

Preparing Lawyers for Practice: Developing Cultural Competency, Communication Skills, and Content Knowledge through Street Law Programs

Ben Perdue and Amy Wallace

With contributions from
Tomáš Friedel, Niamh Hanbidge, Amiri Lampley,
Zach Segal, Hannah West, and Nehan Zehra

I. Introduction

Street Law is a legal education methodology designed to increase civic engagement, foster critical thinking skills, and develop practical legal knowledge in nonlawyers. The program initially focused on underserved high schools in Washington, D.C. The fundamental aims of Street Law—notably increasing knowledge of law and democracy and encouraging informed civic participation—led to the rapid growth of Street Law programs around the world. These programs have been proved an effective method to teach critical thinking skills in high school students.¹

While Street Law was designed to help high school students, the programs were also crafted to provide authentic experiential opportunities for law students. In journal reflections and seminar discussions, law students who

Ben Perdue Senior Director of international programs at Street Law, Inc. He has trained hundreds of law faculty, law students, and legal professionals around the world and has supported the development and implementation of dozens of public legal education programs. He is a graduate of Colorado College (B.A. in Sociology) and University College London Institute of Education (M.A. in Educational Planning, Economics, and International Development).

Amy Wallace Adjunct professor of law at New York Law School. Wallace founded and teaches the Street Law experiential course at New York Law School. She participated in the Street Law clinical program as a law student at Georgetown University Law Center. She is a graduate of the University of Toronto (B.A. in Political Science), Georgetown University Law Center (J.D.), and Lehman College (M.A. in Education—New York City Teaching Fellows Program). She is also the Advisor for Law School Programs for Street Law, Inc.

1 Sean G. Arthurs, *Street Law: Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today*, 19 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 925, 961 (2015).

participate in Street Law programs reflect very positively on their experiences with the high school students and working directly with the community. They discuss the practical legal skills they develop in Street Law and comment that they were not able to practice these skills in the same way in other law school courses. However, little research has been done to measure the educational benefits for those law students. We designed this study to measure whether Street Law accomplished these goals.

We conclude that Street Law provides significant and often unique benefits for law students, including developing vital cultural competency skills, practicing legal communication with nonlawyers, and cementing content knowledge in a nonacademic environment. Section IV below includes a comparison of the legal practice benefits of Street Law and other traditional and clinical credit-bearing law school courses. We conclude that Street Law is equally meritorious and, because of the rigorous academically and professionally valuable experience gained from participation in Street Law programs, law students should be awarded academic credit for their work. This paper includes: a background discussion of Street Law programs; an explanation of the study methodology; a summary of the study results, including a detailed examination of the five most common themes; personal reflections from six law students who participated in Street Law; a brief discussion of other law-related education programs taught by law students; and final conclusions and recommendations.²

II. Background

The belief that everyone needs a basic understanding of the law is what led to the founding of Street Law at Georgetown University Law Center in the 1970s. A group of law students partnered with two urban high schools in Washington, D.C., to teach practical legal classes. The lessons focused on criminal law, juvenile justice, consumer law, family law, housing law, and individual rights and freedoms.³ The law students wanted the lessons to be relevant and relatable for their high school students and, in a pioneering effort, they also wanted the lessons to be interactive, engaging, and fun.

What started with two high schools⁴ has grown dramatically to include programs at almost a hundred law schools in the United States and an even greater number in over forty countries around the world.⁵ The popularity of these programs might be explained by the importance of the work being done and the overwhelmingly positive experience of the law student instructors. It is “about teaching high-school students how to have a voice and how to be better

2 The authors would like to thank Lee Arbetman and Richard Marsico for their assistance in preparing this study.

3 Lee Arbetman, *Street Law, Inc.: Context, History and Future*, 2 INT’L J. OF PUB. LEGAL EDUC. 3 (2018).

4 Eastern High School and Wilson High School, Washington, D.C.

5 Arbetman, *supra* note 3.

thinkers, communicators, and learners.”⁶ In addition to the proliferation of law school-based programs, the growth of Street Law also led to the formation of Street Law, Inc.⁷ In the United States, some law schools are hoping their Street Law programs will encourage high school students of color to consider the legal profession. In addition, these programs may help disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

Georgetown’s Street Law clinical/experiential prototype is a credit-bearing course taught by law school faculty. Law students meet weekly in seminar and are observed regularly at their teaching site. Many Street Law programs have been modeled on the original Georgetown program, but other programs vary greatly. Law school student affairs or pro bono offices also coordinate some Street Law programs, and law student volunteers can earn pro bono hours. Others are run through law school student organizations, either as independent groups or coordinated by groups such as the Black Law Students Association chapters. Some international Street Law programs are organized by law societies or legal associations or are offered as an activity of a law school-based legal clinic.

The work of the Street Law participants varies as well. While most law students teach in high schools, programs exist in juvenile justice centers, homeless shelters, centers for survivors of domestic violence, jails, and prisons. Students taking Street Law courses for credit often have time to visit their sites more frequently than the student-led programs, but important, engaging teaching happens regardless of the program format. Professor Richard Roe⁸ explains:

The hallmark Street Law methodology of highly participatory, interactive, and engaging activity-based instruction, where the learning is accomplished largely through the cognitive, expressive, and reflective work of the learners themselves in substantively rich, thoughtfully structured lessons, draws from both the hands-on model of clinical legal education as well as the best practices for effective teaching and learning generally.⁹

The three basic components of an effective Street Law program are practical content, interactive skills-based teaching strategies, and community

6 Arthurs, *supra* note 1, at 945.

7 Street Law, Inc. is a Maryland based nonprofit that advances justice through classroom and community education programs that empower approximately one million people annually with the legal and civic knowledge, skills, and confidence to bring about positive change for themselves and others. Street Law develops curricula and trains classroom teachers, the legal community, law enforcement, government agencies, and community organizations to be effective law and government educators. www.streetlaw.org.

8 Professor Richard Roe taught the Street Law program at Georgetown University Law Center for almost forty years. He also presented at law-related education workshops, trainings, and seminars in over twenty countries.

9 Richard Roe, *Law School-High School*, in *THE EDUCATION PIPELINE TO THE PROFESSIONS: PROGRAMS THAT WORK TO INCREASE DIVERSITY* 136 (Sarah E. Redfield ed., 2012).

involvement. The subject matter covered in Street Law programs around the world differs dramatically, but even internationally, the components of an effective Street Law lesson remain the same: legal content; policy considerations; discussion of conflicting values; an interactive teaching strategy; and practical information.¹⁰ That the topics are important and relevant to the students is key. From the start, Street Law lessons have been student-centered. A common catchphrase for Street Law instructors is “talk less, teach more,” meaning the high school students should be the ones talking, debating, advocating, arguing, negotiating, and crafting solutions.

While the benefits of Street Law to the high school students may be more readily apparent, the program was also created to provide meaningful, substantive, hands-on experience for the law student instructors.¹¹ This study was designed to provide qualitative evidence to support that idea. In the United States and many other countries, Street Law is one component in a vast field of clinical and experiential programs. Law students must take courses satisfying experiential credit requirements set by the American Bar Association.¹² However, in some countries, such as Pakistan,¹³ clinical legal education is not mandated or formalized within the law school curriculum. At those law schools, Street Law programs may fill a critical void in practical legal education.

