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Inclusive Teaching Methods Across the Curriculum: Academic Resource and Law Teachers Tie a Knot at the AALS

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IN SEPTEMBER 1996, Laurie Zimet, Director of the Academic Support¹ Program at the University of California at Hastings College of the Law, proposed to the rest of us—four law professors and two other academic support teachers²—that we plan the Academic Support Section presentation at the 1997 Association of American Law Schools Annual Conference.³ Our panel topic, “Inclusive Teaching Methods Across the Curriculum,” would draw deeply from our common passion for the subject and from our diverse experiences in innovative pedagogy.⁴ But could seven of us, three of us speaking one dialect of legal education (academic support processes)⁵

1. Academic support programs or “ASPs” are a relatively recent but long overdue phenomenon in law schools. Such programs are also sometimes known as academic assistance or academic resource programs.

2. The rest of us: Frances Lee Ansley, Professor, University of Tennessee College of Law; Paula Lustbader, Director of the Academic Resource Center, Seattle University School of Law; Charles E. Daye, Professor, University of North Carolina School of Law; Rodney O. Fong, Director of Academic Resources Program, Golden Gate University Law School; Ann L. Iijima, Professor, William Mitchell College of Law; David Dominguez, Professor, Brigham Young University Law School.

3. At that time, the Academic Support Section had been granted provisional status by The Association of American Law Schools. Laurie Zimet was selected by the Section’s Executive Committee to be the Chair of the Program Committee for the 1997 Annual Meeting.

4. For a discussion of our experiences in innovative pedagogy, see generally Frances Lee Ansley, *Race and the Core Curriculum in Legal Education*, 79 CAL. L. REV. 1511 (1991); Frances Lee Ansley, *Starting with the Students: Lessons From Popular Education*, 4 SO. CAL. REV. LAW & WOMEN’S STUDIES 7 (1994); David Dominguez, *Beyond Zero-Sum Games: Multiculturalism as Enriched Law Training for All Students*, 44 J. LEGAL EDUC. 175 (1994); David Dominguez, *Negotiating Demands for Justice: Public Interest Law as a Problem Solving Dialogue*, 15 IN PUB. INTEREST 1 (1996–1997).

5. ASPs complement the law school curriculum by focusing on the process involved in developing skills that are necessary to succeed in law school. Those involved with ASPs recognize that this process involves a number of learning stages and that there are analytical and non-analyti-

and four of us speaking another (substantive transfer of legal doctrine), communicate well enough to decide what areas we would cover, how we would convey the material, and who would do which part of the presentation?⁶

Little did the seven of us know what lay ahead! Perhaps had we been forewarned that our deliberations would severely test our understanding and practice of inclusive teaching methods, we never would have agreed to take part. Who could have suspected that, in effect, we were enrolling in a fall seminar where each of us would take turns schooling the other? What intense exchanges during those first telephone conferences! What confusion in the early e-mail and faxes! Whether Laurie or anyone else had it clearly in mind to do so, the planning effort placed each of us not only in the role of confident instructors ready to sing each other's praises, but also in the role of anxiety-ridden, slightly intimidated law students looking to prove that we belonged in the group's discussion.⁷

Perhaps because all of us are practicing teachers, the one "seminar" quickly expanded in size and intensity to seven overlapping "courses" on inclusive teaching methods throughout the curriculum, conducted all at once, with each of us pressing our points and seeking to be heard. One by one we called upon each other to teach the rest. This experience in turn caused us to appreciate how much more there was to learn. As each other's students, we were alternatively humbled by our respective blind spots and yet gratified by the wealth of visions, suggestions, and examples that we shared. Time and again one of the seven took time to help the others better understand an unfamiliar idea. Relating well to our law students, we knew in our hearts that the wisest course was to admit openly the need for more explanation. Yet, it was exceedingly difficult to lay bare before one's peers a lack of understanding.

cal factors that can affect student performance. In addition, we recognize that students (like professors) have different backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles that need to be addressed in order for all students to reach their potential. Finally, a strong tenet emerging from ASP practice is that *how* we teach is as important as what we teach when it comes to learning.

6. In our case, the planners were also the ultimate presenters in the program. Planners and presenters are used interchangeably in this article to describe the seven of us.

7. It was only fair that our collaboration on inclusive teaching methods would be very challenging, even for us. It is certainly no less so for our students. One of us opens their upper division courses by having students review statements made in their law school application personal statement. He asks students what degree legal education has fulfilled—or stunted—their dreams. They then interview each other in class and introduce a classmate by conveying something of that classmate's reflections about his or her personal statement. A student later wrote to him about the "individual within a group" learning process that "required me to peer back into the person I was before my baptism as a 1L. It made me accountable for who I was and the progression or regression which has taken place."

More and more the roles of student-teacher converged. We experienced a breakthrough in our conception of the panel: why meet the goal of designing an "expertise-based" presentation when we could exceed it, staging an inclusion-based discovery process? Why make it appear that we seven had "better" insights when our deliberations proved that inclusive teaching methods collaboratively explored could produce educational enrichment beyond that which any law or academic resource teacher would have imagined working in isolation? So, we decided that we would try to model a style of collaborative legal education among law and academic support teachers that would actively recognize a wide range of learning and teaching capabilities. Given how well we had led each other to new frontiers—and then together had broken new ground—we wanted to see if we could replicate that experience at the AALS session, expanding our stage so that participants might see clearly how they too perform as teachers and students at the same time.

This article describes an educational journey of seven diverse law teachers,⁸ located in different parts of the country,⁹ at various stages of our careers,¹⁰ who, in the course of preparing a simple panel, found that we had created a truly rewarding experience of our own. We write with the conviction that we need to share what we learned from those four months of "schoolwork" and from the AALS program we eventually presented in January, 1997. As we reconstruct our collaboration on inclusive teaching methods and ponder where it is taking us, we find we worked through the following stages of progression. First, came the initial selection of the presenters: *Assembling the Panel* (Part I). Second, a period of orientation and sizing up each other followed, where we shared our respective visions of how law and academic support teachers could join forces to promote inclusive teaching methods into the legal academy. We entered an "adjustment-to-reality" phase. Each of us critically reflected upon how our broad vision of collaboration might be at odds with the reality of our circum-

8. Our group included the perspectives of African-American, Caucasian, Chinese-American, Chicano, and Japanese-American individuals. Our group consisted of three men and four women, both heterosexual and gay. There was not a white heterosexual male among us. We considered at length this glaring omission from our otherwise inclusive format. As discussed later, the perspectives of physically and learning disabled individuals also would have helped in planning the presentation.

9. South—University of North Carolina School of Law (North Carolina); Midwest—William Mitchell College of the Law (Minnesota); West—Brigham Young University School of Law (Utah), Seattle University School of Law (Washington), and University of California Hastings College of the Law and Golden Gate University School of Law (California).

