

cific acts of academic assistance rendered by their fellows. In the same way, they regularly attest (in writing, on videotape, at public presentations) to peer academic enrichment, explaining how the team's initial expectations were raised when the group took greater advantage of each member's contributions. Cooperative learning causes each team to evaluate its scholastic performance and each member to compare the academic satisfaction gained with what they would have demanded from themselves had they worked independently.

Academic excellence and professional skills development are reasons enough to introduce cooperative learning to the law school curriculum. Yet it is the third benefit—a fresh perspective on volunteer law work for clients of limited means—that compels us to do so. A vast majority of legal claims of low-income people are not getting addressed, including those that spell the difference between protection and forfeiture of basic entitlements. Law teachers can do more to increase the numbers in the pro bono pipeline by showing students how cooperative learning inculcates a new way of thinking about volunteer legal services. While law students state a variety of reasons as excuses for their non-participation in pro bono law work—for example, lack of time, interest, or specialised legal knowledge—these reasons pale in comparison to the obstacle that they do not see: our failure as law teachers to integrate cooperative learning with the express objective of teaching a novel strategy for making the legal system more accessible.

Most law teachers claim to be in favour of instilling pro bono sensibility in the hearts and minds of students but persist in maintaining cold, atomising classrooms and using pedagogy that deadens any such sensibility. To the degree that this approach to law teaching discourages graduates from doing their part to help the less fortunate, it is necessary to admit that law teachers are the problem, not the answer. When legal education integrates cooperative learning, it sends the powerful message to students that they are re-

sponsible not only for what they can get for themselves—their individual acquisition of legal knowledge—but for what they do to make legal education and the legal profession better.

Thus pro bono takes on new meanings and creative possibilities for law students steeped in cooperative learning. Indeed, students introduced to pro bono legal services as the field extension of cooperative learning experience learn what it means to be a community of lawyers who present themselves as a team. Cooperative learning in the field can work with low-income neighbourhoods not only to address discrete legal issues but also to positively change their corporate relationship to the lawyering process.

For those concerned about the plight of those unable to afford legal representation, the time has come to demand more from law teachers. We need to do our part to teach law students how to see volunteer law work as an intervention into community life which yields a greater return on our investment of professional time. In short, besides cajoling law students to add more volunteer time, we need to help them see how they can multiply it.

In conclusion, cooperative learning, at its best, inextricably links the study of law to pro bono legal services, making them one and the same enterprise: the increase of accessible justice. Grouping students in a variety of exercises and field assignments, it instils a profound sense of connectedness, redeeming the promise of personhood in each student in relation to each other and to the community. This depth of integration is so meaningful that law students resolve to teach this learning process to colleagues and community folks throughout their careers—and that is true pro bono legal service.

Principle 3: good practice encourages active learning

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Students learn both actively and passively. They learn passively when their prima-

ry role is to listen to an authority who organises and presents information and concepts. Active learning occurs when students do more than listen.

Students' learning in and out of the classroom can be thought of as a continuum of increasing levels of activity. At one end of the spectrum, students listen to teachers or guest speakers. Their activity increases as they take notes, monitor their own level of understanding, write questions in their notes, ask questions in class, and organise and synthesise concepts. They are even more active when they discuss concepts or skills, write about them, and apply them in a simulation or in real life.

General characteristics associated with active learning are: students are involved in more than listening; less emphasis is placed on transmitting information and more on developing students' skills; students are involved in higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); students are engaged in activities (eg. reading, discussing, writing); and teachers place greater emphasis on students' exploration of their own attitudes and values.

Law schools commonly use a wide variety of active learning techniques, such as Socratic dialogue, discussion, writing exercises, simulation, computer exercises, real-life experiences (clinics, externships, field trips) and teacher-student collaboration in course design. But active learning is more than a set of techniques. It is also an orientation on the part of students and teachers. It includes a belief that legal education should help students understand legal concepts and theory, improve critical thinking and develop professional skills and values. It seeks to focus students not only on what they are learning but how they are learning as well. Finally, an active learning orientation proceeds from the assumption that students learn best when they take responsibility for their own education.