III. Methodology and Responses

In broad terms, this study is interpretive. As opposed to a positivist approach in which truth is seen as objective, the interpretive approach allows the authors to recognize the different ways that individuals see and experience similar phenomena.¹⁴ The data collection tool for this project was a Google Forms survey (Appendix A). We collected data between November 2019 and January 2020. Law students who had participated in Street Law programs were invited by the authors or by their respective faculty directors to submit responses to survey questions about their experiences in the programs, specifically the personal and professional skills that they took away from the program and the connections that they made with their local community. All survey questions were open-response questions, and respondents were able to write as much or as little as they liked. Responses were completely voluntary—students were not given any kind of compensation or credit, nor were they reprimanded in any

10 DAVID MCQUOID-MASON, *STREET LAW AND PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION: A COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES FROM AROUND THE WORLD IN HONOUR OF ED O'BRIEN 30* (2019).

11 Richard Roe, *supra* note 9, at 140.

12 *Standard 303(a)(3)*, AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION, SECTION OF LEGAL EDUCATION AND ADMISSION TO THE BAR, https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2020-2021/2020-21-aba-standards-and-rules-for-approval-of-law-schools.pdf.

13 Street Law student from Lahore University Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

14 LOUIS COHEN ET AL., *RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION* (2013).

way if they chose not to participate. Respondents were invited to include their names and contact information for follow-up and future research purposes but could withhold this information if they wanted.

In total, sixty-three people submitted responses to the survey. The respondents represented six countries (United States, Ireland, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan) and twenty law schools. As respondents were not given a required or recommended word count for their answers, responses to each question ranged from just one sentence to several paragraphs. The open nature of the format and questions of the survey led unsurprisingly to a diverse set of responses. While this assortment of responses—diffuse in content, length, and style—provides a rich dataset and highlights the different experiences that Street Law students have, it can make “making sense” of the data challenging. To code the data, the authors utilized several of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s tactics for generating meaning from qualitative data including noting patterns and themes and clustering.¹⁵ By reviewing the data holistically, the authors were able to derive general conclusions from the specific data gathered.¹⁶

This study is not a randomized control trial, nor does it purport to be indicative of every law student’s Street Law experience. All of the law student survey respondents reflected positively on their Street Law experiences. It is reasonable to assume that not every law student who has taught with a Street Law program in the fifty years since the program was founded has had a favorable experience. The voluntary nature of the survey may have led to a disproportionate number of enthusiastic respondents. However, the overwhelmingly positive results of the survey do indicate that law students believe participation in Street Law to be an academically and professionally rewarding law school experience. As each Street Law program is different, every student’s experience is unique. That said, it is possible to draw some broad conclusions from these data.

The survey responses indicate that law student participants in Street Law programs believe they developed significant legal practice skills akin to other credit-bearing clinical programs. All clinical and experiential courses are designed to help law students develop practical and professional skills. Midway through the twentieth century in the United States, “the desire to focus on teaching students the ‘art of lawyering’ resulted in the inclusion of research and writing courses, trial skills courses and clinical programs in the curriculum.”¹⁷ Most U.S. law schools now include a broad assemblage of clinical and experiential offerings. Clinical courses are also tailored to provide real-life experiences allowing law students to learn professional responsibility

15 MATTHEW B. MILES ET AL., *QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS: A METHODS SOURCEBOOK* (2014).

16 COHEN ET AL., *supra* note 14.

17 THE GLOBAL CLINICAL MOVEMENT—EDUCATING LAWYERS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE 5 (Frank S. Bloch ed., 2011).

and ethics.¹⁸ Many of the benefits identified by study participants may also be benefits of other clinical or experiential programs. This paper identifies the commonalities in the advantages of Street Law and traditional live-client clinical programs. It also highlights how law student participants in Street Law programs may reap unique benefits compared with other law school offerings.

The U.S. study respondents are specially situated to reflect on the benefits of Street Law in comparison with traditional or clinical and experiential courses. The American Bar Association requires all law students to complete a minimum of six credits of experiential learning.¹⁹ Therefore, almost all²⁰ participants in credit-bearing Street Law courses are required to take at least one additional experiential or clinical course. In addition, more than half of the eighty-plus Street Law programs at law schools in the United States that are registered with Street Law, Inc., are volunteer programs, meaning the law students are awarded no course credit for participation. Those students must take other experiential and clinical courses to fulfill the ABA requirement. Similarly, half of the U.S. law school programs represented in this study are volunteer or student-led programs. All the U.S. respondents in this study participated in Street Law through either a volunteer program or a credit-bearing program that does not completely fulfill the ABA experiential credit requirement. Therefore, most participants had some experience with other clinical or experiential courses when completing their reflection, making these observations particularly informative of some of Street Law's unique benefits.

Several survey respondents were sent follow-up requests to write longer reflections about their participation in Street Law programs. We selected respondents who wrote more detailed answers to the initial study questions. From that list, we chose respondents who represent a geographically and programmatically diverse selection of Street Law programs. The writers were given minimal guidance and were encouraged to write about the aspects of the program that they felt impacted them the most. The six writers represent different Street Law programs from around the world, each uniquely designed and uniquely led. These reflections serve as individual case studies of law students' experiences with Street Law. As such, they provide valuable insight into the effects that Street Law programs have on the law student participants themselves. These reflections are included in full in Part V of this paper.

IV. Results

The study answers were examined, and five broad themes emerged as most representative of the legal practice benefits identified by the respondents. Some of these themes are also benefits of traditional live-client clinical

18 *Id.* at 12.

19 *Standard 303(a)(3)*, *supra* note 12.

20 Georgetown University Law Center permits law students to take Street Law as a full-year course for a possible nine credits, but most credit-bearing programs offer Street Law as a one-, two-, three-, or four-credit course.

programs. Study participants elucidated how some of these benefits may differ from other traditional and experiential law school courses. These themes include: explaining legal concepts to nonlawyers; public speaking in a nonacademic setting; building substantive legal content; engaging in research and preparation; and developing cultural competency and community connections.

A. Explaining Legal Topics to Lay Audiences

Many respondents identified how participating in a Street Law program helped them develop the skill of explaining legal topics to lay audiences. One participant wrote, “I am now able to explain legal concepts in a more digestible manner.”²¹ This theme came up more than any other, suggesting that it is a nearly universal element of the diverse and sometimes highly discrete Street Law programs around the world. As expressed by the respondents, speaking understandably to lay audiences is an important lawyering skill, but not one that is easy to practice in a traditional law school setting.

Being in law school, and speaking with my fellow classmates and professors, everyone speaks in “legal terms.” However, when participating in the program and speaking with the students, it gives me an opportunity to speak on these legal concepts, but in a way that non-law individuals can understand.²²

This recognition of the disparate worlds in which lawyers and lay people live—particularly in relation to the language of the law—underscores the value of practical and straightforward legal education and training for everyone. Students in live-client clinical programs also have the opportunity to practice explaining legal concepts to nonlawyers as they assist their clients with legal issues. Depending on the program, Street Law participants may be able to address a broader array of legal topics over the course of a semester and may have an opportunity to speak with a larger number of nonlawyers more frequently in weekly classes.

Respondents recognized that while not every high school student came away with perfect knowledge of the lesson content, they felt that the lessons were highly valuable to the students.

I felt a sense of pride walking out of some of our more successful lessons knowing that the students really enjoyed their time with us and took away information that was useful. Even if they didn’t learn every single detail of the information we covered, it got them talking about the legal considerations we all face, and hopefully that will make an impact on some of their future decisions.²³

21 Street Law student from the Law Society of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.

22 Street Law student from Roger Williams University School of Law, Bristol, Rhode Island, United States.

23 Street Law student from Loyola Law School, Los Angeles, California, United States.

This highlights an important common aspect of Street Law classes: They are not simply replications of law school classes for a different audience. Rather than focusing on preparing students to pass the bar exam or surveying one whole area of law, the classes are generally designed to provoke critical thought about the ways in which the law affects our lives²⁴ and the practical ways in which people can understand law, practice civic skills, and build confidence about engaging with legal institutions or organizations. Traditional clinical programs give law students the opportunity to provide practical legal advice to clients,²⁵ and because Street Law participants may not dispense legal advice on an actual issue, law students focus class discussions on what the law should be and competing policy arguments. While discussion of policy may also happen in traditional live-client clinic seminars, the purpose of Street Law seminars and classroom teaching is to investigate policy issues that affect the high school students and their communities.