10. Some of us are tenured, others are not.

stances:¹¹ *Planning the Presentation* (Part II). Third, we eventually sought both closure to our collaboration and commencement of a wider effort through a call to activism within the academic community; realizing our goal to make a positive difference for the AALS audience: *The Presentation* (Part III).¹² Finally, we made future plans to bring legal education into the next millennium: *Postscript* (Part IV).¹³

Our transformative experience in working together on this panel, then interacting with a terrific audience and later enjoying the charge of warm and enthusiastic feedback has reinforced for us the importance of inclusive teaching methods in the law school classroom. It has also convinced us that we should seek further opportunities to share and promote these ideas.¹⁴ We write these words with the hope of encouraging other academic support and traditional law teachers to collaborate in a healthy critique of one another's teaching methods, thereby increasing opportunities for new and better applications. We do so with an increased sense of the urgency of the task in the face of the sharp challenges now facing diversity efforts in legal education.¹⁵ It is our conviction that law schools should continue and expand

11. For example, our vision of collaboration might be odds with our (lack of) experience as law teachers, the availability of academic support resources, the politics surrounding the recognition of the academic support teachers as valued colleagues, and the interest level of the administration in promoting this subject among the faculty.

12. For us, for example, it came first in the form of the presentation at AALS and, now, this article.

13. In our first draft of this article, David Dominguez asked us to use marriage as a metaphor to convey what he describes as our "miraculous unity in the midst of real differences." In his original draft, David described the sections of this article as: *Popping the Question* (Part I); *Preparing for the Big Day—Crafting Our Vows* (Part II); *Panel Presentation—Starting a Family* (Part III); and *Postscript—The Next Generation* (Part IV). However, when Laurie began drafting a contribution to this article, she experienced difficulty trying to work within this context since, as a lesbian, she is prohibited from legally marrying. We then realized that in writing this piece, we may have made some assumptions about our audience (and collaborators) and their ability to connect with this metaphor. As was the case throughout our work together, this enabled us to examine how our approaches to writing and presenting relate to our approaches to teaching classes. In our attempt to convey information and enhance learning, what assumptions do we make about our students when we teach, or about our audiences when we write or present?

14. After our presentation at AALS, we challenged each other, upon returning to our respective institutions, to reenact our workshop among our faculty colleagues. Please hold us accountable to that challenge.

15. These sharp challenges are beyond the scope of this paper. One challenge is the instability in affirmative action doctrine. See *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Peña*, 515 U.S. 200 (1995); *Hopwood v. Texas*, 78 F.3d 932 (5th Cir.), cert. denied, 116 S. Ct. 2581 (1996). Another is the important instances of political mobilization against, and intense public debates over, affirmative action. See California Civil Rights Initiative (proposed as Proposition 209 and approved by voters Nov. 1996). See, e.g., CHARLES R. LAWRENCE III & MARI MATSUDA, *WE WON'T GO BACK: MAKING THE CASE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION* (1997); RICHARD D. KAHLBERG, *THE REMEDY: CLASS, RACE AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION* (1996); JOHN DAVID SRENTNY, *THE IRONIES OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION* (1996). A third challenge is the alarming result of abandoning affirmative action.

their efforts to make the legal profession and justice system accessible to all kinds of people, especially to members of groups historically excluded or disadvantaged. Although it is clear that more inclusive teaching methods are beneficial for all students, these methods can also play a key part in assuming that after a diverse class of students is admitted to law school, each member of the class is both supported and challenged in ways that produce personal and academic achievement for all.

I. Assembling the Panel

At the beginning of this enterprise, Laurie Zimet was in it alone.¹⁶ Potential presenters first had to be identified and then contacted. Since the AALS Academic Support Section was still provisional, she felt this presentation was particularly important because permanent status for the section depended, at least in part, upon it. Additionally, we anticipated a large crowd with high expectations. In order to select the proper presenters, Laurie worked backwards, starting by envisioning the audience. Based on past academic support conferences, she predicted the audience would include individuals who differed in class, culture, gender, physical and cognitive processing abilities, race, and sexual orientation. In addition, the audience would be comprised of people from different types of law schools who assumed different roles in their institutions. In attendance would be academic support teachers, administrators, law teachers who taught clinical, doctrinal, legal writing and research subjects, librarians, and staff, among others. In planning the program, Laurie, therefore, wanted presenters who could share some of the above perspectives and understand the points of reference of different members of the audience.

The committee members she eventually assembled did indeed come to the table with perspectives reflecting differences in class, culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, and so on.¹⁷ Further, we had different roles in legal education: some of us were in academic support, some of us were teachers of doctrinal law (first year and upper division courses) and some taught skills-based legal writing and community service courses. A number of us taught large classes, some taught small seminars, and others engaged in one-to-one counseling. This combination of different perspectives enabled

See, e.g., Linda Wightman, *The Threat to Diversity in Legal Education: An Empirical Analysis of the Consequences of Abandoning Race as a Factor in Law School Admission Decisions*, 72 N.Y.U. L. REV. 1 (1997); Peter Applebome, *In Two Law Schools Black Enrollment Scarcely Exists*, N.Y. TIMES, June 28, 1997, at A1.

16. This was because she was responsible for setting up a program as Chair of the Planning Committee of the Academic Support Section of the AALS.

17. *See supra* note 8. *But see infra* note 24.

us to include topics and teaching methods that could resonate with the various segments of the audience. And, at the same time, we would create a model for legal education. Instead of just a panel of diverse teachers talking or reading about inclusive teaching methods,¹⁸ the presentation could credibly model the methods we use in our work, methods that we hoped would be incorporated in and adapted for classes across the curriculum.

In selecting presenters for this enterprise, Laurie was looking not only for differences but also some commonalities. She sought people who she believed had a genuine interest in enabling others to learn and a concern about how they feel while doing so; sensitivity and respect for individuals; listening skills; a sense of humor; the ability to be vulnerable and not take themselves too seriously; and willingness to place a high priority on teaching as part of their work.¹⁹

II. Planning the Presentation

A. Defining Inclusive Teaching Methods

Inclusive teaching methods begin not with inclusion, *per se*, but with permission to trace the numerous individual paths that have led students and teachers to the same time and place. Most of our group had never met or talked with many of the other planners. All of us worked at different "status locations" within a profession that displays a clear, well defined hierarchy. Yet, within our own small group and across large geographic distances, we were trying to collaborate and jointly plan a program on teaching methods. What a challenge! Many of us felt a combination of uneasiness, excitement, and caution. We were uneasy working with teachers we had heard about and who had excellent reputations, but with whom we had never before spoken. In addition, we were scattered all over the country! To communi-

18. This alone would have been extremely informative given the knowledge and talent of the teachers involved in this presentation. Yet, the audience (and students in our classes) would not have experienced the "Aha!" that comes from their individual involvement and contribution. In order for each participant to become individually involved and contribute, we needed to use various teaching methods to address different learning styles and backgrounds.

