

The Lord Chancellor's advisory committee on legal education and the legal profession

Lord Griffiths of Govilon M.C.
[See Enrolment Policies]

PURPOSE

Holding us all together: law in the humanistic dialogue

R Strickland

94 *AALS Nltr* 2, April 1994, 1

The President of the AALS considers the current "national conversation" about what is it that holds the country together and drives it apart. He considers what role legal education can play. He says law is central to the humanities and the humanities are central to the law. He encourages faculty and students to explore questions about the humanistic aspects of the law discipline. He urges that law teachers cannot lose the human valuing dimension of law. The current pressure to produce better trained technicians means that law schools can lose sight of the need for all graduates of law to be humanists.

RESEARCH

[no material in this edition]

RESOURCES

[no material in this edition]

SKILLS

Are skills really frills?

N Gold

11 *J Prof L Educ* 1, pp 1-11

There has been a "rush" to a skills-based curriculum in many countries.

The author outlines a brief rationale for teaching skills, and discusses the resistance to skills teaching, and the basis of the skills agenda in law teaching. He notes that skills training can respond to the professions' complaint that new graduates are unskilful; although the professions often resist attempts to remedy the deficiency.

He says the shift in orientation has been away from learning only law and procedure to more wide-ranging courses where professionalism, skilfulness and knowledge are combined. He says there is a richness to these new courses which no longer isolates law from its contexts of operation and which provide meaningful and practical examples with which students may grapple.

After describing different categories of lawyers' skills, the author discusses decision-making and intellectual skills. He points out that the traditional role of higher education has been not the mastery of technical detail but the acquisition of such skills as logic, persuasion, criticism, extrapolation and hypothesis, and various forms of expression. He urges that as skills as complex, more needs to be known of them, and that teaching them is not the same as teaching law.

Instilling skills: are new lawyers prepared to practice?

5 *Researching Law: an ABF Update* 1, Winter 1994, p 1

Reports on an American Bar Foundation empirical study which looks at the relationship between legal education and the development of skills that lawyers deem essential in their practices.

The study is based on a survey of over 800 recent law graduates in Chicago.

Communication skills were the clear winners as the most important skills. The study identified gaps between what was or could be taught and what were deemed important skills. Using what they called a "misery index", the researchers found that law graduates felt most miserable about their failure to obtain skills in drafting legal documents, and least miserable about their knowledge of the substantive law.

The study also compared its data with the earlier Zemans and Rosenblum study, and found generally that patterns in the two studies were largely consistent, but some differences.

Skills demonstrations: Where "show" works better than "tell"

D Cruickshank

28 *Law Teacher*, 1, 1994, pp 13-21
Demonstrations of lawyering skills have been found to be of use in continuing legal education (CLE) or practical legal training (PLT) courses. Demonstrations show the specific application of a skill, inspire participants, provide a focal point for discussion and critique of a skill, and relieve anxiety about a participant's ensuing performance of a skill. A demonstration should be placed after the elements of the skill have been described and before the discussion, review or practice of the skill by the participant. Demonstrations should not be greater than 40 minutes, should be realistic, present a positive example and meet the skill criteria. Furthermore, the substantive or procedural points