While many respondents recognized the benefits that their students took away from their classes, the law student instructors also articulated how the classes helped them. They saw the ability to explain legal topics to lay audiences not just as an altruistic way to improve the knowledge and skills of young people, but also as an important asset that will serve them well in their legal careers.

[Street Law] taught me how to explain legal principles in a way that non-lawyers will understand. As a criminal lawyer, this skill has been particularly helpful as my clients—some who struggle with English—must make serious decisions based on my ability to effectively explain sometimes complicated concepts.²⁶

The Street Law program thus was a valuable legal education experience not only for the high school students, but also for their law student instructors.

B. Public Speaking

Developing the skill of public speaking was another often-recurring response. Respondents described how the process of teaching in front of high school students prepared them to speak in front of a crowd. Law school provides many opportunities for law students to practice formally answering questions and explaining cases and legal rules. Many law schools include oral arguments as part of traditional writing courses. Speaking before a panel of judges enables law students to practice public speaking. In contrast, the unpredictability of a classroom of high school students requires law students involved in Street Law to develop these skills in a different way. They have to

24 Because most Street Law programs are experiential and not court practice courses, law students must be able to discuss topics without dispensing specific legal advice to their high school students, which could raise issues of unauthorized practice of law in the United States.

25 Closely supervised by law school faculty or supervising attorneys.

26 Street Law student from Touro Law Center, Central Islip, New York, United States.

engage large groups of students in discourse on complicated legal topics while simultaneously being captivating, accessible, and legally accurate. These skills will be useful in practice when speaking to jurors or other groups of nonlawyers.

I have become a much more confident public speaker and have refined my communication skills at large. Despite being rather outgoing one-on-one, I was always intimidated by audiences and so teaching a class of more than 15 young adults allowed me to face that fear head on.²⁷

Building confidence around communication—both for the law student instructors and for the high school student beneficiaries—is a key element of Street Law and a theme that came up repeatedly in the survey responses. Having the confidence to speak to other people is an essential first step to putting basic legal knowledge and skills to practical use. Through Street Law programs, both instructors and students build their public speaking abilities by being forced to practice them.

Many respondents also described how developing their public speaking skills in the Street Law program was instrumental in preparing them for their legal careers. As one respondent put it, “Street Law prepare[d] me to think on my feet and answer the diverse questions students asked me. This has been critical to my success in the courtroom.”²⁸ Reacting in real time and answering unexpected questions are common aspects of Street Law programs. By interacting with and teaching curious teenagers, law student instructors have to assess questions and give coherent and correct responses to a very discerning audience. These high-pressure situations are scenarios that lawyers commonly encounter.

Presenting in front of a large group of high school students significantly helped me develop my ability to respond to questions from the bench during oral arguments. During law school, when you’re dealing with hypotheticals that have set boundaries in terms of information, it’s easy to know what will be asked of you and to respond. But in real life, judges can ask questions completely out of the blue that catch you totally off guard. The students in my classes commonly caught me off guard, and it taught me how to quickly think on my feet and give informative, concise responses.²⁹

This comparison between the courtroom and the classroom highlights the practicality of the Street Law experience for the law students. Teaching in the classroom mirrors many real-life situations that lawyers will encounter in their careers.

27 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

28 Street Law student from Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan, United States.

29 Street Law student from Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan, United States.

Unlike other clinical experiences in which clients are likely to be interested in their own legal issues, high school students are not always immediately invested in the legal topic being discussed. Law students have to learn to engage their students and present information in a way that is relevant and interesting.

If you can relate these principles to 15 and 16 year olds, then you can relate them to a juror [sic] of your peers. Kids are unforgiving. It taught me to not be afraid to make a mistake but I had to learn to engage my audience.³⁰

The respondent went on to say, “[I]t made me a better prosecutor.”³¹ Being able to captivate your target audience is an essential lawyering skill.

It helped me to improve, first of all, my public speech [sic]. Because we need to know how the ways of making satisfactory public speech [sic] and the ways of enchanting the attention.³²

While the respondents recognized the importance that colloquial public speaking plays in the legal profession, some felt that the Street Law program provided the best way for them to practice this informal type of legal communication. One respondent wrote that in law school, “I was so accustomed to speaking in a formal setting [as I would] to judges and lawyers, whereas street law is a conversational setting with students.”³³ The informal setting allowed students to connect and communicate in a more authentic way.

I believe that my public speaking skills have improved because I am learning how to connect with a crowd of people and tell them a story that will impact them emotionally and intellectually. I feel less afraid of public speaking after having this experience and I understand how to best connect with my audience.³⁴

By building a real connection with the students with whom they interact, Street Law students learn pragmatic public speaking and communication skills that will serve them in their legal careers.

C. Building Legal Knowledge

Another common theme in the responses was how the Street Law program developed law students’ legal knowledge. Respondents identified two distinct ways in which their participation in the program helped build their legal

30 Street Law student from Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan, United States.

31 Street Law student from Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan, United States.

32 Street Law student from Tashkent State University of Law, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

33 Street Law student from Roger Williams School of Law, Bristol, Rhode Island, United States.

34 Street Law student from Thomas Jefferson School of Law, San Diego, California, United States.

knowledge. First, the Street Law experience helped them refine and review the information that they were learning in their other law school classes. Many traditional law school classes examine legal issues through a national lens. As with many live-client clinics, Street Law requires law students to understand the applicable law in one jurisdiction, which is a useful complement to traditional classroom learning.

Being in my last year of law school, the Street Law course has helped me review the material that was taught my first year while challenging me to be able to take the actual law and make such material easier to understand for students with the program.³⁵

By teaching basic legal concepts to high school students, Street Law students are forced to constantly review the information that they were taught throughout law school.

Second, Street Law helped law students develop knowledge of new legal concepts that they otherwise might not have learned elsewhere in law school. Participants often have significant input into the topics they choose to teach each week. This empowers law students to select areas of particular interest to them and their students. Because law schools have a number of required courses, law students are not always able to select courses in all of their interest areas. Some respondents listed specific instances of laws that they had to learn about to properly serve the community where they were working. For example, one respondent reported learning extensively about restraining orders before teaching a group of survivors of domestic violence. Although law students may learn about family law and the legal rules that govern their jurisdiction, Street Law enabled them to delve into those issues and examine how those rules are applied on a practical micro level. Law students participating in traditional live-client clinics have the opportunity to closely examine issues in a similar way.

Respondents identified the process of teaching as a specific element of their Street Law experience that built their own personal legal knowledge. To teach about a topic and explain it to high school students, the instructor must fully understand the topic. In addition to legal rules, instructors must grasp the public policy issues involved to facilitate discussions about why certain laws exist.

I have realized that what I remember the best is what I taught high school students. Teaching others made me really think about the issues in a greater context and forced me to get to understand them properly.³⁶

35 Street Law student from Oklahoma City University School of Law, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States.

