

Aspirations of a Young Law School: Process, Content and Direction

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Abstract

This article invites a pause, and an overall reflection on the role and purpose of a Law School in contributing to the types of lawyers, and law, and so types of justice, which prevails in a community. The main focus is the Law School, law teachers and law students and how these three components contribute to the discipline and practice of law. In particular, how the learning and practice of law benefits the social life of the community as a whole.

The specific context selected in this article is teaching in Law School, primarily to first and second year undergraduate students. The daily challenges are highlighted, and throughout the article, you are invited to consider and assess whether these built-in routines or activities are useful and functioning well for the purpose of educating undergraduates to take on their roles as leaders in the legal arena, and to contribute to, and benefit society, in years to come.

The wider contexts raised above are outside the scope of this article, although some aspects of the function of law as a whole within society, are referred to, to remind us of the need for regular checks to ensure alignment between the direction and aspirations of the Law School, and current teaching/learning activities; with the end purpose of nurturing young lawyers who contribute to society.

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1. Introduction

1.1 *The good news*

In March 2016, campus internal mail received this e-mail¹ (part of which is reproduced here):

Dear Colleagues –

I am elated to share with you the good news we received earlier today.

The *Taylor's University Bachelor of Laws degree* (Taylor's LLB) is now an LLB degree recognised by the Malaysian Legal Profession Qualifying Board (MLPQB). Students who complete all three years and graduate at Taylor's University with the Taylor's Bachelor of Law Degree) will now be eligible to apply and sit for the *Certificate of Legal Practice Examinations (CLP Exams)* ...

The Herculean journey of seeing our Law Programme being recognised started off in the year 2009 when the Bachelor of Laws Programme (in its original form) was taken to the drawing board. This was at the time when the sheer thought of a private institution having a recognised Law Degree for legal practice was laughed off as a joke. From then on it has been a very steep 90 degree hike which involved seven years of painful and patient engagement with the MQA, MLPQB and Bar Council Malaysia, delicately balancing the market and industry confidence in the programme amidst many challenges due to non-recognition ...

(Dean of Law School)²

2. Setting direction – where does one begin?

The excerpt above is a portion of an e-mail, in acknowledgment of a significant achievement in the process of developing a Law School. It was a meaningful day for the academics serving at the Taylor's Law School. Now that the celebrations are well over and the usual buzz of classes and routine university activities takes place the questions which we at Taylor's Law School specifically and hopefully those of us in the legal fraternity as a whole (education and practice) need to address are:

- i) What is the direction and aspirations of the Law School? (Where are we going? What is the ultimate/final objective);
- ii) How does the School achieve its intended direction and aspiration?

Two short questions with no easy or short-cut answers. Not because a direction cannot be set, but because of the many different views on what the direction should be and the processes required to be operating on and in, that direction.

1 Part of the e-mail is reproduced above.

2 Mr Harmahinder Singh Iqbal Singh, current Dean of Taylor's University Law School since 2011.

Where indeed, do we begin to find “agreeable” answers to these questions? We might begin with a closer examination of what we have and what we do.

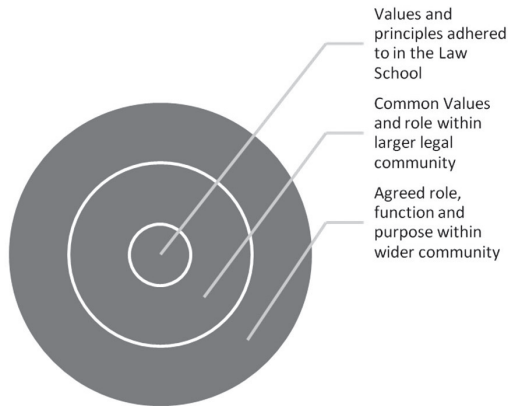
In this article, you will read several reflections and observations from teaching experiences. It might seem irrelevant and unrelated and to have no relationship with the two questions raised above. Hence the opening invitation of this article is for you to pause. It is hoped that our attempt to piece together activities, questions and reflections on law and teaching gives us all a clearer idea of what exactly are we focusing on (and spending much time on), and how (much) these daily activities support our aspirations and to bring us onto a clear route, towards our direction.

3. Factors taken into account in setting direction

Despite more rules, regulations and laws, including several generations of lawyers, the gap between law and justice is still obvious. What could be missing?

