processes of determining what is good work in any given situation, it enables them to become effective and responsible learners.

However, self-assessment is not without technical problems and is under-represented in higher education, despite its importance as a technique. It has also been deemed a misnomer because it is supported by some sort of checking or second-marking by the lecturer. However, the literature on self-assessment is voluminous and supports a correlation between students' marks and those awarded by their tutors.

The study had three main aims: (1) to test how closely the assessment by the students of their own work matched that of their tutor; (2) to give students an insight into the marking process (which research has shown improves learning); and (3) to see how far staff time could be saved.

The target group of students consisted of 17 students studying Tort. The following materials were prepared: the problem question itself; the marking scheme; and a set of instructions. The students were given a copy of the marking scheme and were asked to mark their own work under instructions given by their tutor. They were also given instructions on the meaning of logical presentation, critical approach, evidence of wide reading and absence of petty errors. Their tutor did checking and second marking.

The results showed a high level of agreement between the students' own assessment and their tutor's. At first it was thought the exercise might just be a sort of academic roulette, as this was the first time it had been tried with a full-blown problem question, in contrast with an objective test. But the results were really rather encouraging: more than 50% of the students who participated in the exercise gave themselves marks not more or less than 3 away from the tutor's marks. The results, therefore, seem to validate the findings of previous research that in general students were fairly accurate in their assessment and that there is a very high level of agreement between the average marks of students and their teacher's. The study was perceived by the students to result in an improvement of their subsequent examination performance and also saved staff time.

There is no doubt from the author's point of view that the students benefited from the exercise. The feedback received from them was generally encouraging. They felt contented about the whole exercise, especially the opportunity of actually looking at a marking scheme (for the first time) and, therefore, knowing the kind of things expected of them in their assignments and examinations. The students were motivated by the self-assessment exercise, which revealed to them the kind of things required, and the opportunity given to them to know what was involved in marking scripts. This is interesting because involving students in the assessment process, especially, via self-assessment, can help motivate them and does let them see the value in what they are doing, thereby making them more responsible for their own learning.

The study also enabled the tutor to save some time. Because the students had a copy of the marking scheme, they had been given adequate time to note issues they had left out or not handled properly or as extensively as required. There was no need for their tutor to make detailed comments exceeding more than a few lines on each script, as had usually been the case. Their tutor was, therefore, able to save considerable time (about 2 hours in all). The actual marking was also speeded up by the fact that the Assignment Guidelines required the students to underline all cases and statutes and to word-process their assignments or write legibly. There are, therefore, potential benefits to both teaching staff and their institutions. The resource implications are enormous. If nearly 2 hours of staff time can be saved in the case of 14 students, one can imagine the time that could be saved in the case of a hundred or more students.

The study was limited because the sample was small. However, it must be stressed that this was only a pilot study from which the following important lesson has been learnt: before an exercise like the present one is carried out, the students have to be prepared psychologically by their tutor. What to expect during the exercise and the benefits to be obtained must all be explained to them and reassurance given them.

LEGAL EDUCATION GENERALLY

Seven principles of good practice in legal education: history and overview

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Editor's note: This particular edition of the Journal of Legal Education is largely devoted to a series of eight articles, exploring 'seven principles of good practice in legal education' and how they can be applied. For this issue of the Digest, the introductory article and the articles on the first four principles are digested. The remaining three will appear in our next issue.

The seven principles of good practice in legal education are modelled on seven principles of good practice in undergraduate education. The undergraduate principles were derived from decades of research on teaching and learning in college. This issue of the *Journal of Legal Education* applies the principles in legal education, explores their implications, and describes practical methods of implementing them in the law school classroom. The principles assert that good practice in legal education: encourages student-faculty contact; encourages cooperation among students; encourages active learning; gives prompt feedback; emphasises time on tasks; communicates high expectations; and respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

If the seven principles were developed in the context of undergraduate education, why should legal educators apply the sev-

en principles in the law school setting? For a simple, but powerful reason: law teachers who understand and implement the seven principles and law schools that reflect the seven principles can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning in legal education and the personal satisfaction of faculty and students as well.