36 Street Law student from Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

[Street Law] has helped me understand the law better, because I need to make sure I have a good understanding of it so that I can explain it simply.³⁷

Teaching Street Law requires an in-depth understanding of the practical application of the law. It provides the Street Law participants an opportunity to discuss legal concepts from the perspective of the students and examine how the law affects them and their communities. As one respondent put it, Street Law taught her how to connect “the theoretical that is taught in law school and the practical in how it affects real lives.”³⁸ This reconceptualization of the law is an important learning opportunity that Street Law programs provide for participants.

D. Research and Preparation

While teaching in front of a class of students is the most visible and public-facing aspect of Street Law programs, the process of teaching involves much more time and effort than just the forty-five to ninety minutes in the classroom with the students. Researching legal topics, creating lesson plans, and preparing for everything that can come up during the lesson are time-consuming but extremely important elements of the Street Law experience. Respondents recognized that the time that they put into researching and preparing for teaching was a valuable educational experience for them, and one that they felt was good training for their future work as lawyers. These are skills law students also develop in many other law school courses and clinics, making Street Law courses an important complement to traditional law school curricula.

The most fundamental aspect of preparing to teach a Street Law class is developing or refining a lesson plan. The lesson plan is a detailed guide for the instructor that outlines what students should learn and be able to do (outcomes), how the content will be taught (methods), and how the learning will be measured (assessment). While every Street Law program is different—some students create their own lesson plans and others use lessons plans developed by the professor or other external sources—all Street Law students use some kind of plan to guide their teaching.

Street Law has allowed me to refine my legal knowledge and skills. This is mostly a result of formulating lesson plans, in which I had to make sure I had adequate knowledge of topics myself before teaching and explaining them to students.³⁹

The process of creating or adapting a lesson plan for use in the classroom is thus in itself a learning experience for the Street Law participants.

37 Street Law student from University of Kentucky College of Law, Lexington, Kentucky, United States.

38 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

39 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

Preparation for a Street Law class involves more than simply planning what to do during the class. As the respondents explained, an important aspect of planning is anticipating the unexpected questions and scenarios that might arise during the class. This preparation involves not just a deep understanding of the law, but also preparation for the different personalities and behaviors that they will encounter in the classroom. As one respondent put it, “It wasn’t enough to ‘wing it.’ My teaching partner and I had to be adequately prepared to thoroughly explain each lesson, actively engage the students, and maintain control of the room.”⁴⁰ Many of the respondents also identified the curiosity of their students as a factor that drove their preparation.

[Street Law] has made me realize how important . . . preparation [is] because the students will always come up with new questions which we had not encountered before as each student sees the law differently and that results in them taking different approaches and thinking of new angles.⁴¹

Respondents linked the inquisitiveness of the students in the class to real-life lawyering scenarios that they are likely to encounter (or in some cases have already encountered) in their professional lives as lawyers. Working with a class of high school students prepared the Street Law participants for a variety of legal situations. As one respondent succinctly stated, “Whether as the teacher to the students or as the future lawyer to my clients, without preparation . . . you cannot succeed.”⁴²

E. Cultural Competency and Community Connections

Street Law connects law students with people in their community, and many respondents identified this relationship as an important aspect of their experience with the program. Although more abstract than the other themes described, this association was a powerful and meaningful element to the law student participants. Law students in many traditional live-client clinics also work closely with community members. Clinics often serve economically disadvantaged communities or communities of color. Incredible, important pro bono work is done in these legal clinics, and law student participants may gain some or all of the benefits identified here. In contrast to many other clinical and experiential programs in which law students interact with community members in a professional lawyer/client relationship, Street Law allows law students to communicate with participants on a more equal level. Because the law students are not addressing a contemporaneous legal problem when they meet with their students, discussions can track the interests of the high school students and focus on current events. Although it may seem insignificant, while law students are teaching interactive and engaging lessons, both they and the high school students are often laughing and having fun.

⁴⁰ Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

⁴¹ Street Law student from The Law Society of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.

⁴² Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

These experiences create genuine connections that remain with both the students and the instructors. Because classroom discussions are primarily skills driven (e.g. critical thinking, advocacy), law students focus less on one correct answer and more on how different laws impact the community or may impact different communities disparately. These interactions are vital for law students to underscore the value of diversity, which is a cornerstone of cultural competency. This open dialogue allows for meaningful understanding and mutual appreciation:

While you're a law student, it is easy to get stuck in a law school bubble because of how busy you are with classes and internships. This program has helped me step outside that bubble and connect with people in my community on something that I am passionate about.⁴³

Many respondents also identified how experiencing the disconnect between laypeople and the law was eye-opening for them. Understanding this gap in legal awareness will help lawyers be more responsive to their clients.

[I learned] how little most people know about the legal system. It is easy after four years of college and three years of law school to assume that most people know information that is fundamental in the field. Yet in reality, most of my clients have little to no understanding of the judiciary, and the Street Law program really helped me understand this.⁴⁴

Their participation in the Street Law program thus was not only an educational experience for the knowledge and skills that it helped them develop, but also for the empathetic attitudes that it helped them adopt toward the people in their communities.

Respondents highlighted another disconnection that Street Law bridged, namely that between law students and their local community.

Street Law was a refreshing and humbling reminder of the people I will be serving when I become a prosecutor in this community. It energized me and reconnected me with the kids in my city that I had forgotten about during the fray of law school.⁴⁵

Street Law programs connect law students with their communities. In addition, many respondents explicitly described the differences between law students and the students they served. In their words, law students were often more privileged and wealthier than the young people that they were teaching.

It has allowed [sic] to be reconnect with parts of my community that may not be as economically affluent as I am. This helps you in gaining

43 Street Law student from Oklahoma City University School of Law, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, United States.

44 Street Law student from Michigan State University College of Law, East Lansing, Michigan, United States.

45 Street Law student from University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law, Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

perspective in life and also makes you infinitely more grateful for the opportunities you have.⁴⁶

The Street Law program helped them connect with people who had different life experiences from their own, thus preparing them for the diverse group of clients that they are likely to encounter in their legal careers.

Central to law students' connection to their community was the development of an appreciation for the value of pro bono work. As one respondent articulated, doing work for others is an important attribute of a good lawyer but something that may be easy to forget in the competitive bustle of law school:

I think law school is designed to be selfish. You are constantly comparing yourself to others, focusing on your own grades and comprehension of materials, and comparing your status . . . to your peers. Street Law allows you to see the bigger picture of law school, that your actions will deeply affect others, and that you have the opportunity to create a positive influence. It allowed me to stop being selfish in my education and career.⁴⁷

By developing the attitudes necessary for what one respondent described as a "career in service,"⁴⁸ Street Law programs serve a critical preparatory function for legal professionals.

Like many clinical courses and even some traditional law school classes, Street Law participants often teach in pairs or teams. The law students learn to communicate and cooperate with their peers and the classroom teacher or site supervisor.

Not only has Street Law allowed me to connect to the high school students in the Bronx/their HS teachers, but I have also gotten to know my law school peers.⁴⁹

Prague Street Law program is based on "community spirit," so we consider ourselves to be not just colleagues [sic] but (first of all) friends.⁵⁰

Law students have to balance different personalities and study styles to produce a unified lesson and work together to manage the planned activities and the classroom. Learning how to work effectively as a team is critical for virtually all legal careers.

46 Street Law student from Lahore Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

47 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

48 Street Law student from University of Missouri Kansas City School of Law, Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

49 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

50 Street Law student from Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic.

V. Reflections⁵¹

The reflections included below were written by law students and attorneys who participated in Street Law. They taught in the Czech Republic, Ireland, Pakistan, and the United States. The topics they taught and the nature of their placements are widely disparate, but, again, common themes are present. The contributors identify community connection, public speaking, and the development of core legal knowledge as benefits of participation in their Street Law programs.