19. Some of us who were invited by Laurie feel compelled to note that we are not always confident answering to her glowing criteria. Certainly all of us believe in the importance of teaching, and all of us recall "high moments." But we are only too painfully aware that we seldom meet all our goals, and each of us could, no doubt, construct a list of "low moments" as well. One of us, Fran Ansley, even achieved a moment of notoriety as an exhibitor of teaching low points when, before a plenary crowd at one of AALS's Annual Conferences for New Law Teachers, she read aloud to the assembly a collection of some of the worst student evaluations she had ever received. She refuses to repeat the performance in these pages, but reports that there are some real doozies in the bunch. There was a lot of laughter at the AALS gathering, but it was the laughter that sometimes erupts in recognition of pain survived. Real pain and terror go along with the pleasure and joy of teaching.

cate, we used e-mail, faxes, and regularly scheduled conference calls. We used e-mail to plan the agenda before the conference call, and then afterward to summarize our telephone discussion. When we later reviewed our presentation and planning process, one of us commented:

The capacity of e-mail and conference calls to enable this planning process really amazed me. I have become a believer. Especially in light of the fact that many of us had never met each other before, it was remarkable to me that we could plan an event that required so much on-site trust, collaboration, and improvisation.

Yet, e-mail alone probably would not have been enough as this presenter recounts:

I don't think it is a process that will work for everyone planning an event of this kind. There are a couple of features of our process that I believe have been key: it was important that we combined e-mail with conference calls. The latter gave us a chance to know each other in at least a somewhat more "embodied" way—our tones of voice, our personalities and emotions come through more clearly on the telephone, along with a better feel for how the various team members may come across in a public setting, the different sorts of strengths and contributions each might bring, what the chemistry might be. The conference calls required significantly more money, I am sure, as well as significantly more coordination, planning, and "administration," but I think that they were necessary to the quality of the eventual program.

A different presenter described our earlier conversations:

Many of the initial conference calls were painfully polite as we showed our respect for each other. I was more intent on listening to the others, just like listening closely to my students, to interpret what each person was saying. I did not spend much time processing my own thoughts until after the conversation was over. This forum was new to me, and I needed my own time to process.

I remember listening very closely to each speaker, trying to figure out what the speaker was saying. I needed to be alert to the words, tones, and possible cultural and gender nuances that might have been conveyed during the discussions. Our group was exceptionally diverse, and I wanted to recognize everyone's contribution.

There were other potential barriers to our early planning as this academic support teacher describes:

Another source of my uneasiness was a spillover from the uneasiness I sensed from other members of the group. We were taking on different roles. The law professors, who plan their classes independently, were not used to developing teaching strategies with someone else, much less an academic support teacher. Now they were required to explain and support their approaches to teaching. And, this also was a new role for my academic support colleagues. As academic support teachers, we direct our programs often without working directly with classroom professors. We were now being required to explain to the law professors what

we practiced intuitively. The level of collaboration and cooperation to which we aspired was rare.

In fact, after a period of time (described later), we truly achieved a collaborative mode where law teachers encouraged academic support teachers to assist them in planning a particular exercise and vice versa. One of the law teachers described it this way:

I am becoming aware that the academic support professionals in our group not only had the hands-on experience of working "up close" with students on crucial legal reasoning skills, but also some specialized knowledge of cognition and learning theory that I believe would be extremely helpful for me as a teacher. The hands-on experience is something I was expecting; but the vocabulary and perspectives that I am beginning to pick up in things that Laurie, Rod, and Paula say, are an unanticipated benefit I am drawing from these conversations.

Sometime, I would like to arrange for a more formal opportunity to learn more about some of these things. For instance, I'd like to hear more about the notion that we learn with the aid of "schema" and how such a concept might influence my course work. I'd like to understand more about different learning processes and learning styles that I've heard these teachers mention. I'd like to discuss practical examples of "developmental" approaches to teaching and learning in the law school context.

So, there we were, accomplished teachers with plenty of material (in fact with too *much* material), trying to form a seamless presentation that not only accounted for the very best that each of us had to offer but blended those efforts into something even more valuable. It would have been easy at that point (the temptation was real enough!) to simply divide the presentation seven ways and allow each of us equal time to demonstrate our "best" method.²⁰ That would have been the inclusive thing to do, would it not?

No, it would not. Such an approach constitutes an act of compilation, not inclusion. It hears from all sides but does not ensure that anyone is crossing over from one side to the other. The lesson may be very informative, but is rarely transformative of the relationships among the listeners. They enter the classroom as strangers and leave perhaps more knowledgeable but no less strangers. Inclusive teaching methods place students in interactive roles in which they experiment with many learning styles and then teach each other what they learned. Moved by the collaboration, the students in this kind of environment are often eager to carry the message to a new audience outside the classroom.²¹

For this reason, critical reflection or self-examination becomes important. We need to consciously reexamine the inertia of conventional

20. No wonder most planning committees select speakers and discussants, arrange their order of presentation, and do little else.

21. This article is itself evidence that the authors, as "students" of our own process, have likewise been infected by this sort of energy.

pedagogy, where we simply do what is expected, satisfying traditional standards. Why artificially restrain instructional efforts in the form of sequentially airing viewpoints, when we can use inclusive teaching methods to multiply the variety of learning methods? Why settle for less? Why not be open to new contributions or discoveries? One of the constant ironies of law teaching is that once we use a method that works or feels good, and we get to the point where we are fairly competent at it, we see no reason to learn or try new ways—this, in an educational setting where our overriding message to students is not simply to master the current body of information, but to contend with the constantly evolving status quo and learn how to find and move with new frontiers!

Indeed, too many law school classroom discussions, even those whose convenors are determined to hear from all sides, end up pitting students against each other. The students compete in their relative grasp of material, trying desperately to win, to emerge with the top grade or high class ranking in hand. The academic support movement challenges this tacit classroom paradigm of scarce learning resources.²² If we base our learning on the idea that there is no way to expand a fixed, inadequate pie of educational opportunities, then we are left hoarding the little information we have, constantly fearful that sharing it will come at our expense and will place us at a disadvantage. Too many “top” students who do well achieve their grades through cramming and purging while a more interactive style, in which they helped fellow students, would result in a deeper and more lasting mastery and appreciation of the materials. Although some students believe that they “win the contest” of legal education, all students lose the opportunity to acquire and practice intellectual and interactive skills that are sorely needed in the profession. We have plenty of lawyers who are splendid at defensive argumentation and far too few who can collaborate effectively.

All these insights were well and good, but how were we to proceed? In the group were seven orchestrations of our talents, each with an eager director assigning roles and handing out scripts. There would be no way to account for all our approaches—the amount of time we had as a panel alone did not allow for that. The “pie” of one hour, forty-five minutes was as big as it was going to get. Could we, in short, break through the scarcity model and create the classroom among us that we had always dreamed about experiencing in our law school teaching?

22. The most pernicious scarcity mentality results from the all-too-real competition over top grades, class rank, selective co-curricular programs, employment opportunities, and the like.

With limited time as a non-negotiable reality, each of us could have resorted to self-promotional tactics to ensure that our “stuff” would make the final edit and appear on the actual panel. We could have jockeyed for positions. Just because our subject was inclusive teaching methods did not foreclose pre-set agendas or stock answers.