Active learning is important for the fundamental reason that active involvement enhances learning. Active learning

methods are effective and efficient ways to teach critical thinking and higher-level cognitive skills. Active learning helps students grasp, retain and apply content. It also allows students to have concrete experiences, receive feedback, reflect, integrate the experience, and experiment with further experiences.

Barriers to active learning include the following: institutions usually prioritise scholarship over teaching; some students resist active learning methods; most teachers feel pressure to cover a certain amount of content and believe they can barely do justice to their subject matter in the time allotted so are reluctant to employ methods that they believe will sacrifice coverage; faculty resistance to the time and energy required to learn new techniques; many teachers are reluctant to try innovative methods in large classes; many teachers see their primary role as transmitting knowledge of the subject matter; and teacher unwillingness to take risks in the classroom.

The use of active learning methods is common in legal education. Broadly conceived, Socratic dialogue is the exploration of concepts through questions posed by the teacher and responses from students. Questioning of students by teachers is ubiquitous in legal education, from case dissection to problem-based courses. To help turn the theory of the benefits of the method into reality, you can employ several simple techniques to maximise the active learning aspects of Socratic dialogue.

First, teach students how to be active learners. They need to learn how to be active readers, organisers, and synthesisers. When reading material for class, active learners not only extract the key information, they monitor their own understanding, note their questions and attempt to apply the reading to the larger context of the course or real life. Second, help students prepare for class. Students will get more from Socratic dialogue if you alert them to key questions, hypotheticals, or problems that you will explore in upcoming classes. Third, involve all stu-

dents in the dialogue in class. After posing a question, hypothetical or problem, ask the entire class to formulate silently a response in thirty seconds, or to write a brief response in one minute.

Discussion has a number of benefits for students and teachers. Discussion allows students to 'discover' ideas, which leads to deeper learning. Good discussions prompt students to use higher-level thinking skills: to apply rules in new contexts, analyse issues, synthesise doctrines, and evaluate ideas. Suggestions to generate effective discussions are: first, create a classroom atmosphere conducive to discussion; second, plan the discussion by identifying goals, materials, format and questions; third, be sure the students know what the question is; and fourth, guide the discussion by maintaining eye contact with the student speaking to signal the rest of the class to pay attention.

Writing exercises—in our out of class, graded or ungraded, formal or informal—have significant benefits for students and teachers. Writing helps to develop thinking skills. As students explore an idea in writing, their understanding and misunderstanding of concepts become clearer. Writing in class gets students actively involved in learning the subject matter and skills of a course.

A significant body of literature identifies the beneficial effects of computers on teaching and learning in higher education generally and in law school specifically. First, students in courses taught in part through computer-assisted instruction (CAI) learn content faster and retain it longer than students in the same course taught without CAI. Second, teachers in courses taught in part through CAI are able to devote less class time to teaching basic legal rules and more time to, for example, the underlying rationale for the law or analysis skills. Third, computer-assisted methods such as tutorials and electronic forums help teachers respond to students' different learning styles. Fourth, some students learn more comfortably and effectively in the electronic environment than in the classroom.

Experiential learning integrates theory and practice; it combines academic inquiry with real-life experiences. Students can have real-life experience with law in courts, agencies, clinics and law offices. Or you can arrange for students to encounter real life in the classroom through actual legal documents, videos, and speakers. But for effective learning students must do more than have experiences; they must engage in a reflective process in which they glean meaning and lessons from the experiences.

Although experiential learning takes many different forms, several general principles apply. Not all experience leads to educational growth. Student experiences are most likely to promote significant learning if they are carefully structured and monitored to achieve specific learning goals. The teacher, student, and field personnel (if applicable) should have a clear understanding of the student's role in the experience.

Active learning encompasses both a methodology and an orientation. Its orientation proceeds from two assumptions: that students should take responsibility for their own education; and that important goals for legal education include legal concepts and theory, critical thinking, and professional skills and values. Perhaps the greatest barrier to the implementation of active learning is teachers' reluctance to take risks in their classrooms. But since active learning methods are essential tools to achieve many of the critical goals of legal education, that risk is well worth taking.

Principle 4: good practice gives prompt feedback

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Knowing what you know and don't know focuses learning. Students need appropriate feedback on performance to benefit from courses. When getting started, students need help in assessing existing knowledge and competence. In classes, students need frequent opportunities to