A. Tomáš Friedel⁵² (Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic)

“You live a new life for every new language you speak” says old Czech proverb.

I consider the law to be a *foreign language*. Even more, I consider the law to be a *special foreign language*. Why is it special? Everyone is willing (or forced) to speak it at least from time to time. Moreover, it is a powerful—and therefore important—language. If one disobeys what the law says s/he is forced to listen. In such reality it is vital to speak the law for anyone. In such reality the lawyers are needed.

My conception of the law was deeply formed through my Street Law experience. I find the Street Law to be a special way of communication between the law and a lay person through a Street Lawyer. The Street Lawyer plays a role of agent or translator of law which demands a lot from her/him or more precisely from me, if I want to meet the requirements for such position.

First of all, as a Street Lawyers (and a lawyer later on) I must have improved my legal knowledge. I cannot be proper translator if I do not know the vocabulary, if I do not know how to build a legal sentence or what authorities think about various issues. Research and preparation are inherent part of providing Street Law lecture as it is inherent part of providing legal services. Simply speaking, in class as well as in firm, I need *to have something to say*.

Speaking about knowledge of law, Street Law was the first course that let me experience a volatility of law. In regular law faculty classes, it was usually mentioned that preparation of certain amendment to some significant statute is in progress or that important judgement is about to be hand down. Though, there is gulf between *knowing* that law changes all the time and *experiencing* that law changes all the time. As a law student I was required to pay attention only to changes that had happened before I took an exam and frequently, I was notified by teachers about them. On the other hand, as a long-standing

⁵¹ Reflections are included here as written, without editing, to capture each author’s voice.

⁵² Tomáš Friedel participated in the Street Law program at Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic. He worked as a lawyer at the Prague City Council Office and is currently working as a law faculty lecturer at Charles University in the department of political science and sociology.

Street Lawyer who teaches similar topics every year, I must have kept pace with changes of law on long term basis. Needless to say, that the responsibility for doing so was my own.

Subsequently, it was necessary for me to get to know *proper means of communication of the law* with students or laypersons broadly speaking.

Firstly, Street Law emphasizes that it is essential to realize what your partner (regardless if student or client) wants and needs. (And as a follow-up what you—as a teacher or a lawyer—want and need and what law allows). Once one gathered the inputs into the communication it is much easier to communicate. Street Law is especially seminal in displaying that since high school students are unique stratum—they are not afraid to ask a question even though they do not know how exactly. In other words, students (and most of other laypersons) know what they need to know nevertheless they are not able to formulate it. After some Street Law practice, I was able to recognize that *not-understanding* questions or requirements is a valuable first step in finding blank spaces of legal knowledge of my communication partner. After finding such spaces, my role was to fill them. Only then our communication could continue fluently. Besides, in class Street Law experience teaches every Street Lawyer in thickened form that not understanding the law is completely common, which is a valuable lesson for someone who usually speaks about law with lawyers or law students.

Secondly, Street Law offered and trained me in tens of concrete means of communication. Even more fruitful than getting to know wide repertoire of means of communication was cognition that every situation requires its own communication method and therefore it is vital to think carefully which one should be used as a toll for dealing with certain situation. Of course, some of Street Law methods were more useful for in class situations (such as mock trials or moot courts) yet public speaking, face to face communication or teamwork are as valuable in the class as in the practice of law firm.

I obtained most of mentioned skills and features during my Street Law teaching at high schools Gymnázium Jana Nerudy in Prague and Gymnázium Bohumila Hrabala in Nymburk where I taught one year seminars of law and political science in second to last and last year students (from 16 to 18 years old).

Instead of writing regular conclusion of my text, I carried out a small word count. I used a noun “communication” ten times and a noun “language” four time. Malicious reader could say the reason I repeat the same words that times is that my ungainly English. I would like to suggest a different explanation. I used the words that often because Street Law is in the first place a way how to be in connection with fellow citizens for me, it is a way how to create a community.

*B. Niamh Hanbidge*⁵³ (*Law Society of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland*)

The Street Law Programme really appealed to me as an opportunity to give back to the community and to those from disadvantaged areas. I participated in two Street Law Programmes, one in a secondary school working with 15-16 year olds and one in a prison. Volunteering in these two programmes really enabled me to learn the true value of Street Law and its lasting impact.

As a law student and now a Trainee solicitor, I have always been passionate about education. It is the very catalyst that opens your eyes, mind and heart to different ways of understanding life. I am very alive to the fact that education is a privilege, one which I am forever grateful for. The lack of accessibility of education is a societal issue with serious effects. When the chance arose to volunteer for Street Law, I truly was delighted to put myself forward.

The orientation weekend of Street Law illustrated how important the *manner* in which education is delivered to students. Interactive learning is integral to real personal development and a broad way of thinking. Students are subjected to rote learning in schools and the chance to truly deepen their own way of thinking slips away. This is even more so for disadvantaged students where schools may be oversubscribed and underfunded. School becomes a chore, a mere litany of tests necessary to be done during your childhood years.

Street Law changed the way I view education. It struck me that rote learning is something that law students are generally quite suited to. With the sheer vast amounts of information, rote and fast learning becomes the norm, sometimes with little time to actually digest what you are learning. As law students and practitioners are well adapted to this, it became clear that our learning mechanisms enabled us to be the fortunate ones. The opportunity to learn about law and legal theories has become a privilege. I believe it should be a right. By placing the autonomy back in the students hands and minds, open dialogue and engagement is not only encouraged, but it happens naturally. It is truly great to see how impassioned the students became when discussing law.

LESSONS

The lessons differed greatly between teaching children and teaching prisoners. For this purpose, I will talk about them separately.

For teaching children, my teaching partner and I wanted to broaden the students' horizons with interesting, age appropriate, thought provoking material. We developed the lesson plans weekly. We taught on topical areas of law, such as the women's right, the right to choose, referendums and crime. What was truly fascinating was to create a classroom where the students took over. We gave them the basic tools and bare guidance. The dialogue was flowing and it was really amazing to see how passionate the students were about basic human rights and principles of law.

53 Niamh Hanbidge participated in the Street Law program with the Law Society of Ireland in Dublin, Ireland, and is now a Trainee Solicitor with Eversheds Sutherland.

For teaching the prisoners, my fellow teaching partners and I wanted to engage in stimulating conversations, mature and educational. It was hard at times to pick the right topics to teach. It was important we engaged with the students in an educational, mature and equal manner. We discussed topics like freedom of expression, personal injuries and liability, the death penalty in America and the criminal justice system.

I have to say I was genuinely taken aback by how much the prisoners engaged. While keeping up the bravado amongst their fellow inmates, there was a real level of interest and enthusiasm when discussing legal ideas and social norms. By bringing the law back to its very basics, the importance of law and how you teach it became extremely evident. The discussion of ideas of justice, consequences and moral rights showed me how important the accessibility of law is. Lawyers are fortunate to have skills where we can take in vast amounts of information by reading and digesting information for hours on end. The majority of people do not have this skill, time or educational freedom and opportunity. That does not mean people not want to engage with the law. If people are given the chance, a real chance, to engage, learn and develop legal theories, the benefits would be far-reaching.

IMPACT

I hope the students had an enjoyable, educational experience with Street Law. For me, I found it changed my perception of how law should be taught. It further instilled in me the fact that education, particularly legal theories and law, should be comprehensible and available for anyone who is interested. The programme allows volunteers to engage with people from a disadvantaged community or people who may be struggling academically, with complex ideas about justice, social norms and the law. No bias or societal privilege is placed on anybody. The impact of Street Law is about opening up those channels for a level-playing field in teaching law.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to engage with this programme as I believe it will make me a better Solicitor once I qualify. Street Law helps you grow compassion and interest in learning for others. It is important to always remember that independent and creative thinking can be cultivated through education. Socio-economic factors should never hinder this. The legal profession holds a high regard in society, therefore we must all play our part and give back to those who may need it.

