and responsibly integrating digital technologies.

Institutions can promote teaching-methodology workshops, shared lesson plans, peer observation and reflection sessions on assessment results. These initiatives should respect teachers' scientific autonomy and be oriented towards improving academic quality.

It should not be assumed that all Angolan institutions face the same difficulties or have the same resources. Training needs should be identified in each context, considering programme characteristics, working conditions and teachers' experience.

Pedagogical training does not replace legal specialisation. It seeks to improve the ability to transform scientific knowledge into structured learning experiences suited to students.

Teaching quality cannot depend exclusively on individual initiative either. It requires institutional conditions that allow materials to be prepared, students to be supported, content to be updated and research to be developed.

4.6 Digital technologies, artificial intelligence and academic integrity

Digital technologies can expand access to study materials, legislation, case law, scientific publications and collaborative activities. Learning platforms can provide syllabuses, exercises and guidance; communication tools can support clarification sessions; and digital resources can facilitate research and academic work organisation.

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However, using technology does not by itself constitute pedagogical innovation. Simply transferring a lecture into a digital environment can leave participation and assessment unchanged. Technology becomes pedagogically relevant when it improves access to sources, enables learning to be monitored, facilitates collaboration or creates opportunities to apply knowledge.

In Angola, adopting technologies should consider differences in Internet access, equipment availability, connectivity costs and students' and teachers' digital skills. Low-data materials, documents available offline, and face-to-face and asynchronous activities can foster a more inclusive approach.

Generative artificial intelligence adds possibilities and risks. It can support question formulation, idea organisation and initial understanding of concepts. However, it can also produce incorrect information, nonexistent references, outdated interpretations or responses that do not correspond to the Angolan legal system.

Using these tools requires source verification, comparison of answers with current legislation and student responsibility for submitted work. Institutions should establish clear guidance on permitted uses, disclosure obligations and situations in which automated tools compromise assessment authenticity.

In legal education, teaching students to distinguish a plausible answer from a legally substantiated one is especially important. A tool's textual fluency does not demonstrate a reference's accuracy, a rule's current validity or an interpretation's validity.

Technology should remain subordinate to educational purposes, scientific rigour and academic responsibility.

4.7 Curriculum, scientific research and university outreach

Methodological innovation will be insufficient unless accompanied by reflection on curricular organisation and connections between teaching, research and university outreach.

Law No. 17/16 of 7 October, amended by Law No. 32/20 of 12 August, and the legislation regulating the higher education subsystem provide references for understanding education's institutional framework. Implementing curricular guidelines nevertheless requires pedagogical planning, monitoring and assessment of actual implementation conditions.

Law curricula should allow coherent progression between introductory knowledge, specialised course units and integration and application activities. Curricular connections can

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be strengthened through interdisciplinary projects relating different legal fields around concrete problems.

Scientific research should progressively form part of students' education. Critical reading of articles, legislative research, decision analysis and short scientific assignments can develop research and argumentation skills from the programme's first years.

University outreach can bring institutions closer to the community through rights education initiatives, legal information activities and supervised projects. These activities must respect applicable legal and institutional rules and must not be confused with providing legal services reserved for qualified professionals.

Connections between curriculum, research and outreach contribute to an education extending beyond the classroom while preserving the scientific rigour that should guide university activities.

4.8 Original proposal: Contextualised Legal Didactics Model (CLDM)

The analysis developed supports proposing the Contextualised Legal Didactics Model (CLDM) as a conceptual framework for organising legal education in Angola. The model seeks to connect the scientific demands of legal education with application competences, national realities, assessment and ethical responsibility.

The CLDM is neither a single method nor a mandatory formula for all institutions. It is a proposal for pedagogical organisation adaptable to course-unit characteristics, educational objectives, academic level and available resources.

Its originality lies in systematically connecting six dimensions that should operate in an integrated manner.

First dimension: doctrinal and normative foundations.

Learning should ensure mastery of fundamental concepts, principles, legal institutions and rules. Students need to know the sources of law, understand the legal system's structure and recognise the relationship between general rules and special regimes.

Participatory methodologies do not dispense with reading legislation, studying legal scholarship or systematising content. On the contrary, practical application requires a consistent conceptual foundation.

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Second dimension: explicit development of legal reasoning.