Instead, we were committed to practicing among ourselves what we would teach to our assembled colleagues in January, 1997. In some ways, we took this to the extreme. We never let anyone make concessions in order to simply “get along.” Although we were ready to accommodate each other through consensus, we were very sensitive to anyone feeling that they were forced to compromise. While we all chose to back down from time to time, we were highly conscious of not wanting to achieve our goal at another’s expense.

We tracked unfamiliar lines of vision and found that we could see straight and clear with each other’s help. This built trust among us and gave permission to affirm and critique the frameworks we used to account for our teaching improvement. We listened carefully and honestly considered alternative constructs to every panel idea. In short, our inclusive teaching method forged an instructional process which produced far better results than any of us could have discovered working alone.

Among the seven of us, the more we took inventory of our instructional travels and hopes for the future of legal education, the more we could see that there was an impressive variety of approaches to our panel topic—and not all of them harmonious with one another. This became evident right from the start. Our first e-mail asked each of us to identify our goals for the program, and for our planning process. What did we want the audience to get in 1.75 hours, and what did we want to achieve by planning it? In other words, we were being asked to abide by a standard practice for many teachers, but one often woefully absent in professional education: we were to articulate our teaching objectives. Next, we were asked to consider how to structure the presentation and our own planning to achieve our goals. With this direction, we were being asked to take another standard but often ignored step: we were to develop a lesson plan. These instructions set us up for our first conference call, and not surprisingly we came at these questions in different ways.

When we tried to define “inclusive teaching methods,” each of our perspectives appropriately reflected our role(s) in our home institutions, as well as our general background and life experiences. Some of us thought inclusion referred to the ideological choices professors make when they select the topics and readings for courses. Someone believed it was politically

charged and, depending on who was defining the concept, associated with a much larger agenda.

Others of us, mostly ASP folk, focused on the teaching methods used to convey the law and how to include all students in the discussion. Eventually we agreed that we wanted to enable students, particularly those who have been traditionally silenced in class, to be able to participate in the discourse and to challenge doctrines and values presented in class. From an ASP perspective, such a goal could be facilitated by using a variety of teaching methods, including reflection pieces,²³ free-writes,²⁴ role-playing, pairing-and-report, and other exercises that allow and encourage students to be actively involved. We knew the tension felt among us about course content versus teaching methods would also be in our audience and in our law schools. In fact, this was something that helped make our collaboration exciting and promising—we were modeling legal education!

Because our own conversation had proved so enlightening, somebody suggested that we have the audience do the same thing—explore the meaning of “inclusive teaching methods.” Echoing what we would do to foster inclusion of students in our classes, somebody else suggested that we have the audience respond to a free-write, asking participants for their definitions. Another offered a debriefing exercise using overhead transparencies and still another suggested that afterwards we could have the audience members explore why they teach the way they do. Brainstorming, we thought of breaking the audience into small groups or pairing individuals. In these groups or pairs they would select a course, identify the teaching methods used and why, and then have others suggest additional methods that might be more inclusive. Exchanging ideas and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of different teaching methods would be fun and informative for the audience. In fact, it would match what we were experiencing in our planning process.

After much discussion, we decided that another goal of the program might be to set up a situation where the audience could identify with students who feel excluded or inadequate in class. Importantly, we wanted teachers to step into the shoes of students. Several suggestions were made, again reflecting the committee’s own different learning styles and backgrounds. Someone suggested having members of the audience free-write

23. Reflection pieces enable students to express their personal thoughts and reactions to whatever is asked of them.

24. Free-writing is a technique in which writing is used for thinking and processing purposes. The writer uses the writing instrument (pen, pencil, computer keyboard) to answer a question without pausing or lifting the instrument for a period of time. It is a form of free association that enables the individual to use writing to enhance learning.

about reasons why students feel isolated or disenfranchised and then have them discuss this in pairs or small groups. Another proposed using vignettes that describe how students experience exclusion. A further option was to have actual student comments or reflection pieces be part of an exercise. One of us described bringing into the classroom students' personal statements, included in their law school applications. It was suggested that we could contrast these personal statements, which often convey excitement, enthusiasm, confidence, and high ideals, with statements made by students after a month in law school.²⁵ Then the audience could explore—using free-writes, role playing, and pairing—how students change in response to the law school environment and ways to help them retain their feelings of self-worth and confidence in the midst of these changes.

After this suggestion of including actual student voices, we explored videotaping a class and panning across the faces of the students. They might be angry (fist clenched), confused (shaking head or index finger over mouth), bored (yawn), absent (empty seat), etc. It was first suggested that we then have the audience offer explanations for the students' reactions. In a memorable exchange, one of us questioned our assumptions that we could accurately project what is going on with students simply by their appearance. Instead, we were prodded to have the audience think of teaching methods that would enable the *students* to communicate what is affecting their learning.

As we continued to generate ideas, it became clear that we wanted to introduce how students have different levels of comfort and feelings of belonging in a class. We wanted the audience to experience the feelings of being a novice in a new, challenging endeavor where there were unacknowledged norms and values and no developmental (step-by-step) instruction. We considered having the audience perform the "Macarena" to

25. The use of students' personal statements was incorporated in the description of the program as follows:

When students apply to law school, their personal statements often convey confidence, excitement, and high ideals regarding law school study and the practice of law. At some point in law school, these feelings are replaced with self-doubt, alienation, and despair. What are we doing or not doing in our classrooms that creates a learning environment that causes this?

Modeling different teaching methods, this interactive session will explore this question, and ways participants can approach their own teaching so students can retain their high ideals, enthusiasm, and confidence. The program will include actual insights from students about our teaching methods.

In addition, the panel—which consists of clinical professors, doctrinal, and academic support professors/professionals—will model how to use academic support programs as a resource in our quest to become better teachers!

illustrate this point.²⁶ There would be different comfort levels as some people, those familiar with the “Macarena” or more at ease with dancing in general, would thrive. Others, who were unfamiliar or uncomfortable with dancing or the “Macarena,” would lack confidence, feel awkward, and fail. Some would get the “Aha”/dance steps quickly and some would take longer. Several people might create additional, creative steps, and others would be satisfied going through the motions. We would then explore how each audience member felt during the exercise, which teaching method(s) helped, and at what stage the person got the “Aha.” The audience could then use this experience and relate it to the law school environment. Some students have a higher comfort level because their prior knowledge or their learning style, gender, race, sexual orientation, class, or other trait enables them to be more at ease with the content and teaching methods used in law school. We were very excited about using this dance until we examined our assumptions about it. When we pictured the audience engaged in the exercise, we assumed that people had no physical disabilities which would prevent them from participating. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages, we opted for a different approach which, as you will see, helped this problem somewhat but did not solve it entirely.²⁷

During this reiterative process, conference call after conference call, e-mail after e-mail, we narrowed our goals and, as time became increasingly short, we had to prioritize and make decisions. We identified a final set of goals: (1) enable the participants to experience and identify with different types of learning processes (e.g., novice, visual, contextual, collaborative, and experiential); (2) model inclusive teaching methods for diverse learners; and (3) promote collaboration between ASP teachers and others involved in legal education. This latter goal was developed after hearing how one of our academic support presenters is paired with a different doctrinal teacher each year and collaboratively teaches a class with that professor infusing it with academic support pedagogy. We thought this was a terrific approach and concluded that having the ASP teacher rotate among multiple courses and collaborate with numerous law teachers, who then go on to incorporate academic support methods in their other classes, has the potential, in time, to significantly alter the teaching climate in that particular law school. If academic support and law teachers collaborated similarly in law

26. We envisioned a group of law professors attempting to learn the dance during a professional conference and decided that this exercise would be truly novel. Later one of us saw an advertisement for a training videotape on the “Macarena” and faxed the rest of us the order form!