I would like to thank the organisers of the Street Law programme, the Law Society of Ireland and the Solas Project for this great opportunity.

*C. Amiri Lampley*⁵⁴ (*The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois*)

In the Spring of 2019, the University of Chicago Black Law Students Association reinstated a Street Law Program in partnership with the university's urban charter school, Woodlawn High School. The program was reinstated and led by me, the BLSA president at the time. Through support from the University Director of Partnerships at the Urban Education Institute and the law school's deans' office, BLSA was able to facilitate a five-week, after school program teaching students between ninth and eleventh grade, about the law, their constitutional rights as students, and opportunities for advocacy as youth leaders within their community.

Prior to law school, I taught high school English as a Teach for America Corps member. While teaching I became uncomfortably familiar with the residual effects of educational and racial disparities within the African American community. I discovered that effective teaching had to be accompanied with financial capital, equal opportunity, and community engagement in order to produce desirable student outcomes. Due to systemic racism and generational poverty, a disproportionate amount of my students were victims of trauma and lacked the literacy to advocate for themselves. Incited by their suffering and inspired by their resilience, I pursued a law degree with hopes that I could make an impact from a macro level on disenfranchised youth in urban education.

Thus, I came to law school with a primary interest in identifying how I could use my legal career to aid in dismantling the school to prison pipeline system and acquiring a skill set that could be used to empower African American youth. I also sorely missed teaching children and was excited to learn that Street Law could serve as both a way for me to remain connected to youth, deepen my own understanding of the law, and meet the needs of the kids I came to law school for.

After I discovered that the University of Chicago did not have an active Street Law program, I began planning for re-establishing a program in my first year of law school, with the intent of re-chartering it as an official student organization. However, after I was elected president of BLSA I decided that it was best to house the program within BLSA, at least for the first year.

Although Street Law student organizations are widely successful across the country, it was really important to me that black high school students on the South Side of Chicago have the opportunity to see black law students from the University of Chicago, who look just like them, stand in front of them and not only tell them they could be lawyers too, but prove it through our presence, our existence. To be able to speak to how by merely existing in spaces that have historically barred our attendance because of the color of our skin, we are engaging in a form of resistance. To share how systemic and

54 Amiri Lampley participated in the Street Law program at the University of Chicago and joined Kirkland & Ellis in the litigation practice group in fall 2020.

institutional racism has led to underrepresentation in the legal field, and yet overrepresentation in our prisons.

While my primary interest in having the program led by black students was rooted in the desire to establish an informal legal pipeline between the charter school and the law school and provide students with role models who looked like them, the reward of having BLSA lead Street Law was two-fold. Not only did we empower students, but by engaging in topics from search and seizure and free speech, to racial profiling and legitimacy of the law, BLSA members also experienced professional growth and personal healing.

Law school can be a really isolating place for minorities. Street Law reminded us of our purpose, our commitment to our community, and the immensity of the work we are doing. It also encouraged us to continue pushing the law school to be more than a distant figure in the center of a community in which it played a primarily role in its disenfranchisement. Our high school students often shared how they had never been on campus or told stories about how the university would not allow students to merely walk across the midway for field trips. To see their smiles as they sat amongst students in one of the law school classes and witness them stand up in the law school's court room as lawyers in a mock trial on the culminating day of the program, not only touched the minds and hearts of all involved, but also was an additional symbol of change—though incremental—that is progressively happening within the walls of our law school, if not the university.

While BLSA led the program, we still opened up volunteering positions to the entire student body and gratefully received support from students involved in various public interest and ethnic organizations. Thus, while Street Law was led by BLSA and the curriculum primarily curated by BLSA, our volunteers were still diverse in race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and thought, contributing to very rich discussions amongst the students and volunteers.

Despite the academically challenging courses and enriched legal discussions I have engaged in as a law student, I have still found nothing as more rewarding and fulfilling as the complex, messy, and ingenious conversations I get to have with youth. Having the opportunity to teach again, connect with youth, and design lesson plans kept me grounded throughout my second year of law school. Managing my peers and pitching the program to my administration also further developed my leadership skills. More importantly, teaching students the law helped clarify my own understanding of the law and answer questions that I didn't even realize I had before. Moving forward I hope that my administration will be able to attest to the academic, professional, and personal benefits of adopting Street Law as a clinical course within the law school so that students like myself may receive the credit they deserve for their hard work.

D. Zach Segal⁵⁵ (Touro Law Center, Central Islip, New York)

As a Canadian, having moved to the United States for law school, I felt I lacked a connection with the country whose laws I was learning about. That was until Spring 2019 when the Street Law Program was added to the curriculum at Touro. Excited to put what I had been learning in school to good use before formally entering the legal field, and a yearning desire to get a better hold on the United States, I signed up.

I was placed at Brentwood High School in Brentwood, New York. From what I had been told, generally, Brentwood was associated with gangs and violence. Frankly, I was expecting the high school I had seen in movies growing up where metal detectors were installed at the front door. When I walked in the school and presented my identification to the front desk, they could not read my Quebec driver's license and asked me a litany of questions relating to the big question: how did I end up there? I quickly realized this was my "hook" for engaging the students.

Now, initially, I was of the impression that, like me, the class would be eager to learn about the law. I was wrong. I could not get them to raise a hand, answer a question, nothing. It was like talking to a wall. After discussing with my Professor, Professor Roig, he suggested maybe a class on the separation of powers was not the best way to get sixteen years olds engaged. So, I switched gears towards the area I currently practice: criminal law. After all, it is the most interesting area.

But, to spice it up even further, I wanted to make it relatable to every day life. The solution: music. Turns out students are a lot more interested in learning about the Fourth Amendment's automobile exception when it's explained in the context of a Jay-Z song. With music video playing, I broke down each step and explained the intricacies of the exception and the "dos" and "do nots" if the police pull you over. The rest of the semester proceeded in this way, explaining to non-lawyers boring (to most people) concepts by making them relatable.

Of course, it ended, and before I knew it I was visiting clients in jail and writing up suppression motions. It did not take very long, however, for me to realize how instrumental Street Law was for my career. The most important thing it taught me was how to explain legal principles in a way that non-lawyers will understand. As a criminal lawyer, this skill has been particularly helpful as my clients—some of whom struggle with English, and others that don't know the law, or think it applies to them—must make serious decisions based on my ability to effectively explain sometimes complicated concepts. On a less interpersonal level, Street Law forced me to prepare materials that are relevant to what I want to present in a way that will capture the reader's attention. In other words, although I am not interacting with, for example,

55 Zach Segal participated in the Street Law program at the Touro Law Center and is currently an attorney at Levitt & Kaizer.

a judge, the way in which the argument is presented could make a world of difference in the outcome.

All in all, I think Street Law is a fantastic program. It gives law students a chance to put what we learnt to practical use and, I hope, imputed the high school students with the impression that lawyers have personalities. Although it was only available my last semester, I could not think of a better way to close out my law school experience.

*E. Hannah West*⁵⁶ (*New York Law School, New York, New York*)

*When one teaches, two learn*⁵⁷

I participated in New York Law School's Street Law program, which is supervised by Professor Amy Wallace. A chosen group of law students worked in pairs or groups of three to teach weekly classes at an urban law-themed high school, the Charter High School for Law and Social Justice, in the Bronx. Our students were ninth or tenth graders. During the fall 2019 semester, we focused on criminal law. The semester culminated in a mock trial hosted by New York Law School in Manhattan.

