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Educating New Lawyers

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BY TARA CASEY

CARRICO CENTER FOR PRO BONO SERVICE,
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EDUCATING new lawyers

Law schools have been challenged recently to place greater emphasis on preparing students for the realities of legal practice through skills training and community-based learning.

The discussion regarding a law school's role in the broader community as well as the legal profession came to the forefront in 2007 after the release of the Carnegie Report (http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/sites/default/files/publications/elibrary_pdf_632.pdf). The Carnegie Foundation visited and researched 16 law schools as part of concurrent studies of professional education. The report found that the traditional method of legal education, which focused on edited appellate cases, did not necessarily link those cases to the people, institutions and lawyering tasks involved in the disputes. With an emphasis on the neutrality and objectivity of the law, the potential existed for subduing the passion for justice that entering law students often bring with them.

The Carnegie Report recommended the joining of "lawyering" and professionalism with legal analysis from the beginning. If law students are to be viewed as adult learners, as the median age for starting 1Ls suggest they should be, then they would understand material best if they had a context for what they are learning.

An active learning model provides this contextual education while also fulfilling an inherent goal of law school:

train students to engage in effective analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The adult student becomes acquainted with new ideas and skills, applies these ideas and skills in real life settings or simulations, reflects on the experience with these new skills and concepts, redefines how they might apply in other settings and then reapplies them in other settings.

Since the Carnegie Report, the legal job market and the day-to-day business of practicing law have changed significantly. However, if law schools educate students in foundational knowledge, critical analysis and practical skills application, then new graduates will adapt well to this changing environment and serve as models for professionalism and legal service. ■

Credits: James H. Backman, *Law Schools, Law Students, Civic Engagement, and Community-Based Research as Resources for Improving Access to Justice in Utah*, 2006 UTAH L. REV. 953 (2006); Joseph A. Barette, *Self-Awareness: The Missing Piece of the Experiential Learning Puzzle*, 5 T.M. COOLEY J. PRAC. & CLINICAL L. 1 (2002); Gerald F. Hess, *Listening to Our Students: Obstructing and Enhancing Learning in Law School*, 31 U.S.F. L. REV. 941 (1997); Deborah Maranville, *Infusing Passion and Context into the Traditional Law Curriculum Through Experiential Learning*, 51 J. LEGAL EDUC. 51, 56 (2001); Mary Pat Treuthart, *Weaving a Tapestry: Providing Context Through Service-Learning*, 38 GONZ. L. REV. 215 (2002/03).

Tara Casey, a speaker in a VBA Summer Meeting presentation on turning law students into lawyers, is the Director of the Carrico Center for Pro Bono Service at the University of Richmond School of Law. Before joining the Richmond Law faculty, she served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

How creativity works in law practices

BY CLIONA ROBB

CHAIR, PROFESSIONALISM COMMITTEE

To be more productive, arrange office space so that everyone in the same department sits near one another.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE
Brainstorming sessions are a good way to extract creative ideas from a group.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE
The most innovative solutions now come from individual geniuses, not from groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE
For groups to be productive, it helps to rely on talented professionals who work well together rather than including new, untested talent.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE
Collaborators produce better work product when their offices are within 10 meters of each other.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE
A chaotic building full of disparate academic groups who have little in common results in inferior research work.	<input type="checkbox"/> TRUE <input type="checkbox"/> FALSE



This fall, come to the LMPD's Integrated Life in the Law book series to learn why the answers to these questions matter to your law practice. Check out vba.org/lpmd for the times and locations in Richmond, Roanoke,

Northern Virginia and Tidewater where we'll discuss Jonah Lehrer's *Imagine* (or other resources on this topic since, as we go to press, *Imagine* has been recalled because of the controversy over its Bob Dylan quotes).