27. In retrospect, it would have been helpful to have individuals with physical and learning disabilities on our planning committee. Again, we were reminded of the importance of including different perspectives when planning our classes and conferences.

schools across the country, we believe that they might well transform legal education as a whole.

All of the ideas discussed above laid the groundwork for our ultimate presentation which, in fact, did *not* include any of these approaches. Instead, on the "Big Day" these ideas were reworked and evolved into a new form. Importantly, we learned that the ultimate exercise was less critical than our process in exploring the reasons why we chose it.

As a result of our planning process and presentation, we gained greater insight into the qualities necessary for electric moments to happen in a learning environment, whether a conference presentation or law school class. In the section that follows, we will share the reflections of one member of our team with occasional comments by another.

B. One Presenter's Retrospective on the Planning Process

I think to put together the program at AALS 1997 required at least five qualities: vision, leadership, sensitivity, persistence, and willing participants. Laurie Zimet brought all the qualities to the planning enterprise. In short she, as the Chair of the Planning Committee, made all the rest of us believe our program could, indeed, be something special.

Laurie's comments: Although this presenter uses the context of the conference, what we learned has direct application to our roles as teachers in law school. Ideally, in a classroom, the teacher starts with a vision/goal and then creates opportunities for all students to contribute in forming and achieving that vision/goal. While the comment above describes me modeling the "teacher" role in the planning process,²⁸ anyone of us could have performed this same role if asked, and all of us were eager to grow as teachers and learn from each other.

Vision:²⁹

On vision, I understood from Laurie that we were to "model" the ideas we were presenting. I confess that, at the outset, I anticipated being just an interested bystander as the incoming chair of the section. As such, it was not particularly clear to me what the implications were of this "modeling thing" that Laurie was talking about.

During an early conference call, I began to get a glimmer. We were to actually use the methods of "inclusive teaching" as we were making a presentation about "inclusive teaching." I began to get it! I got so excited that I lost my better judgment when I encountered an advertisement for a Macarena lesson tape. "Hey," I said to myself then and later to the others (as I faxed the advertisement), "we could use this!"

28. See *supra* note 15.

29. Vision also requires the teacher to share power and be vulnerable in the classroom.

Laurie's comments: If the teacher is effective, the students will refine the initial goal through their contributions and, while doing so, will become invested in working to attain it. This is precisely what happened with our group.

Leadership and Ownership:

The other aspect of her vision, as a leader, was to assure that each of us understood and signed on to the project. She involved each of us so that our work became a true collaboration and each of us had an equal measure of "ownership" for the final product. Indeed, when all was said and done, it was quite impossible, and utterly irrelevant, who had brought what particular idea to the conversation because this was a project that was fully "blended."

This kind of leadership was all the more extraordinary because I had never even met three of the individuals involved in the telephone conference-call conversations. I think the same is true of some or most of the others. A whole lot of listening to one another transpired, at Laurie's insistence. She would be sure that each person was in the conversation during our conference calls by asking more than once whenever the occasion demanded, "Charles" or "Rod" or "David" or "Ann" or "Paula" or "Fran," "what do you think of the idea of . . ." Soon, this group, which was spread across the country, was working together with greater smoothness than one would ever imagine.

Sensitivity:

Sensitivity characterized the leadership that Laurie brought to the enterprise, and characterized the form and substance of the entire dialogue. After conversations, she would promptly circulate copious notes of what we had discussed, seeming to include something from everyone.

Laurie's comments: It probably would have been more inclusive to have a process in which each person had the opportunity to summarize at least one of our conversations. In our case, no one volunteered to type up the minutes/discussion, so it defaulted to me as the Chair. Perhaps the best teachers inspire their students (or committee members) so they clamor for the chance to do this. While no one was inspired to draft the minutes, I do observe with satisfaction that we were inspired enough to want to write and jointly share our experiences in this article.

Soon we were exchanging samples of our work and notes that we had in our possession. Every individual listened, contributed, discussed, suggested, demurred, objected, and critiqued. Yet nobody was put down, diminished, overlooked, ignored, catered to, pampered, or overly disputed. Discussions evolved into consensus.³⁰

30. Echoing some of these points, another presenter also discussed the qualities of a good teacher by analyzing Laurie's approach to facilitating our group's learning process. This presenter

Persistence:

Sometimes things reached a lull. At that point, one of us would keep the end game in focus, and soon we were up to new ideas for making this program something special. That is where persistence came in. And it was not just persistence to put on any program that perhaps anyone of us working alone could have devised—with talking heads for a couple of hours. No! Rather it was a dogged persistence to make this program different, special—indeed, “inclusive” not merely as to content, but as to presentation and methodology. Remember, Laurie had told us that we had to model the very ideas we were presenting. In that sense not merely was the program “inclusive,” rather the very planning process that produced it was itself a model of inclusivity.

Willing Participants:

Finally, there had to be willing participants.³¹ Recall my own notion that I was to be an interested observer. Perhaps others had the idea that they were planning a program for someone else to present. Soon, it became clear that each of us had a role we could play. Laurie was the insightful one at saying, “Oh, yes. I could see you doing that!” I think she said that to each of us more than once. Before long we all were committed to participating in different part of the presentation!

Laurie's Comments: After planning the program, we were asked to think about the parts we wanted to do in the actual presentation. At that point because our program as a whole reflected a consensus of ideas, none of us was particularly wedded to doing a particular part. When someone was suggested to do a part, we discussed it and then made our choice. In planning the content, we had achieved a truly collaborative product. Moreover, as colleagues having experienced an inclusive process, we each were willing to do any part without competition over being the first or last to speak, having more time presenting, or speaking as an “expert.” This is a wonderful model for our classes where students can share their ideas freely and “own” the ultimate learning that takes place. Moreover, they can be rewarded by their actual learning experiences and not just by grades/professional recognition.

III. The Panel Presentation

At last, we found ourselves at the long-anticipated AALS meeting. We arranged to meet for lunch prior to our presentation and had the strange

commented on the importance of energy and commitment, planning, identifying goals, facilitating discussions, bringing absentees back up to speed, providing feedback, and “nudging” people on their assignments. In closing, this presenter emphasized that enthusiasm and humor made the process not only possible but genuinely fun.