As law students accustomed to learning rather than teaching, we spent several weeks training in law-related education. We learned how to construct learner-centered lesson plans to encourage students to develop intellectual and cognitive skills. Before we began teaching at the high school, we taught mock classes to our peers in the Street Law class. We received helpful feedback and got to work out the kinks in our lesson plans before going "live" at the high school. While teaching law students was helpful practice, teaching thirty ninth graders came with new challenges.

Each week Professor Wallace would demonstrate a new lesson plan, and we could choose to adopt it as our own, or create a different plan. Usually, my partner and I would use Professor Wallace's lesson as a starting point for building our own lesson tailored to our class and our teaching styles. The weekly themes ranged from the differences between criminal and civil law to the degrees of murder. We quickly learned the simultaneous importance of preparation and flexibility.

Participating in the Street Law program prepared me for my legal career in several ways. Being a teacher, like being a lawyer, requires research and preparation. A well-prepared lesson plan is the greatest armor a teacher can bring to the classroom. Similarly, a well-crafted brief, memo, or contract is one of a lawyer's strongest tools. However, the work does not end there. A classroom, like a courtroom or a law firm, comes with surprises. I learned that

⁵⁶ Hannah West is currently a 3L at New York Law School and was a summer associate at Milbank LLP in New York.

⁵⁷ Robert Heinlein.

it is important to be flexible, and light on your feet, to handle unexpected challenges with grace and confidence. Our classroom was chaotic at times, which meant that we could not always perfectly follow our lesson plan. My partner and I quickly learned that creativity would be equally as key as our lesson preparation. For example, on our first day teaching at the high school, we were told as we walked into the classroom that there would be a fire drill which would cut our lesson short by twenty minutes. We adjusted, worked well as a team, and found our stride for a successful first day. These unexpected bumps have prepared me for the dynamic environment that comes with being a lawyer.

By teaching law to high schoolers, I was able to practice translating complex legal concepts into relatable everyday language. Lawyers often have clients who are not familiar with the law, so being able to break law down into digestible parts is a crucial lawyering skill. Moreover, we were teaching these ideas to a large classroom of thirty students, which gave me ample opportunity to practice public speaking. Commanding the attention and respect of thirty students makes convincing one judge, as a lawyer, seem far less intimidating.

Street Law also provided an opportunity to develop interpersonal skills like leadership, empathy, motivation, patience, and dependability. Many of our students were learning English as their second language. Others came from unstable homes. Each student had different needs. I learned that managing a classroom of thirty students meant focusing on the whole classroom, while using moments of group work to address individual students' needs. I learned the importance of listening in order to have greater compassion and understanding for others' feelings. For instance, during the mock trial at the end of the semester, one student had an anxiety attack and was crying out of fear of public speaking. I took her into the hallway and listened to her concerns. After some deep breathing and a pep talk, she went back into the classroom and faced her fears by performing her role in the mock trial.

I sought to strike a balance between kindness and firmness in order to be an effective leader. Lawyers must strike a similar balance as they manage and motivate employees and clients. Teachers and lawyers are figures of authority that must inspire confidence, gain trust, and motivate others. The interpersonal skills I gained as a Street Law teacher are directly applicable to my personal and professional life.

Furthermore, Street Law allowed me to build a meaningful connection to my community. As a law student, it is easy to get stuck in the "campus bubble" where I am focused on what is happening in a textbook or a classroom—not on what is going on in the real world. Street Law provides a way to integrate the study of law with civic duty. Building relationships with educators and students in the community gave me a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment. I will never forget the meaningful lessons Street Law has taught me, and I hope to continue to give back to and build bonds with my community as a student and as a practicing lawyer in the future. Robert Heinlein said it best:

“When one teaches, two learn.” I can only hope that my Street Law students learned as much as I did from the experience.

*F. Nehan Zehra*⁵⁸ (Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law,
Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan)

Street Law program is a form of clinic legal education imparting civic education to the high school students. Street Law programs around the world are providing professional development to the law students and have become an integral part of various law schools’ curricula across the globe. In Pakistan, however, there is no formal setup for the clinic legal education and therefore, introducing such educational experiences fall completely under the law schools’ discretion.

The Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law (SAHSOL) at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), based in Pakistan, launched its first street law program in the year 2017.⁵⁹ It aims to provide legal education to underprivileged high schools enrolling lower to middle strata of students located in the city, Lahore. The program strives for twin objectives of exposing budding lawyers to real audience for creating awareness on Pakistan’s legal system and on the other hand, empowering high school students with basic legal knowledge on how a constitutional democracy works, what role law plays in our individual lives and what role a well-informed citizen can play for the betterment of such legal system.

From the last three years, various local high schools have been taken aboard for this program, namely, School of Sciences, American Lycetuff, Umeed School, Haleem Institute, Crescent Trust Organization exclusively for orphans, and Bali Memorial Trust exclusively for the female homeless children and women. The program is supervised by Advocate Angbeen Mirza, a permanent faculty member at SAHSOL. Ms. Mirza has been tremendously working hard with her law students from SAHSOL to make this program successful and fruitful in the longer run.

I volunteered myself as an instructor for this program in the year 2017 and continued to be a part of it until I graduated in the year 2019. The program is designed to be yearlong comprising of hourly interactive sessions with the students twice a week. Every year, the curriculum is developed targeting adolescent students keeping in mind the fact that our target audience has very minimal understanding of the role of law in their society. It is important to understand that education, being the most crucial key for the personal and professional growth of our youth, must include insightful interactive activities that strengthen critical thinking within the individuals. Therefore, the curriculum we designed helped not only the law students but also high school

58 Nehan Zehra participated in the Street Law program at the Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law at Lahore University of Management Sciences and is currently working as an associate at a law firm, Raja Mohammed Akram & Co., based in Lahore, Pakistan.

59 Lahore University of Management Science, Street Law, Community Outreach.

students to ponder upon the diverse aspects of a political and social life where each and every aspect is governed by the rules and regulations in our society.

The program's curriculum was designed with the help of our supervisor, Ms. Mirza, along with the law students who volunteered themselves to be the instructors for this program. We were a group of five to six students, working together to develop modules and lesson plans for each session. The first module was an introduction to the concept of state and its component parts: the legislature, executive and judiciary. Through interactive exercises and role play activities, the high school students were able to exhibit an understanding of how our state is meant to function. This was followed by a module on criminal law, the process followed in a criminal trial and the concept of punishment/sentencing. The final module covered interactive sessions on various fundamental human rights, including but not limited to the right to education, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, right to equality and non-discrimination. The program has also successfully inculcated modules on employment laws and family laws considering their importance in understanding all aspects of a human being's life.

The Street Law program has helped me in gaining enough confidence and power to disseminate legal knowledge to students who are not privileged enough to know their legal rights. It helped me to learn the art of micro-managing my lesson plans and simplifying each session being mindful of their level of understanding. This proved to be really helpful for my students too, as they were more focused to learn the underlying concept of each of my activity without getting distracted from difficult legal jargons. With the increased number of interactive and participatory sessions, I observed that the students started thinking more critically. Their active participation, increased ability of thinking and questioning at the end of each lesson made me more passionate to continue teaching law to under-privileged of our society in the longer run. With their deeper understanding, I started to thoroughly prepare and time each session before delivering it to my class, as my students started asking me various insightful questions.