In what follows, some thoughts and a proposal are offered on the setting of direction and identifying a “legal destination”:

- i) *Overall cohesive and aligned system between Law School, legal community as a whole, and ultimately related roles and responsibilities within the larger community*



An important element is the alignment and coherence between theory, practice, objective and purpose. We need to start with the end. What is the objective and purpose of law, and what roles and responsibilities do we expect lawyers and all involved in law-making and law-enforcement and implementation to discharge, in meeting that purpose? How do we ensure these roles and responsibilities are carried out? These are questions which must be answered and defined first which is outside the scope of this article. Once lawyers’ roles and responsibilities are identified and defined, the Law School or faculty works with this through the design of its curriculum, teaching and all

Law School activities to enable and prepare the law students to meet these social responsibilities when they graduate from Law School.

ii) What do we “see” when setting direction? How is this connected to curriculum content and so, delivery?

There will inevitably be disagreements (and there always will be) as to what exactly should be included in the Law School curriculum. Disagreements of course stem from different ways of thinking resulting in different ways of “seeing” the end (and the process towards that end). Two simplest examples would be to continue with the existing curriculum or alternatively, make changes according to what other institutions local or foreign has initiated. Both decisions have their own value but in the first option of carrying on with the exact same syllabus at the same depth, this potentially introduces a certain degree of mismatch between students’ foundational knowledge, competencies and potential ability to develop further upon leaving Law School as outside the Law School, many new changes, priorities and needs are taking place.

In the second option of introducing changes adopted from external sources, this may work out well provided the adopting Law School shares the same aspirations and direction with the Law School from which the changes are adopted. There are many other options in between these two, not discussed in this brief paper.

A significant point on curriculum and content is the requirement of community outreach or community services. There is no argument that it has to be incorporated into the curriculum. The question here is the value of such activity in the development of the young man or woman into being a responsible lawyer. In principle and as an idea and strategy to get law undergraduates to be involved with real persons with real issues within the community, these programmes are an excellent development in Law School curriculum. Thoughtful preparation depending on the intended developmental result on the students is crucial. A well-planned programme will get the students to both think and implement, and review both theory and especially implementation measures in order to achieve the intended outcome of the programmes. This is a matter which must be carefully thought out at the School level. The experiential learning aspect of this programme is especially crucial for it to be internalised by the students. Participation in such activities could give rise to a range of results, from such activity being purely mechanical to ensure it is incorporated in the timetable, quickly forgotten within a semester (low value) to a truly meaningful learning experience in the development of responsible and mature lawyers (higher value). Layering activities, also known as scaffolding learning, aimed at achieving meaningful results which are internalised and form the character of the students need planning, attention and effective strategy.

iii) More thinking or more doing?

Legal education has traditionally and conventionally focused on thinking. Despite much literature on stages of thinking, critical thinking and developmental thinking and many others; the core ideas and values from this literature has yet to be practically embedded into the Law School curriculum. The process of embedding is best done in stages.

Inasmuch as thinking (about legal principles) is a continuous process in Law School, there is a need to go beyond just thinking. Knowing what is right alone is insufficient. Thinking on how to implement or put into practice, the knowledge in the law requires a broader grasp of humanity—beginning with awareness and ending with empathy and compassion. It is when legal principles are implemented with empathy and compassion that justice will begin to seed from the implementation. Ultimately a multidiscipline awareness yet law-focused solution will probably serve to challenge the students' minds and hearts, and indirectly force holistic thinking and development.

Hence thinking must be accompanied by practice and review. It is a continuous process which becomes whole and not severable after a certain point. For initial learning purposes, programme objectives and vision may be segregated into explicitly identified year-by-year objectives.

4. Aligning teaching to aspiration and direction

In a more ideal situation (which is achievable as long as we are serious about our "average" common goals) the final objective and purpose of law in society is clearly understood and agreed to, by those in a decision-making capacity. This purpose (and objective) is categorised into doable teaching and learning activities within the Law School curriculum. The Law School's contribution to the end objective and purpose of law is critical. Law teachers must also understand and be made aware of the final objective and purpose, and the critical learning outcome of Law School activities which collectively "form" or "meet" the end purpose and stated objective. A simple analogy is that the Law School is the first savings account (perhaps the first RM10,000–RM20,000) towards the final goal of savings of let's say RM100,000 to be used to regulate society's life.