31. Our vision of legal education also places onto students the reciprocal obligation of being willing to participate in and contribute to the learning process.

pleasure of actually laying eyes upon each other, often for the first time. We were excited, still a bit ragged, and each coming from other AALS involvements and events. At lunch we agreed to gather early in the assigned room to ensure all was in place for the big event. Recognizing that this would be a different learning experience, we had arranged the stage to reflect this. There was a long table for the panel, an overhead projector and screen, a coffee table, and two plush reclining chairs. It looked like something from the "Tonight Show," not in the least like a typical academic panel. As participants entered, they saw a crazy but comfortable sort of "living room" on stage. This visual impact immediately affected the atmosphere of our learning environment.³² In addition, participants were given a handout of our materials, a sixteen-inch piece of rope, and an index card when entering. They knew something different was afoot.

Before the presentation, we drafted our collective vision of the program. This script was hurriedly finalized over lunch and hot off Laurie's presses when we actually got to the room at the appointed time. All of us kept a copy close by.³³

We first focused on the audience. Before the program began, we asked the participants to write on an index card a problem or successful activity that related to inclusive teaching methods. Then to set a tone of collegiality between different types of educators, we asked the audience members to identify their role(s) in legal education. Afterward, one by one, our panel members introduced each other. To clarify what we wanted to accomplish and why, we discussed our goals verbally and illustrated them visually, using an overhead projector.

In our riskiest exercise, we placed audience members into the role of novice by requesting they tie their piece of rope into a "Bowline Knot."³⁴

32. It was clear from this setup that this would not be a panel of "talking heads." There was no podium, which indicated that there would be no "reading heads," either. Query what would happen if we changed the architecture and/or furniture in our classrooms to evoke a similar environment where people feel comfortable and physically included in the learning process? For example, some professors choose classrooms where seats can be arranged in a horseshoe or circle so the class and professor can see each others' faces.

33. The script is reproduced in Appendix A.

34. The "Bowline Knot" exercise was created by Rod Fong during his summer program. He was trying to prepare his students for the classroom experience. Since many of them were intimidated by the classroom and did not learn well in that scenario, he needed to let them know that some of their experiences were affected by their learning style. The previous summer, he had tried unsuccessfully to introduce the concept of different learning styles using an open class discussion. Unfortunately, having only a verbal discussion on different learning styles just did not work. He needed to create an experiential lesson that was visual. He thought about doing something with tying a knot, but he knew nothing about the subject. So, he approached a colleague who was a former Boy Scout and knew about knot tying; his colleague suggested tying a bowline. Rod developed a simple exercise that began by providing everyone with a sixteen-inch length of cotton

Most of the audience did not know what to do. We used diverse teaching methods³⁵ so the audience could experience and be exposed to different learning styles and emotions that accompany developing a new skill.³⁶ After the exercise, we had audience members write about their reactions to the teaching methods and how they felt during the exercise. Some wrote that they understood immediately what to do, while others expressed how they

sashcord. Then through a series of instructions, that involved different teaching methods, each participant could easily determine his or her own learning style.

35. The teaching methods were verbal complex instructions, verbal plain English instructions, written complex instructions, written plain English instructions, pictures, pictures with text, demonstrations, and pairing/collaboration.

36. The Bowline Rope Exercise was an important part of the program's success. Rod Fong, who facilitated this part, described the risks and rewards involved in teaching this new lesson:

First, I began by setting a serious tone for the audience even though they were all sitting there holding a sashcord in their hand. I started by announcing that they needed to tie a knot before they could leave the room; the nervous laughter began. I stated in a serious tone the technical instructions for the bowline; again there were nervous giggles. People sat there confused as if I had said something in Chinese. Then, once they realized that this was all part of the exercise, they turned their attention to the sashcord. Still there were occasional nervous giggles as people realized that the knot was not easily tied. Many sat motionless trying to visualize my verbal instructions.

Next, I asked if it would help to put the same instructions in writing. A loud sigh of relief came from the audience as if visualizing the written instructions would do the trick. I flopped down an overhead of the technical instructions they had in their handouts. People again tried tying the knot, but were still having problems turning the language into action.

Next, I asked if a picture of the knot would help and the crowd reacted positively. I referred to the handout with a picture of the knot above the written instructions. After a couple of minutes, someone raised their hand and exclaimed, "I think I got it." Everyone stopped and turned to look wondering if indeed someone from their ranks was able to tie the knot. Once it was discovered that several people had succeeded, the remaining people went back at it with renewed hope.

As I moved to the next step, the collaborative level, I could sense the energy level rising. I instructed those who had successfully tied the knot to teach the others around them. Everyone was engaged. Those who had succeeded in tying the knot wanted to show their new found skill to the others. Those who had not succeeded wanted to join the ranks of the victors. The audience had cooperated by fully immersing themselves in the exercise.

The audience was buzzing with excitement, and audience members were helping each other tie the knot. At one point, someone in the first row had successfully tied the knot and asked if it was correct. I look at the knot quickly and, without providing any indication one way or the other, responded, "what do you think?" I could sense his disappointment in receiving an unresponsive reply, and could feel the frustration rising. But I just smiled and moved around the room. Didn't I react just like a professor?, I mused.

I brought the audience back together as more people started acknowledging that they had tied the knot. Finally, I put up the last overhead that showed the knot with instructions in everyday words. More people nodded as they were able to tie the knot. After a couple of more minutes, the exercise was completed. I left the stage feeling content. I had achieved that feeling we all get after teaching that perfect class.

still could not tie the knot. Some people were confident, while others felt alienated. We then asked them to explore how the exercise related to their students' experiences in law school and their own teaching methods.³⁷

Jam-packed into the next forty minutes, we presented actual student voices describing their learning experiences, including: a lively talk-show roundtable, educational theory, role plays, and an opportunity at the end for the participants to reflect on what they learned during the session.³⁸

After our presentation, we were elated. We had opened the circle of deliberations to a larger community and had to embrace a whole new group of creators and active participants. The proof of the pudding was that the audience was unable to sit still. The place was jumping! The pattern we had set among ourselves meant that there could be no idle spectator looking to observe while the rest of us worked. Imagine a class where there can be no onlookers, where once a student is physically present there is no way to escape full immersion in the learning process.

What bore out the value of our intense preparation and hard work was that we set a stage and the actors performed old and new roles with gusto—student, stranger, teacher, neighbor, fellow anxiety-ridden classmate, friend. Furthermore, the nature of their participation made good on all the hopes and dreams that we had at the outset, as we seven individuals brought into the open the best of our work as a community, a unified team in spirit and purpose.

The presenter who discussed how the teaching process involved "Vision," "Learning and Ownership," "Sensitivity," "Persistence," and "Willing Participants,"³⁹ described our program by adding a final category:

The Reward:

The program that we actually presented, from my perspective, was wonderful. We had become a group. The parts flowed. The transitions were smooth, almost automatic. The content was thoroughly modeled. Perhaps other planning and presenting groups have had similar experiences. I doubt it. Our group became a "team"—a "community"—focused on the endeavor of trying to be sure that at some point legal education could be an endeavor in which every student could find more than a little bit of something positive and affirming in the educational process. Our planning process and presentation made me feel positive about what academic support can mean for our students, and about working with colleagues in the endeavor of trying to bring about a positive and affirming environment to legal education everywhere!