This program has been one of the most remarkable experience of my law school journey. Being an instructor and conducting sessions in front of a class of more than thirty students was in itself a tremendous learning experience for me. Upon completion of the sessions, feedback from the high school students indicated a high level of satisfaction and interest in the subject matter. Towards the end of my street law academic session, I realized that how much important quality education is for everyone and what a well-educated and well informed mind can strive for. The response and improvement that I beheld in my students was by far the most genuine achievement of my life. These engaging role play activities, interactive lectures and open discussion made my students able to learn how to exercise their legal rights on a daily basis. In the long-run, I believe these students will hopefully contribute to the society productively.

To conclude, my Street Law experience helped me in gaining not only personal but also professional skills. This overwhelming experience taught

me the importance of law, education, and communication. Street Law strives for building a society of tomorrow, comprising better thinkers, community members, and leaders.

VI. Other Law-Related Education Programs Taught by Law Students

The inaugural Street Law program at Georgetown just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. Street Law is the foundational law school-based law-related education methodology, and this study surveyed law student participants in only Street Law programs. However, other programs where law students are placed in schools exist around the country and may share some or all of these benefits. Included below are a few representative examples.

The Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project,⁶⁰ founded in 1999 at American University Washington College of Law, is also a credit-bearing faculty-taught course.⁶¹ Similar to Street Law,⁶² Marshall-Brennan uses a textbook to guide law students in the classroom.⁶³ Marshall-Brennan focuses entirely on constitutional issues related to students. The program was developed to address the lack of substantive learning about the Constitution in public schools. When designing a solution, founders “realized they had valuable social capital at their disposal—a surplus of energetic law students eager to share their knowledge about Supreme Court cases.”⁶⁴ As with Street Law, law students typically teach in pairs. However, Marshall-Brennan sends two pairs of law students into each classroom. One pair focuses on substantive legal issues and the other pair focuses on moot court. Most Street Law programs also incorporate legal simulations in the curriculum. These include mock trial, moot court, and mock dispute resolution (negotiation, mediation, and arbitration).

Another outstanding law-related education program is Legal Outreach,⁶⁵ founded in 1983 and based in Brooklyn, New York. Legal Outreach differs significantly from both Street Law and Marshall-Brennan. High school students who participate in Legal Outreach typically remain in the program for all of high school. The program opts to serve fewer students, which enables Legal Outreach to have a greater impact on those who participate. Legal Outreach “is arguably the legal profession’s best example of an early-

60 *Marshall-Brennan Constitutional Literacy Project*, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW, <https://www.wcl.american.edu/impact/initiatives-programs/marshallbrennan/> (last visited Dec. 30, 2021).

61 Maryam Ahranjani, *Law School–High School: Marshall-Brennan and Moot Court*, *American University Washington College of Law and Others*, in *THE EDUCATION PIPELINE*, *supra* note 9, at 145.

62 LEE P. ARBETMAN ET AL., *STREET LAW: A COURSE IN PRACTICAL LAW* (10th ed. 2021).

63 JAMIN B. RASKIN, *WE THE STUDENTS: SUPREME COURT CASES FOR AND ABOUT STUDENTS* (4th ed. 2014).

64 Ahranjani, in *THE EDUCATION PIPELINE*, *supra* note 61, at 146.

65 LEGAL OUTREACH, www.legaloutreach.org (last visited Dec. 30, 2021).

intervention pipeline program.”⁶⁶ The program is carefully designed to increase diversity in the legal profession by preparing high school students for the rigor of college and law school.⁶⁷ The high school students attend classes during the school year, and Legal Outreach runs summer programs at most New York City law schools, where courses are taught by law students and faculty. Law students are involved during the year as constitutional law debate coaches and over the summer teaching criminal law. Similarly, Street Law, Inc. has piloted a summer law program in the Bronx, New York, taught by law students at New York Law School.

Additionally, together with a New York State Appellate Division justice, New York Law School law students teach biweekly classes through the PENCIL program.⁶⁸ The lessons focus in depth on a case recently argued before the Appellate Division, with high school students closely examining all aspects of the case. Other similar regional programs likely exist throughout the United States and abroad, with varying degrees of law student involvement, and these programs may offer some or all of the benefits identified by Street Law participants in this study.

VII. Conclusion and Recommendations

The responses from law students suggest they believe that Street Law programs provide valuable and unique preparation for their legal careers. In several distinct areas, the law students felt that the Street Law experience not only propelled them to develop critical lawyering skills but did so in ways equal to traditional live-client clinical programs; yet many law students who participate in Street Law programs receive little or no academic credit.

The respondents identified skills and knowledge that they learned from their Street Law experiences that they found valuable and applicable to their legal careers. From the development of lawyering skills such as preparation and clear communication to the enhancement and broadening of legal concepts and knowledge, the law students articulated the ways in which Street Law helped them become better lawyers.

Street Law . . . increased my skills in problem solving, communication, preparation, research, and presentation. I appreciate that Street Law provided the space to hone those skills because they made me a more marketable candidate for any position within the legal field.⁶⁹

Without diminishing the importance of the traditional law school curriculum, the evidence from this study suggests that Street Law is an important supplemental educational activity for law students. It provides learning opportunities—both in content and in methodology—and personal

66 Michael Bobelian, *Fixing the Holes*, 6 MINORITY L. J. (Fall 2006).

67 *Id.*

68 PENCIL, www.pencil.org (last visited Dec. 30, 2021).

69 Street Law student from New York Law School, New York, New York, United States.

and professional growth that may not be available through other classes or activities in law school. Many live-client clinical programs provide benefits similar to those identified here, but Street Law programs provide some distinct advantages for law students.

Street Law gives law students a real and tangible way to interact with their community. By moving beyond the theory and formality of the law school environment and connecting law students with a diverse set of young people in a nonadversarial setting, law students and high school participants can connect on a neutral level. The result is development of cultural competency skills that can be difficult to teach in a traditional law school curriculum. The program exposes both law students and program participants to what one respondent called “real life issues.”⁷⁰

[The] Street Law Program has been one of the best things of my entire law degree. It made me understand . . . how . . . important education is and what a well-educated and well-informed mind can strive for. It helped me deal and engage with the kids who don’t enjoy the privileges [that the] upper class do. Besides this it made me realize that no matter which class you belong to, a well informed mind can do wonders by just critically thinking each aspect of law and life at large. The response and improvement that I beheld in my students was by far the most genuine achievement of my life.⁷¹

Understanding the people of a community and the ways that they interact with law is a fundamental aspect of Street Law and an undeniably important skill for effective legal professionals.

Given the value of Street Law programs for law students, law schools should consider offering Street Law as a core credit-bearing element of the experiential curriculum. Law student participants identified many similar academic and professional practice benefits to traditional live-client clinics and some benefits unique to Street Law. Credit-bearing Street Law courses taught by law school faculty allow law students more time at their teaching site (a) because those law students are taking fewer courses, and (b) because faculty members generally coordinate all administrative aspects of the program. These programs also generally provide greater training and supervision for the law students and additional opportunities for reflection. Put succinctly, Street Law programs prepare law students to become better lawyers. By offering high-quality Street Law programs for their students, law schools will not only provide a valuable learning opportunity for their students but allow them to develop practical skills and knowledge that will serve them in their legal careers.

70 Street Law student from Cardiff University, Cardiff, United Kingdom.

71 Street Law student from Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

Preparing Lawyers for Practice Appendix

1. Name
2. Email
3. University name
4. City
5. Country
6. Number of years you have participated in Street Law as a law student.
7. How has participating in the Street Law program prepared you for your legal career?
8. How has participating in the Street Law program developed your professional skills (e.g., research, preparation, public speaking, etc.)?
9. How has participating in the Street Law program improved your interpersonal and life skills?
10. How has participating in the Street Law program connected you with your community?
11. Is there anything else you would like to add about the impact that the Street Law program has had on you?