Too much disconnect between Law School curriculum and responsibilities as lawyers in the community should be avoided, for the wider the disconnect, the higher the level of confusion about our respective roles and functions. It need not be further amplified that confusion in understanding of roles and functions would lead to a confusion in the objective and purpose of law in society. Depending on the degree of confusion and time required for remedial measures, any dysfunction which arises could be costly in many aspects—legal, economic and social, to name a few.

5. A closer look into Law School focus and concerns within the existing curriculum

It might be useful to start with the School mission, which contains the School's aspirations and direction. The Taylor's Law School mission is to produce law graduates with outstanding professional skills with high ethical values who meaningfully contribute to society.

Three important aspirations are contained in this mission:

- i) Firstly, and most easily agreed with by all Law Schools, is that students are to be trained to develop professional skills. This is a common objective of all Law Schools or faculties and Taylor's Law School is no different in this primary objective. Professional practice aspects are embedded in subjects such as mooting and usually procedure and professional practice. The specific "skills of lawyering" is indeed what the professional degree offers.

Changes in subjects offered within the programme may be made from time to time as decisions are made both within and without the Law School or faculty in order to meet this aspiration of producing graduates with the required professional skills.

- ii) Secondly, producing students with high ethical values. This involves a somewhat closer approach—closer in the sense that discussion of legal principles is subjected to a process whereby it enables the students to extract or identify the values contained in the principles. Awareness in mind is created on the impact of legal rules on people and the impact of legal rules on society living. Achieving this aspiration requires attention on the part of both lecturer and students. As with the first aspiration, this too, is a dynamic process within the daily teaching-learning environment. Constant feedback and assessment (whether recorded or not) is needed. In Taylor's Law School one such subject where this second aspiration is the dominant learning objective of the module, is the subject of Research and Writing II with holistic focus on student strengths and skills, transferred onto selected topics of research.
- iii) The third aspiration is the most important as well as the hardest to achieve. It is essentially developing lawyers with excellent character. The higher the moral character of the lawyer, the more willing and able he or she will be, in contributing to the development of society. Many earlier processes could deviate from the development of this aspect of character in the young undergraduate, without the "interference" being obvious or even noticeable while in Law School (or even earlier and elsewhere). To a certain extent, the realisation of this aspiration of the Law School is only evident many years later in future as the graduates mature and hold leadership positions in society. Might it be too late then?

(Details on assessment and feedback to monitor the development of young undergraduates who understands and are willing to take on responsibility through their professions deserve a separate paper or study on its own).

In any case the Law School is the right place where students are immersed in professional values. Students should be introduced to the ethical thinking of law as well as the emphatic feeling of legal protection under the law.

6. Reflections on current concerns and focus in teaching

What follows are six different reflections on actual concerns in teaching law and about being with the students. It will be shown that focus and attention towards the achievement and meeting of the three aspirations above need to be worked on more closely.

6.1 *Engaging with students*

Reflection 1 – Identifying what engages students generally, and whether specific lecturer-experience is needed to ensure that learning experience is effective and further enhanced for law students.

The Research and Writing II module taken by students in their fourth semester requires students to conduct research on a particular theme for the semester and write an academic piece of 3,000 words. In the August 2015 semester, both lecturers on the course decided that we would have the students conduct research in the area of refugees and stateless persons. My co-lecturer was given the task of imparting know-how on academic writing skills while my task was to provide the students with knowledge and understanding on the plight of the stateless persons and refugees. The first week of lectures commenced with the provision of information on the legal aspects on refugees and stateless persons. Lectures in week two and three centred on methods of research and drafting. This was followed by consultation hours with students throughout the semester, culminating with the submission of their research in the tenth week of the semester. In the course of delivering the basic understanding of the plight of the refugee and stateless persons in Malaysia, I was disappointed to observe that students were not all that interested in this area of research. There seemed to be a disconnect between my delivery of the topic and students' reception and engagement towards the area of law. I have since come to terms with the fact that not all students will have the same interest in this area of study as I. Nevertheless I would have to source out ways and means of making the area of law interesting. One thing that I have discerned from my years of teaching is that students enjoy stories and particularly enjoy real life experiences narrated to them. Perhaps delivery has to be less theoretical and more focus should be given to real life examples to be imparted to the students.

This brings into question the best method of involving students in real life examples. Had I embarked on field work during my PhD studies, I would

have had first-hand experience that I would have been able to bring into the classroom. Hence, the merit of fieldwork is two-pronged. It would allow for proper socio-legal research being conducted with concrete suggestions provided for the benefit of the refugee or stateless individual. At the same time, this would enhance my teaching capabilities in this area of research.