37. The audience's response to the exercise was fascinating and the subject for another article.

38. For more details about the program, see the Appendix.

39. See discussion *supra* Part II.

At the close of the presentation, individual members of the audience flocked to the stage to congratulate us and the section. Upon our return home, many of us heard positive comments from colleagues. The following e-mail is one example:

I'm so glad I ran into you and that you encouraged me to attend the section meeting—it was wonderful! I am attaching a note I sent to Bari Burke, AALS Deputy Director, about it:

I wanted to tell you what an excellent program was presented by the Academic Support section at the Annual Meeting. I have never seen a better-organized presentation, with the speakers engaging in a “tag-team” pattern that was a masterpiece of choreography. Furthermore, the program had goals and objectives which were shared with the audience. Most importantly, in discussing inclusive teaching methods, the presenters modeled their subject in their presentation to this audience.

As you know from the interest in the Conference on New Ideas, law professors hunger for programs that feature pedagogy rather than substantive law. In helping all of us substantive teachers to be more sensitive to the differing learning styles of our audience, and by exposing us to some of those learning styles, this program served an important need.

Our efforts had paid off and the rewards were exhilarating.

IV. Postscript

The idea for this article was born in the immediate afterglow of our Academic Support Program Panel. It seemed a natural expansion of our experience to include a wider circle than those who were able to be physically present at the AALS conference. We want to share what we learned with appropriate humility and with accurate enthusiasm.

We continue to try to put these ideas into practice in our individual classrooms. After the presentation, one of our law teacher presenters tried out several of the inclusive teaching methods in the very first class of the semester. She circulated to the rest of us the following message describing the activities and the students' response:

Hello, Gang. This is a “Report From the Front.”

In my very first Property class of the semester, I opened with the bowline exercise. Once it was completed, I had the students do a focus-write about their feelings and I followed that with some discussion about how the exercise might apply to law school, including the importance of different learning styles, the helpfulness of collaboration and peer-teaching/learning, and the benefits of repetition.

Next, I shifted gears into Property. I introduced a categorical scheme I have often used before that helps students to identify policy argument “types” in judicial opinions. But this time instead of a mini-lecture followed by calling on students and conducting dialogue, I did the mini-lecture and then handed out a set of hypothetical excerpts from hypothetical judicial opinions (designed to be easy). I then asked people to work in

groups in order to decide into which of the four categories each hypo fit. I asked for volunteer answers, and it appeared that the whole class was pretty well on target. Everyone seemed engaged.

Then I told them that I thought they would be able to find policy arguments of these types in the first case assigned for the next day. I handed out a still-to-be-completed grid that I suggested they might find useful for listing and grouping arguments they spotted in that case, and reminded them that they could make a similar chart for themselves for other cases if they found this one helpful.

At the very end of the class, I asked them to write for just a minute or two on what they got out of the class.

This professor went on describe what she learned from teaching this class:

I really liked the feel of this class. Too often I think I enter my classroom thinking, "Have I adequately mastered the doctrine for today?" On this occasion, I think there was a different question in my mind, and it feels like a more appropriate and productive question. It was something like, "Where are my various students coming from, and what are good ways to introduce them to this material so that the maximum number of them can understand it and use it proficiently?"

I want to share this with all of you because I think it worked well, and I feel grateful to our project and to all of you.

She also shared her students' free-write responses to the question, "What did you learn from today's class?"

I learned how to successfully tie a bowline; I received new insight in the categorization of problems; I became used to thinking about how I learn best—i.e., sight, discussion, etc.; good relationship builder between the instructor and class members.

I loved the class today because it was active. I was participating in a fun way.

I actually learned a great deal today about learning styles (I thought I already knew a great deal about them). In addition, I feel better about the upcoming semester with a newer way of thinking about law and these classes. You have encouraged me after my disappointment in my grades.

Not much.⁴⁰

I learned that I'm definitely a visual learner and that just because I don't get everything out of a lecture that others do doesn't mean I was

40. We note that this was not the only negative comment, though negative comments were overwhelmingly outnumbered by positive. We include it here because we think it is important to underscore that *no* method will be equally positive (or perhaps positive at all) for all students on any given day and no teacher should try to "please" everyone in every class period. One of the major points we hope to convey is precisely that students are different, and variety, patience, and perspective are all important.

slacking off or not paying attention. Obviously, different teaching techniques work for different people. Just because one prof isn't effective with me doesn't mean the material is over my head.

The realization that some law professors remember what it was like to be in law school.

It demonstrated that you want us to learn.

In conclusion, we hope this narrative has stirred your interest. We are aware that we may sound occasionally a bit over-enthusiastic. Please don't get us wrong. We are only too aware of the real challenges we meet in classrooms everyday—the pressures on our time and our institutions' budgets, the real threats to diversity that now affect our student bodies and faculties, and the undeniable difficulties that confront teachers who want to reach out to students and colleagues different from themselves. At the same time, however, we want to tell you how much we each feel we gained from the chemistry of working together, within existing resources, in the ways we have just described. We believe that similar collaborations and experiments can take place in many settings and at many levels; we hoped that the insights we gained and the fun we had will inspire others to try their own projects and to become *our* teachers in the future that lies before us all.⁴¹

41. This article is dedicated to Professor Trina Grillo who knew all of this and modeled so much more.

Appendix

The Presentation Script

As audience enters the room: hand out cards, rope, and packet. On the overhead projector:

As part of the program, we will have a talk show style discussion that addresses specific concerns about inclusive teaching methods as well as examples of effective teaching methods elicited from participants in the audience. So, please answer one of the following questions:

- *Specifically describe concerns/problems when you have used or thought about using inclusive teaching methods;*
- *Specifically describe a teaching method/activity you have used that encouraged inclusion and why.*

I. Introductions: Laurie (1:30-1:45)

A. Audience: David

Have audience self-identify their primary role in the institution: academic support teacher, law teacher, clinical teacher, legal research and writing teacher, dean/administrator, staff, librarian, student. Ask audience to look around the room as people raise hands.

Follow-up Question: How many assume more than one role? How many of you have an ASP at your school? How many of you know the ASP teacher at your school?

Purpose: Sends message that we may have different roles and not fully understand what each other does in law school but we have in common a concern about academic support. Sets tone of focus on audience and connects audience with one another and presenters, helps individuals feel like a part of a group.

B. Speakers: David

Explains that we will introduce each other to highlight our range of perspectives and how we wanted the committee planning the presentation to reflect the various perspectives reflected in the audience and legal education. Also wanted to emphasize what we can accomplish by collaborating with colleagues with different perspectives/roles and the impact this can have across the curriculum and in legal education.

