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SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

Introduction: Family court review special issue dynamic pedagogy in the family and juvenile law classroom: Experiential and in-class exercises

Meredith Johnson Harbach | Naomi Cahn

Over the last number of years, the legal academy has placed increasing emphasis on the need to diversify teaching methods, and in particular, has focused on expanding in-class, experiential teaching methods. Educational research confirms that learning experientially has multiple benefits for adult learners, including better retention of material, the ability to explore a more diverse range of representation contexts, the development and use of a broader range of analytical skills, and an emphasis professional collaboration and growth.¹ Consistent with this evolution of the scholarship on teaching and learning in law school, ABA Standard 303(a)(3) requires all students to complete “one or more experiential course(s) totaling at least six credit hours.”² This growing recognition has increased demand for experiential learning courses and clinics at law schools, and presents opportunities for innovative teaching and community partnerships.

Alongside this (r)evolution in how we teach our students, we have also increasingly come to realize that our responsibility to teach all students effectively and according to best practices requires additional commitments: to designing inclusive classroom environments in which all students can learn and thrive; to creating spaces in which our students can critically evaluate their roles as lawyers; to collaborating with community partners to effect change in the real world; and to bringing in and engaging with multiple disciplines and perspectives as we design and teach our courses.

This Special Issue explores existing—and creative—visions for engaging experiential learning in service of these goals. The volume builds on programming offered by the Section on Family and Juvenile law at the Association of American Law School's Annual Meeting in January 2021, including several presenters from that programming, as well as bringing in additional voices. Our authors include both veteran and newer teachers, who teach in clinics and casebook-focused classrooms, in courses on family law, children and the law, legal writing, and clinical practice. The articles in this volume provide a rich array of course design, exercises, techniques, and perspectives on possible ways to teach and what might be taught. They also provide thoughtful, introspective reflections on the craft of teaching, and on our continuing obligation to design courses and content that serve all students, and enable them to develop and thrive professionally in service to our communities.

¹See Peggy Cooper Davis, et al., *Making Law Students Healthy, Skillful, and Wise*, 56 N.Y.L. Sch. Law Rev. 487 (2012).

²AMERICAN BAR ASSN., STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS 303(a)(3) (2022).

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It has been our pleasure and privilege to collaborate with the authors in this Special Issue. We are delighted to bring their work to you in this volume, and we hope you will find inspiration in these pages to incorporate into your own Family and Juvenile Law classrooms.

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