It is my view that for certain areas of law, especially international law that specifically deals with individuals rather than the State, it would be best for data collection from the field via quantitative or qualitative methods to be conducted rather than a pure doctrinal analysis. The PhD studies was the platform used to learn and have in-depth appreciation of the plight of the refugee and stateless person. The task is now to move away from the comfort zone of theoretical frameworks to fieldwork and collection of data. This would be the next port of call which hopefully will crystallise into beneficial publications and ultimately result in the creation of enthusiastic learners of this area of law.

Reflection 2 – In teaching and learning dynamics, early identification of students who are struggling in first-year Law School requires a combination of assessments.

In imparting difficult concepts, every effort must be made until the students grasp and understand important foundational concepts.

This reflection covers two aspects of teaching; the law teacher-law students teaching and learning experience, and on educating the students with legal knowledge.

6.2 Teaching and learning

(i) Comprehension of the law

I taught English Legal System and Constitutional and Administrative Law I in the last semester. Overall, the Year 1 Semester 1 cohort consisted of well-behaved students who were able to communicate well with the lecturers. Some of the students were very participative, yet there were a small number of students who were very reserved in class. This group of reserved students tended to remain quiet even when they were given the opportunity and encouragement to answer.

In order to change this situation, two open-book tests were conducted in class to assess their understanding on certain topics. The results were quite promising. However, the results of the final examinations were somewhat disappointing. Despite the tests and opportunity to participate during class, some students did poorly in the final exam. Perhaps in future semesters assessments need to be more varied. I will consider getting the students to write a one-page summary of what they have understood in class. In this way, I can perhaps assess whether they have actively listened during the lectures.

I have also found that students who came from vernacular schools, and those with a science background were the ones who were struggling with law and legal concepts. These students had appeared to understand what was going on in class, but in actual fact they were struggling. (Appearance can be deceiving!)

(ii) Discipline

In the Land Law class, I found discipline to be an issue. Their listening and attention span during class was clearly lacking. More effective methods are needed to overcome this issue.

(iii) Knowledge and understanding of difficult areas

Students found certain sub-topics to be very difficult. Examples are the doctrine of implied and express repeal and legal entrenchment. The students face difficulties in understanding the legal and formal terms used and also their application. Although simple analogies and explanations in easier or simpler terms have been made the students still found these issues difficult overall.

Inasmuch as teaching concepts are important to first year students, even more challenging is ensuring that they fully understand the important concepts. Case-studies illustrations will be used in future batches, and a subsequent re-evaluation of whether this is a more effective way of helping students understand the concepts.

6.3 Tool(s) of engagement

Reflection 3 – Lecturer’s adaptability and flexibility with technology may be the (best) communication tool with students in this era.

Teaching and learning in higher institutions has progressed manifold in the last decade. As an educator, it is incumbent that one is equipped with the latest technology in order to keep abreast with the Gen Y generation. Coming from a 60s era and categorised as Generation X, I was unexposed to the latest know-how. Accordingly, the early teaching years at Taylor’s University were quite challenging as I had to learn how to incorporate technology into teaching and learning.

It was a challenge to prepare powerpoint slides for lectures, which was utterly new for me. When I taught in secondary schools (I was a trained teacher prior to being a lawyer) it was all chalk and board! Fortunately with the help of colleagues, who painstakingly taught me the basics, I started experimenting and am today quite able to produce colourful and imaginative slides for lectures.

The next challenge was incorporating blended learning into the teaching and learning curriculum. The law faculty had designated week 6 of every semester as “Blended Learning Week”. During this period all lectures and tutorials are

to be conducted online. With the help of the e-learning academy, I managed to master the skill of “lecture capture”, basically, capturing my lectures online and posting them on TiMES, the official university portal which is accessible to all law students. As for tutorials, a discussion forum with the students was possible by posting selected tutorial questions on the portal. Since the first introduction of blended learning week almost five semesters ago, I have managed to improve both presentation and delivery of the modules I teach, namely the Law of Torts and English Legal System.

Last semester, the X-space, another technology for delivery of all first year tutorials, was introduced. Initially, I was apprehensive as it sounded too complicated. However, having gone for the much needed training and continuous support from my fellow colleagues, I managed to carry out the tutorials quite effectively last semester. In addition, I also learnt how to create a tutorial page using Padlet to make the tutorial interactive and fun. The students were very engaged and truly enjoyed the tutorial sessions.