David introduces *Paula* from Seattle University School of Law (she teaches and directs the Academic Resource Center, co-teaches in the program's comprehensive summer component, and uses student peer teaching assistants). *Paula* introduces *Charles* from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (he teaches first year Torts, upper-level courses in Housing and Community Development, and Administrative Advocacy; in addition he has served as a dean and president of the Law School Admis-

sion Council). *Charles* introduces *Fran* from the University of Tennessee College of the Law (she teaches first year Property and Legal Process (a course on legal analysis and writing); Gratuitous Transfers, Discrimination and the Law, and Community Development). *Fran* introduces *Rod* from Golden Gate University School of Law (he teaches and directs ASP, rotates co-teaching classes with different faculty, and this semester co-taught an upper-level course on the First Amendment). *Rod* introduces *Ann* from William-Mitchell College of the Law (she teaches upper-level courses including Constitutional Law, Business Organizations, and Employment Discrimination). *Ann* introduces *Laurie* from Hastings College of the Law (she teaches two academic support courses, and is creating a new ASP for different student populations). *Laurie* introduces *David* from Brigham Young University School of Law (he teaches first year Public Interest Law and Criminal Law, and upper-level courses on Public Policy Negotiations, Community Based Lawyering, and Labor and Employment Courses).

Purpose: Sets tone of collegiality/respect and connection between different educators.

C. Agenda: Ann

On the overhead projector:

Goals

1. Enable audience to experience and identify with different types of learning experiences—novice, visual, contextual, collaborative, and experiential
2. Model inclusive teaching methods for diverse learners
3. Promote collaboration between ASP directors and people involved in legal education

Purpose: To clarify what we will accomplish today and why.

II. The Bowline Rope Exercise

A. The Activity: Rod (1:45-2:05)

The exercise includes verbal (steps, historical background importance), written (legalese, plain English, everyday English), pictures, pictures with text, demonstration, and pairing/collaboration instructions.

Purpose: To see how learning styles, gender, race, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and experience affect learning.

B. Debrief

1. Individual: Laurie (1:45-2:05)

On the overhead projector:

- *In your own way, describe how to tie this knot for someone unfamiliar with it.*

- *How did you feel during this exercise? Did you ever figure it out? If yes, how did you feel before you got the "Aha?" After you got the "Aha?" If no, how did you feel?*
- *What happened before you got the "Aha?" (when did you get it and what teaching method(s) worked best for you?)*

In addition:

- *What did you know about knots before this session?*
- *How relevant is tying knots to you?*
- *Why are these questions important?*

2. Large Group: Fran and Charles (2:05-2:20)

Summarize your answers and keep your comments within the context of the rope exercise. Emphasize how you felt/comfort level, the relevance and pre-existing knowledge based on your socioeconomic backgrounds. Who stopped and said the heck with it? Who felt like this was a piece of cake-any sailors? Any Girl/Boy Scout in the audience?. Is there a gender bias in this exercise? What could make it relevant—first job dependent on tying it? What do we assume about the audience/our classes? How would a physically disabled student respond to this exercise? The descriptions written by the audience will reflect different learning styles and how important is it to use a variety of teaching methods?

Relate as metaphor for law school: Do our classes have people with higher comfort levels? Who would they be? How can race, gender, disability, class, etc. affect this learning process? What do we assume about our classes? What about the teaching methods we use?⁴²

III. Conversations (2:35-2:45)

Academic support program and traditional law teachers will role play collaborative efforts to address student problems.

A. Student Voices: *read by David*

The following student comments address problems similar to those expressed by the audience during the rope exercise.

I considered myself a confident person . . . I look back . . . during that year I lacked confidence . . . I lost so much of myself, the experience made me gather up my belongings and hold them close . . . I am not going to let that happen this year.

Also, I can remember an experience in my first year criminal law class. We were discussing the Bernard Goetz case . . . I didn't speak up because I felt . . . emotional. I did not want to look like a fool, I would not have effectively got across my viewpoint. I wouldn't have felt comfortable going to the professor. I was emotionally charged. I felt terrible . . . angry. I didn't want to talk to anybody about it really. I think it

42. The audience's response to these questions could be the subject of another article.

affected me as one of the few black males in the class, and I felt that the students' comments were directed at me.

1. Charles - Rod Conversation

Charles says he has heard students echo those statements and he has learned much about teaching from his conversations with ASP teachers. Discussion of proximate cause ensues.

2. Ann - Laurie Conversation

Ann gets up. She tells audience that she teaches only upper-level courses and met some ASP folk at a conference where she crashed on of their sessions:

I found people who helped me learn about learning and teaching. I have had conversations like . . . I just finished reading yet another law school exam answer after holding yet another review session and am feeling frustrated. HOW can I get students to understand that in order to do analysis, they have to combine a rule with facts? I TALK IT. I tell them what I want and that they will have to analyze problems in order to get points on their finals. I CHALK IT. I WALK IT. Every class session, we discuss problems they have been given long before. I hold yet another review session before the exam. Half the time they don't even participate!

Laurie begins by asking what teaching strategies Ann has used when it was a positive experience both for her and the students? Ann recollects a role playing exercise and Laurie responds:

You know why that worked? Because you got the students engaged, active, and most important, they related the concepts to their own experience. Have you thought about having students relate their experiences to what you are teaching them by having them create their own hypos with names and experiences that are meaningful to them? Then, you can have them write answers to their hypos. You can use small groups or pair them to do this. You can have some groups address certain rules/concepts or have them all do the same rule. Then you have lots of options—you can collect them, you can have the students exchange them, you can share a few in the next class. All I know is the more you create hypos, the better you learn the concept. The more they create factual situations, the better they learn it! Everyone is enriched (the students and you) with different perspectives about the legal concept or skill (Ann's exercises are in the handout).

B. Educational Theory: Paula

A summary of the literature about the impact of schema, relevance, and experience on learning.

C. Additional Student Voices: read by David

In Contracts, I had read the cases three times and wrote a thorough brief of it, but when the professor asked me a question about it, I could not understand what he was saying. He may as well have been speaking a foreign language. I felt nervous and stupid. Then the professor did a really neat thing; he leaned over the podium and said, "Forget about that case, instead let's say you and I entered a contract . . ." I immediately understood his question and was able to answer it.

When we broke into small groups. I found it refreshing to find out that you're not the only one who feels dumb in class. It doesn't benefit just a certain group of students but it benefits everybody . . . you learn from each other that way.

The professor put us into small groups and gave us different roles. She assigned them so I had a chance to meet and interact with students I otherwise would not have. I intermingled with my group and other groups as well. We got to know each other in a more positive light. This gave me another setting to approach a student. As a minority, often you're the only one, so having the exercise to talk about outside of class was a good experience.

Purpose: To collaborate with Academic Support Program professionals as resources for inclusive teaching methods.

IV. Talk Show Roundtable Discussion: Paula (2:50-3:05)

David, Fran, Laurie, and Ann discuss with one another some of the concerns and methods elicited from the audience (refer to handout for syllabi/exercises).

V. Presentation Debrief: Laurie (3:05-3:15)

A. Quickie Tie knot

Again, demonstrate the recursive nature of learning (must not only get the "Aha" but must repeat/practice it so becomes internalized).

B. Free-write

"What did I learn during this session that can help me be a more inclusive teacher?"

C. Big Group Debrief

Audience members share insights gained from their participation in the presentation.