The seven principles are student and learning-centred. Much of the research that forms the basis for the principles is concerned with questions such as these: how do students learn concepts and skills? what motivates students to work hard in their courses? what relationships and experiences have the greatest impact on students? Based on the results of empirical research directed at those and similar questions, the seven principles set out basic precepts of effective learning. For example, frequent student-faculty contact, both in and out of class, is the most important factor in student motivation; good learning, like good work, is collaborative and social, not competitive and isolated; there are many roads to learning; students bring different talents and styles of learning to school; and high expectations are important for everyone—for the poorly prepared, for those unwilling to exert themselves, and for the bright and motivated.

An effective teaching and learning environment can increase personal satisfaction for students and teachers. The seven principles address a number of negative characteristics that contribute to student and faculty frustration in and out of the classroom: distant, impersonal connections between teachers and students; competitive and isolated relationships among students; passive teaching and learning methods; lack of ongoing feedback on teachers' and students' performance; and low expectations.

The seven principles can help teachers and students create an environment of mutual respect and fulfilment. For example, students who know a few teachers well can get through the tough times and strengthen their commitment to the educational endeavour. Likewise, students who have the opportunity to work cooperatively with one another in the classroom can increase both their depth of understanding and their involvement in their own education. Students are most likely to succeed in school if they engage in a variety of active learning methods, receive periodic feedback on their performance, are allowed to demonstrate their learning in ways that play to their strengths, and are held to high expectations. When students succeed under those circumstances, faculty share in that success because they helped create the conditions that allowed both students and teachers to reach their goals.

Although the seven principles were developed in the mid-1980s and have enjoyed wide distribution in undergraduate departments at colleges and universities during the past ten years, most law teachers remain unaware of the principles and inventories. To bring the seven principles to the attention of legal educators, the Institute for Law School Teaching sponsored a conference in the summer of 1998, titled Seven Principles for Good Practice in Legal Education. The seven authors of these essays developed, attended and presented that conference. The participants explored four topics: the research basis for each of the principles; the adaptation of each principle to the environment of legal education; barriers to implementing the principles in law school; and strategies to overcome those barriers.

This issue of the *Journal of Legal Education* can be part of an important step forward for legal education. It addresses in detail each of the four topics considered at the conference, and it begins to address the critical issues identified by conference participants.

In the articles that follow, a diverse group of authors adapt the seven principles to legal education. The authors have done traditional and innovative classroom teaching, developed, and directed legal writing and academic support programs, taught in clinical settings, and served as law school administrators. One characteristic shared, however, is a commitment to outstanding teaching and meaningful learning in law school.

Principle 1: good practice encourages student-faculty contact

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Frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes is the most important factor in student motivation and involvement. Faculty concern helps students get through rough times and keep on working. Knowing a few faculty members well enhances students' intellectual commitment and encourages them to think about their own values and future plans. The issue becomes more complex, however, when one realises that relatively little of this kind of interaction actually takes place in higher education. There are many practical barriers, and—more importantly—not all teachers and students value out-of-classroom contact. Differing views of education and of the appropriate roles for its participants are key to understanding why some students and faculty view such contact as important and others do not.

There is a clear divide between faculty who value contact outside the classroom and those who do not, and the difference stems from disparate views of the meaning and process of education. Similarly certain students are drawn to their teachers and will make efforts to see them, while others are less likely to do so. What this means is that under the best of circumstances some faculty and some students engage in contact outside of the classroom and believe these contacts to be positive contributions to the students' education.

Who is the teacher who engages with students outside of class? Leading studies of undergraduate institutions have tried to answer this question by describing faculty as high-interactive or low-interactive teachers, depending on the number and extent of outside contacts with students. Significantly, professorial behaviour inside the classroom indicates