I believe the bottom line is individual receptiveness to technology. There is in fact no barrier to learning and adopting new technology. The key is whether as an individual you are willing and prepared to learn and apply the knowledge. Hence, irrespective of whether you are Gen Y or Gen X, you can have a meaningful teaching experience in teaching and learning if as a teacher you are prepared to take challenges that lie ahead.

I end with this quote:

Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is most important. – Bill Gates.

6.4 Assisting students with motivational opportunities and other practical issues

Reflection 4 – How assessments may be used as a meter or indicator of learning direction and learning interests (motivation) of students

The major difficulty I encountered in my course of teaching is on how to best utilise the 14 weeks in the semester to “shape” my students towards being an accomplished law graduate. I employed two main methods; firstly teaching and learning activities and secondly, assessments.

My focus here is on the flexibility allowed in designing the assessments according to the needs of particular students. A preliminary preparation is determining the purpose of the test score. Should score portray the level of teaching quality or the attitude of students in learning? Could it be based on the internal and external atmosphere of the School? There is no one right answer to these questions. Assessment serves a higher purpose than merely providing data on the students’ accomplishment in terms of grades.

It is much like a “breathing monitor” to ensure the on-going of a positive learning process. Most importantly, it should and can serve as a motivator for the students to learn from their mistakes and to give them a clearer guide to direct their learning.

I teach Constitutional and Administrative Law III and I tried to evaluate whether the assessments serve as a “motivator”. This module comprises 60% for final examination, 30% for written assignment and 10% for tutorial participation. I consider that only tutorial participation serves the above mentioned purpose. It is my personal view that the assessments are not well balanced due to the low allocation of marks in sessions where student motivation could be “created”.

Tutorial participation allows the law teacher to provide comments and feedbacks to students. For able students, marks evoke feeling of accomplishment whereas for average students, positive feedback motivates them to perform better. When students are given the opportunity to be more involved in the teaching and learning process, they are more likely to be self-motivated, although this also depends on the law teacher’s readiness to spend quality time with the students.

Communication is key. When students are actively involved in the thinking and analysing process, they are more likely to understand the rules.

Inasmuch as assessments are to be properly balanced for the purpose of providing continuous support to students, there must also be flexibility or room within the range of assessments allowed. In reality, this flexibility is unfortunately rather non-existent. Law teachers are bound by the assessments-system which the School adheres to. It can be frustrating to a law teacher who may wish to introduce new forms of assessments which may prove to be more effective for students-learning. Uniformity, certainty and predictability in processes can sometimes be deemed to be more important than effective motivation of students.

Another concern is the emphasis placed on cultivating and preserving soft skills in the students. So while increasing importance is placed on the integration of technology and blended learning in delivering courses, the “other end” of skills are equally important.

Law Schools must therefore find a balance between honing technological skills and soft skills, identifying activities which emphasise on one or the other.

Reflection 5 – Continuous practical steps to assist new law students to settle into Law School may be used as a supportive strategy in the transition period.

Here are two challenges which I faced when I was teaching Contract Law in the previous semesters:

Background of the challenges

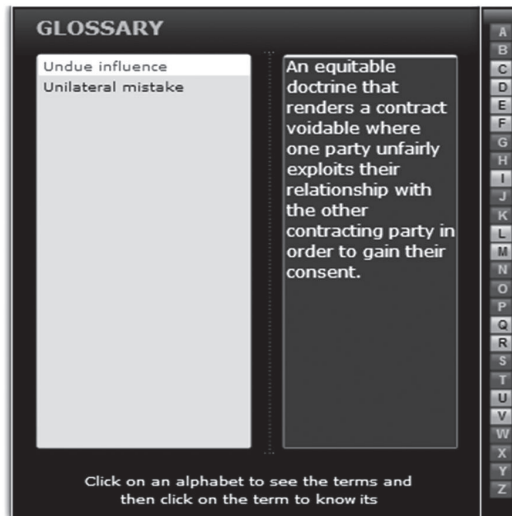
The students were first year first semester students who may or may not have any knowledge about law or legal studies. The diversity of the background of the students had caused two main challenges, namely:

- (1) *Legal terminologies*: Their weakness in understanding the legal terminologies or jargon, resulting in poor understanding of the legal principles;
- (2) *Limited questioning time*: Although students were encouraged to ask questions during lectures, time is precious as the syllabus needs to be completed.

