

law teachers who conscientiously wish to improve their teaching practices. It will assist them to understand what are the ingredients of the teaching equation and how the various elements interact as parts of the entire system. It is a conspicuous landmark in our understanding of what exactly is involved in teaching and learning law.

However, it also cannot escape one of the great weaknesses in many of the models which one encounters in much of the general instructional design literature: the more an educational phenomenon is broken down into its component parts, the more impenetrable and labyrinthine it can become, with the risk of blurring the vision of the relative importance of each of those parts and their contribution to the bigger picture. Fortunately, this particular model/framework appears to be securely anchored in commonsense. The litmus test will be the extent to which classroom law teachers ultimately make use of it to improve their teaching practices.

Editor

A comprehensive approach to orientation and mentoring of new faculty

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46 *J of Leg Educ* 1, March 1966, pp 59-66

Law school faculties have so increased in size since the 1970s that it has become no longer practical or for them to function as a single social unit as in the past when new faculty could fast become acclimatised to the nuances of the faculty culture.

In 1993 the Washington University law school bit the bullet and decided to invest time and resources into creating a formal and comprehensive orientation and mentoring program for new faculty. This consisted of four elements:

- a detailed memo, 'Things I wished I had known as a new faculty member'
- a series of four two-hour orientation sessions
- a formal mentoring program, and
- a detailed question-and-answer memo about the tenure process to supplement the formal tenure document.

The 'Things I wished I had known' memo addressed a broad range of disparate items from consultancies outside the university to where the coffee was kept. The importance of annual updating was recognised, as was the need for different customised versions for full-time tenure-track staff, visiting faculty, adjuncts and summer school faculty.

It was realised that some important topics did not lend themselves to a memo and require fuller discussion. Two-hour seminar-like orientation sessions on teaching, creating and grading exams, pursuing scholarship, and dealing with the law reviews, taking the format of round table discussions, were spaced over the course of the year to coincide with the times when the subject matter would be most relevant. These proved to be one of the more successful aspects of the orientation program.

Whether there should be a formal mentoring program at all met with some debate. Assignments are made at the start of the academic year and most people tend to keep the same mentor from year to year. Mentors are expected 'to assist the development of the candidate in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and general acclimation with the law school community'. A major issue was trying to reconcile the conflict of interest between a senior faculty member's role as mentor and as a voting member of the tenure committee. The mentoring program as it works in practice is a useful resource for new faculty in their first year or two of teaching but by the end of the second year they

have usually figured out which senior colleagues they will turn to for regular advice.

The fourth element, questions and answers about the tenure process, was not adopted until 1995. Tenure is obviously of foremost concern to untenured staff and the subject so large it clearly merited separate treatment. While the formal tenure document is confined to the statement of standards and criteria, the Q & A addresses both procedural details about which there must be specific answers and subjective matters on which it is clear there is no single answer. One danger is that the school could be later held responsible by the university or a court for the failure to follow the guidelines as articulated by the faculty.

Law schools which seriously invest time and effort in an orientation program may well discover benefits to their untenured faculty that go beyond the mere transmission of useful information, such as contributing to a greater sense of community within the school.

TEACHING METHODS & MEDIA

Thinking about first year law teaching

J Goldring

2 *Canberra Law Review* 2, 1995, pp 137-144

The climate of legal in Australia has changed markedly since the publication of the Pearce Report in 1987. These changes are marked by different approaches to the content of legal education and also a change in teaching techniques. Reading *Thinking about law*³, a collection of

³ Hunter, R, Ingleby, R & Johnstone, R, (Eds) *Thinking about law: perspectives on the history, philosophy and sociology of law*, (1995) Sydney: Allen & Unwin