Teaching should make visible the intellectual operations used to solve legal problems. Students should learn to identify relevant facts, formulate the legal issue, locate sources, interpret rules, compare arguments and substantiate conclusions.

Teachers can demonstrate these operations through a commented case resolution, then ask students to apply the same procedure to different situations. Legal reasoning thus becomes an explicit pedagogical objective, rather than an assumed ability.

Third dimension: Angolan contextualisation.

Content should be related, whenever relevant, to the Angolan legal system, national institutions and legally relevant social problems. This contextualisation includes rigorous use of current legislation, consultation of relevant judicial decisions and analysis of situations suited to national realities.

Contextualising does not mean abandoning foreign legal scholarship or restricting learning to the national level. It means critically using comparative contributions, distinguishing what can be transferred from what depends on specific legal, historical or institutional conditions.

Fourth dimension: supervised experiential learning.

Students should have progressive opportunities to apply knowledge through hypothetical cases, decision analysis, legal opinions, simulations and legal drafting exercises.

Experience should be accompanied by teacher guidance and subsequent reflection. The activity extends beyond presenting a solution, including analysis of the arguments used, errors identified and possible alternatives.

Fifth dimension: competence-aligned assessment.

Assessment instruments should correspond to learning objectives. If the objective is to develop statutory interpretation, the task should require interpretation; if it is to develop argumentation, students should construct and defend arguments.

Formative assessment should identify difficulties and provide guidance for improvement. Criteria should be clear, proportionate and appropriate to the educational level.

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Sixth dimension: ethical and digital responsibility.

Legal education should integrate reflection on fundamental rights, academic integrity, professional responsibility, information protection and critical use of technologies.

Students should learn to verify sources, respect authorship, recognise digital tools' limitations and assume responsibility for the conclusions they present.

The six dimensions are not isolated stages. Doctrinal foundations support reasoning; reasoning guides application; contextualisation makes problems legally relevant; experience allows knowledge to be applied; assessment provides information about learning; and ethical responsibility guides the use of knowledge.

4.8.1 Operationalising the model

The CLDM can be applied through three complementary moments.

Before class, teachers provide preparatory materials, indicate fundamental sources and formulate a guiding question. Students undertake an initial reading and identify doubts or problems.

During class, teachers systematise necessary concepts and guide an application activity, such as case resolution, decision analysis or comparison of interpretations. Participation is accompanied by criteria valuing legal justification.

After class, students present reasoned responses, review their arguments and receive comments on aspects requiring improvement. Teachers use the difficulties identified to adjust subsequent activities.

This sequence does not necessarily require advanced technological resources. It can be implemented using printed legislation, selected texts, teacher-prepared cases and written exercises. Technology can expand possibilities, but is not indispensable to the model's operation.

4.8.2 CLDM application matrix

Dimension	**Guiding question**	**Possible pedagogical activity**	**Evidence of learning**
Doctrinal and normative foundations	Does the student understand the relevant concepts and sources?	Guided reading, systematic exposition and identification of rules	Correct explanation of concepts and selection of relevant sources

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Dimension	**Guiding question**	**Possible pedagogical activity**	**Evidence of learning**
Legal reasoning	Can the student construct a substantiated solution?	Commented case resolution and comparison of arguments	Coherent identification of the problem, interpretation and justification
Angolan contextualisation	Can the student relate knowledge to the national legal system?	Analysis of legislation and decisions relevant to Angola	Correct use of national sources and appropriate contextualisation
Supervised experiential learning	Can the student apply knowledge to legal tasks?	Legal opinions, simulations and decision analysis	Consistent application of rules and ability to revise arguments
Competence-aligned assessment	Does assessment measure what the course unit intends to develop?	Criteria rubrics, formative exercises and feedback	Correspondence between objectives, performance and assessment criteria
Ethical and digital responsibility	Does the student use sources and tools responsibly?	Reference verification, disclosure of tools used and ethical discussion	Correct citations, source verification and recognition of tools' limitations

The matrix is an operational proposal, not an already validated instrument. Its application should be adapted to the course unit and accompanied by appropriate indicators. Evidence of learning can be collected through assignments, exercises, assessments and pedagogical observation, provided applicable institutional rules are respected.

4.8.3 Implementation and assessment conditions

The CLDM should be implemented gradually. An institution can begin by selecting some course units, defining priority competences, preparing activities and establishing assessment criteria.