Steps taken to overcome the two challenges

(1) *Legal terminologies in a glossary*

To assist the students to understand legal terminologies, I worked with the eLA specialist in developing a glossary of terms which are relevant to the content of Contract Law II on TIMEs. The terms are uploaded at the beginning of the semester and the students can click on the chosen terminology to learn or refresh their memories on the definition of the term. They are encouraged to access this glossary at any time, either before, after or during the lecture. Below is a snapshot of the glossary on TIMEs:



After this glossary was set up, the majority of the students seemed to be less confused on the terminologies and were more able to grasp the legal principles discussed.

(2) *Limited questioning time*

Three solutions are offered for students to deal with limited questioning time:

(i) *Lectures slides are uploaded at least two days before the lecture*

Lecture slides are uploaded on the portal at least two days prior to the lecture. The students are encouraged to skim through these slides for about 30 to 45 minutes to have a brief idea of the content of the lecture. Those who followed instructions seem to be able to cope better with the pace of the lecture.

(ii) *Individual consultation slots*

One hour of consultation per week is allocated for students to ask questions pertaining to the module. This slot does not clash with the lectures or tutorials of other modules. Each student is given at least 20 minutes to meet me in person outside their lecture hour to ask specific questions. About 20% of the students have used this method. This is a snapshot of the announcement made on the TIMEs:

▼ Individual Consultation Hour for Contract Law (Thursdays 1.00 pm-2.00p.m.)



As already announced previously, if you have queries in relation to the assignment or the course in general and would like to have an individual chat with me, I am physically available in Building E.9B on Thursdays from 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm, from week 4 to week 14, starting from 17 Sept 2015 to 3 Dec 2015 (EXCEPT MID-SEMESTER BREAK i.e. 9 Nov to 13 Nov 2015, as well as PUBLIC HOLIDAYS falling on a Thursday, if any).

Feel free to drop me an email chinchin.sia@taylor.edu.my to fix an appointment before you come during the designated time slot.

Yours truly,

Chin Chin

(iii) *Replies to questions by e-mail*

Students are encouraged to ask questions in writing. Students may email their questions and replies are given within two or three working days. About 40% of the students have used this mode of “questioning time”. (see Annex I for a sample of the email).

Students are constantly encouraged to use one of the four methods above to enhance their self-learning capacity and communication skills. They are indirectly trained to use their time more efficiently through these options.

A tip for a new lecturer who is teaching this subject/topic for the first time and who wishes to avoid facing the same difficulties mentioned above, is to be mindful of the students’ diversity in learning and digesting information. It would be useful to devise a suitable strategy to solve this transitional difficulty.

Overall, the curriculum should acknowledge the diversity and reality of students’ backgrounds and preparedness for higher education. Their

knowledge, skills and attitudes have to be taken into account in preparing them for greater achievement.

6.5 Personal skills before professional skills?

Reflection 6 – Beyond the law: getting to know the person in the students

I started my teaching career as a tutor in the Faculty of Law, University of Malaya (UM). Fresh out of Law School and the subsequent nine months of pupillage, I took up the challenge to educate young minds in their legal studies. Upon reporting for duty, I was given the honour to be part of the Tort team. There were about 220 students that particular year, 20 of whom were police officers doing their Diploma in Public Law whilst the rest were undergraduates in their first or second year of Law School.

As I was a young tutor surrounded by students who were only slightly younger, I made it a point to be friendly towards them. I decided to be their friend whilst bearing in mind that I was their tutor as the memories of how I felt as a student still lingered. I was strict in ensuring the students came prepared for tutorials, and completed all assignments or test questions. But at the same time I made sure that I was accessible for consultation or just for a chat over a glass of *teh ais* to relieve some of the tension building up in the students. I was aware of the requirement of boundaries between the tutor and a friend. Although some colleagues did not necessarily see that this approach was useful, I was set in my ways. I continued this practice throughout my six years as a tutor in the public university.

In 2013, I joined Taylor's University (TU), as part of the faculty in the Law School. Admittedly, the first year was tough. Tough in the sense that the system was different, the atmosphere was different and the students were different. Students demanded and expected more in the private university. Coming from a public university, and being used to seeing students reap what they sow, the new culture was a shock. It took some adjustment but currently after about three years I have found a balance in being a friend to my students. Some come for advice, to help ease the burden they are carrying, and to know that someone is there to assist them whenever they need it. I realise that despite different expectations and behaviours, students are all the same. Ultimately they are human beings who need the attention and care of another human being, and this is particularly true for students whose parents are far away from university.

