

RUTGERS LAW SCHOOL:

Teaching Effectiveness:

The learning process in law schools occurs in a variety of settings. While we tend to think of the large class and the dialogues that take place within it as the centerpiece of law teaching, the fact is that there are other important educational settings. Indeed, many outstanding graduates would undoubtedly identify as their most valuable law school educational experiences such varied ones as their law review work, the one-to-one experience of an independent study project, preparing a presentation for a demanding seminar, or working on the case of a real client in a clinical setting.

Although classroom teaching, seminar teaching, and clinic teaching take quite distinct and, in many ways, dissimilar forms, the standards of teacher excellence to which we refer in this policy cross the margins that divide them. Effective teaching enhances the learning process and, therefore, should have a measurable impact on student knowledge and skills.

a. **Attributes of Effective Teaching**

(1) Large class setting.

(a) Mastery of the specific subject matter of the course, including the relevant literature; The following attributes are relevant to effective teaching in the large class setting:

(b) Ability to relate that subject matter to other fields of knowledge, and to law as a social phenomenon, an instrument of power and a mode of conflict resolution;

(c) Effective organization of the course, and effective communication of the organizing principles so that students can come to understand the extent of interrelationships and logic in the subject matter;

(d) Use of materials which best advance the course's pedagogical objectives and which challenge the students;

(e) Use of pedagogical techniques which effectively engage students and involve them actively in the learning process;

(f) Ability to communicate clearly, and to maintain student interest;

(g) Ability to stimulate the intellectual excitement of students, and to bring them to insights and understandings about the subject matter, and the legal process, which they are unlikely to have obtained through other means;

(h) Insistence on a high quality of student performance in class responses, written assignments and examinations;

(i) Commitment of substantial time to class preparation and to out-of-class interactions with students; and

(j) Timely submission of grades

(2) Small group setting. Effective teaching in small sections of first-year courses, seminars, and independent study projects and through substantial faculty involvement in such activities as moot court and client counseling, requires many of the same attributes as effective large class teaching. In addition, though, it requires an ability to interact with individual students in a much more intensive way, often in connection with the student's development of a detailed project or in evaluating the student's performance in a simulated professional setting.

(3) Clinical setting

These tasks are done under the guidance and direction of the clinic teacher. Supervision is often one-on-one. The clinic teacher must establish and articulate the assigned tasks, review and criticize the student's work and maintain control of the problem-solving process while, at the same time, prodding the student toward initiative, involvement and self-realization. . The attributes of effective teaching in the clinical setting are even more oriented toward the ability to use the intensive one-on-one learning situation. The assessment process must also recognize that the goals of clinical legal education are, in important respects, different than those of either large class instruction or small group, seminar-style instruction. The goal of clinic work is to advance the student's socio-legal insights, substantive knowledge, analytical abilities and transactional skills by applying them to live situations. In the course of problem solving, the student is called upon to research, to analyze facts in the light of research results, to write, and to take the procedural steps that are integral to litigation. Beyond this, he or she is frequently called upon to develop strategies, to interact with peers, teachers, adversaries, court personnel, clients and witnesses, to negotiate and perhaps to effectuate consensual solutions.

The clinical process is significantly different from the classroom process. Teacher-student relationships are much more individualized. The reality of a live case requires integration of many areas of substantive law rather than concentration on self-enclosed subject matter. Unlike classroom teaching, which invites exploration for its own sake, clinic teaching demands quite immediate application of learning to the problems at hand. Finally, the variables created by the presence and roles of real people -- clients, witnesses, adversaries, judges -- produce an entirely different perception of the legal process than that provided by classroom learning.

The faculty attaches great importance to teaching effectiveness. Because the development of teaching effectiveness depends so heavily on the particular skills, personality and interests of the individual faculty member, it was concluded that general statements about developing teaching effectiveness would be less useful than a program specifically addressed to its development. Accordingly, the Faculty has established a standing committee on faculty development. The faculty expects that the Faculty Development Committee will provide individual specific forms of assistance in developing teaching capability particularly to benefit the persons who are new to the profession.