Subsequently, it can analyse the work produced, gather student and teacher opinions and compare difficulties identified before and after the pedagogical experience. If personal data are used or research with human participants is conducted, applicable ethical and institutional requirements should be observed.

Assessment of the model should consider, among other aspects, the quality of legal justification, ability to apply rules, argumentative clarity, research autonomy and academic integrity. Adopting the model should not be assumed to automatically produce better results: that hypothesis requires investigation.

The proposal should therefore be understood as a working framework intended to guide experimentation, teacher reflection and future research.

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4.9 Innovation perspectives and implementation priorities

Innovation in legal education in Angola requires connections between teaching practices, curricular organisation and institutional quality policies.

At classroom level, learning activities should be diversified and opportunities to apply knowledge created. Even with limited resources, hypothetical cases, structured debates, legislative analysis, decision interpretation and justification exercises can be used.

At curricular level, learning outcomes should be formulated in clear and verifiable terms. Course units should indicate the knowledge students need to acquire and the abilities they must demonstrate.

At institutional level, continuing pedagogical training for teachers should be accompanied by working conditions enabling preparation of materials, student guidance, research and revision of assessment practices.

At technological level, priority should be given to accessible, safe and pedagogically justified solutions, with attention to digital inclusion, academic integrity and source verification.

At research level, empirical studies are needed on the methodologies actually used in Angolan law faculties. Surveys, interviews, classroom observations, syllabus analysis and assessment-instrument studies can help explain institutional differences and identify specific needs.

A CLDM research agenda could begin with a pilot study in one or more course units. The study should define in advance its objectives, learning indicators, data-collection procedures and analytical criteria. Comparing work produced at different moments can help identify changes in performance, without automatically attributing every difference to the pedagogical intervention.

Innovation should be understood as a process of critical adaptation and continuous improvement, supported by available evidence, academic community participation and outcome assessment.

5 Final considerations

Methodology and didactics of legal education are fundamental dimensions of legal education quality in Angolan higher education. The complexity of legal phenomena requires

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learning to go beyond reproducing rules and concepts, promoting the ability to interpret, argue, investigate, apply and critically assess knowledge.

The analysis developed supports the conclusion that pedagogical renewal does not depend exclusively on introducing technologies or replacing one methodology with another. It requires interconnected transformation of learning objectives, teaching practices, assessment instruments, curricular organisation and the institutional conditions in which education occurs.

Theoretical explanation continues to play an essential role in systematising legal knowledge. Its effectiveness can nevertheless be reinforced when integrated into application activities, problem discussion, comparison of interpretations and critical reflection.

The case method, decision analysis, simulations, problem-based learning and formative assessment have potential to develop competences relevant to legal education. Their use should be planned, suited to curricular objectives and accompanied by clear assessment criteria.

Contextualising teaching in Angolan realities is an important requirement. Legal education should promote rigorous knowledge of current legislation, understanding of national institutions and analysis of legally relevant social problems, without confusing pedagogical examples with empirical research findings.

Technological innovation can expand access to sources, facilitate research and diversify learning experiences. Its benefits nevertheless depend on access conditions, teacher preparation, source verification and rules promoting academic integrity.

As an original contribution, the article proposes the Contextualised Legal Didactics Model (CLDM), structured around six interdependent dimensions: doctrinal and normative foundations; explicit development of legal reasoning; Angolan contextualisation; supervised experiential learning; competence-aligned assessment; and ethical and digital responsibility.

The CLDM provides a conceptual framework for planning activities, establishing assessment criteria and guiding pedagogical experiences. It should not, however, be presented as an empirically validated model. Its effectiveness, suitability and feasibility need to be examined in concrete institutional contexts.

The main avenue for further development is therefore conducting pilot studies in Angolan law faculties, with predefined indicators, systematic collection of learning evidence and analysis of institutional implementation conditions. Such studies may confirm, reformulate or limit the model's assumptions.

Ultimately, legal education quality should be measured by the ability to train professionals who understand law, substantiate their decisions, research rigorously and

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recognise the social responsibility inherent in their practice, as well as by the amount of content taught.

Modernising legal didactics means preserving the scientific demands of legal education and creating conditions for students to participate actively in constructing knowledge, develop intellectual autonomy and respond critically, with justification and ethically to the challenges of Angolan society.

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