I learnt two things from the students in these two institutions; firstly you cannot teach them all. In the public university I could be their friend who taught them how to survive in the legal world via legal knowledge and research and self-learning. In the private university I am more the person who imparts knowledge in order for them to proceed to the next stage of their learning. Dealing with different learners requires patience and flexibility; it is

however, important for students to know that there is someone whom they can confide in if the need arises. Teaching is definitely a two way street. We learn by doing and by doing so, we learn.

7. Aspirations, directions and reality – the gaps

It is clear from the reflections above, amidst the differences in emphasis, whether on students' interest or motivation, student engagement, tools of communication and practical solutions to increase accessibility to learning; that much time and energy is devoted to method or way of (teaching and) learning. New methods or ways, accompanied by new tools are constantly updated. The focus is clearly the students' engagement.

It is inevitable that with much emphasis on the interests of the students, that the School or faculty loses valuable time and space for development of aspirations and direction. In particular, time and space for building the second and third missions – to produce students with high ethical values, and who contribute to society.

There may be a need to take two steps back and to re-evaluate the progress of the Law School or faculty missions at certain times of the programme. There must be a balance between student-centred learning and direction of the School.

Focus on method and inciting student interest is all good, yet students also need to be made aware of, and perhaps led towards the direction of the institution they have enrolled themselves into, and to start taking responsibility for their learning and to accept that the requirements of their time and energy through the Law School curriculum is for the purpose of their character development.

8. Conclusion – Reigning it all in

We need to begin firstly, by agreeing that Law School is a place where students learn more than just what the legal rules are. We need to acknowledge that during Law School, the students' character and values as future lawyers are also being formed. The Law School needs to develop a curriculum and activities which develop and nurture the intended skills, values and character traits in the students.

While much emphasis, research and time is spent on engaging student attention and learning, there is a point of letting go which the faculty must commonly agree upon, to allow the students to develop self-responsibility and accountability for their own learning.

Both faculty and students must constantly be aware and reminded of what lies beyond immediate concerns; namely the purpose, the intention (aspirations) through the daily methods of teaching and learning.

These three elements must always relate to each of the other element, align and provide a check and balance to each other. Currently, perhaps too much energy, time and focus is spent on the method of teaching and learning so that students' learning is improved. This may not be truly necessary. In other words, teaching and learning methods are important insofar as the methods improve students' responsibility towards their own learning and learning about the aspirations and direction of the discipline they have entered. Students need to realise, through the curriculum, that there is something outside them, bigger than them that they must embrace and learn to carry within themselves as they go through Law School and beyond.

All parties must be aware of the interaction of these three elements. Both law-teachers and law students must be aware of their own personal intentions and the intentions of the School/faculty. There can be differences or gaps as long as the differences are not too opposing and do not cancel each other out. The narrower the gap, the less time is needed to improve on method/way of teaching and learning.

Likewise the law-teachers and law students need to be aware of their personal purpose and the purpose of the Law School/law. One need not possess the highest moral purpose although that would be an excellent start, but it is important to meet at least on the very first few levels of purposes—examples are the foundational need to respect the law as a branch of knowledge which can make a difference in human lives, to teach and learn the basic principles of law and to be interested in teaching and learning on how law may solve disputes and thereby improve social functioning. Meeting of basic purposes would also mean less energy and time spent on the method/way of teaching and learning.

The students also need to blend in and be subjected to the character or moral purpose of the Law School. In this regard, the Law School needs to translate or identify its aspirations into actual activities/projects which become the character of that Law School. This School's character or trait functions as an ethos, or culture which produces a distinct and unique School's identity. It is also this character which will direct and shape the activities, behaviour and direction of its faculty and students.

In conclusion, it is a privilege to be responsible for the development of the moral character of future lawyers. The aspirations remain. The direction is set. Process (method/way) may need to shift somewhat and content (both the curriculum and development of character beginning with self-responsibility towards learning) needs more emphasis.

A review in the near future will inform us whether the processes are bringing us closer towards the realisation of our aspirations and what (types of lawyers) are we training and educating for our society—hopefully future lawyers who are able to productively discharge their social responsibility to the society.

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11. A guiding quote—"You've got to think about big things while you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction." Alvin Toffler, writer and futurist (Oct 1928–June 2016)