

Law Teaching Network

Project Update

July 11, 2017

<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/projects/law>

Project overview

The *Law Teaching Network* (LTN) project is a multi-year partnership between the Faculty of Law and McGill's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS). The project aims to generate a shared commitment to excellent, innovative and engaging teaching and learning practices in the Faculty. The LTN project has supported pedagogical reform, and resulted in greater knowledge and exploration of innovative teaching and learning methods at the Faculty of Law.

1) PROJECT LEADERSHIP TEAM

Law Teaching Network (LTN) steering committee: A group from Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) and the Faculty of Law that, in consultation with the Dean of Law, has been responsible for designing and implementing the LTN project.

Primary participants have included project lead Mariela Tovar (2010-present), Carolyn Samuel (2010-2014, 2016-present) and Jennie Ferris (2010-2016) from TLS, Faculty liaisons Professors Rosalie Jukier (2015-2016), Shauna Van Praagh (2013-2015), Hoi Kong (2012-2013), and Tina Piper (2010-2012), collaborator Katie Hewitt (2011-2012), and student assistants Devon Lemire (2016-2017), Didem Dogar (2015-2016), Alex Burdett (2014-2015), Kristen Emmett (2012-2014), Audrey-Kristel Barbeau (2011-2012), and Liam McHugh-Russell (2010-2011).

2) FACULTY-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

A. Course design, feedback and support

- 2016-2017: Design of Integrated Property Law Course: Provided course design support to professors responsible for designing the new, integrated Property Law course (civil law, common law and Indigenous perspectives). By adapting course design methodologies to the design of this course, the group identified key interdisciplinary concepts and developed learning outcomes and assignments that require students to integrate multiple perspectives.
- 2016-2017: Feedback on inaugural offering of Law Integration Workshop Course: Observed classes and provided feedback during debriefing meetings and in written reports, at the course coordinator's request (twice in Fall 2016; twice in Winter 2017). Facilitated focus groups, gathered and synthesized feedback. The Faculty sought feedback on the newly-implemented curriculum via focus groups with professors, students and Tutorial Leaders (TLs) (upper-year students who led small group sessions with first-year students).

Group	Date(s) held	# of participants
Professors ¹	Nov. 9, 2016	9
Tutorial Leaders (TLs) ²	Jan. 16, 2017	8
Students ³	Jan. 30, 2017; Feb. 3, 2017	17

¹ Seven of ten professors who were teaching the Law Integration Workshop, as well as the Dean and the Associate Dean (Academic)

² Eight of ten TLs who were supporting the course

³ A convenience sample of 21 students from Prof. Hoi Kong's class (of whom 17 ultimately participated), who were invited to participate in one of two feedback sessions.

Professors and TAs were asked three questions (drafted by Prof. Rosalie Jukier, the Faculty member responsible for coordinating the focus group):

1. What do you think is working?
2. What do you think is not working?
3. What ideas do you have for improvement?

Students were asked three questions (drafted by Prof. Hoi Kong):

1. How well did the plenary sessions during the Fall and Winter semester Integration Weeks support your learning?
2. How well did the Integration Week small group sessions held throughout the Fall and Winter semesters support you in learning how to reason and work with the law?
3. How well were the Integration Week plenaries and the small group sessions held during the Integration Weeks integrated with each other to support your learning?

Results from the focus groups were written up in three separate reports and submitted to Dean Leckey.

B. Examination and Evaluation Committee:

- 2015-2016: Developed one-pagers on the topics of pass/fail (specifications) grading and portfolios. Each included a law-specific annotated bibliography. TAs were invited to participate at the November 2015 meeting. Developed and facilitated an assessment workshop for students in collaboration with student representatives on the Committee (see 4. Student Engagement).
- 2014-2015: Completed benchmarking on evaluation practices of selected North American law schools. Prepared materials related to various purposes and approaches to assessment. TAs were invited as discussants at the January 2015 meeting.

C. Ad Hoc Committees on Curricular Reform

- 2013-2014: Advised two subgroups of the Faculty's Committee on Curricular Reform: subgroups 2 (Hours, weeks, terms – Structure of delivery) and 3 (Learning outcomes, skills and experiential learning).
- 2012-2013: Participated and provided support to the Committee as they considered possible pedagogical reconfigurations for the first year program. The first-year Integration Week (first week of the Fall 2013 term) was a direct outcome.
- 2011-2012: Participated in monthly meetings of the Committee, finalizing the undergraduate program outcomes and presenting them to Faculty Council (December 2011). The development of a curriculum mapping survey, synthesis and facilitation of two follow-up informational meetings (Spring 2012) contributed to a growing awareness of the program outcomes and their implications for curricular decisions in the Faculty. The Program Outcomes have since been referred to in ongoing discussions of curricular reform, and elaborated specifically within the context of [Clinical Legal Education](#).

D. "[Talking Teaching](#)" Website

- Developed a website including twenty profiles featuring McGill Law instructors who reflected on various aspects of their teaching and students' learning. Profiles are intended

to catalyze discussion and reflection among colleagues within and beyond the Faculty. Profiles are now highlighted on the Teaching tab of the Faculty of Law's website.

E. Teaching and Learning Forums for instructors and students

Provided support (facilitation, logistics) for the following offerings:

- Third Annual Teaching and Learning Forum (April 15, 2016)
 - An intensive half-day workshop for instructors about pass/fail (“specifications”) grading and peer feedback, with guest facilitator Dr. Linda Nilson. Discussions and work products developed during the Forum will inform the inaugural Integration Workshop being offered in Fall 2016, which will be graded on a pass/fail basis.
- Second Annual Teaching and Learning Forum (March 19, 2015)
 - An opportunity to share creative, innovative, and reflective approaches to teaching and learning in the law faculty, and to discuss teaching and learning issues of common interest.
 - The three-part afternoon included a conversation with recipients of funding from the Experiential/Active Learning Fund, a discussion of the multi-year Faculty Learning Community program (including participants’ experiences and perceived impact on teaching and learning), and a workshop considering the diverse purposes, times and places for assessment in legal education.
- First Annual Teaching and Learning Roundtable and Forum (March 21, 2014)
 - “Flipping Classrooms and Beyond: Variations on a Theme in Law Projects and Pedagogy”: This roundtable discussion included five McGill Law professors’ presentations on their own experiences, complemented by a presentation by Professor Peter Sankoff (University of Alberta) on flipping the classroom.
 - “Student Projects: Integrated Learning Within and Beyond the Classroom”: This forum showcased students’ papers, projects, posters and learning experiences.
 - Organized by the Faculty Liaison, with student support from the Faculty and TLS.

F. Clinical Legal Education Working Group (CLEWG)

- 2012-2013:
 - Developed a [website](#) that brought together the various clinical legal education opportunities at McGill in a student-friendly format.
- 2010-2012:
 - Assessed Faculty clinical legal education offerings and undertook benchmarking of experiential learning initiatives offered in Canadian law schools.
 - Led to the development of a well-received pilot course specifically designed to help students integrate their internship experiences with other in-course aspects of their McGill education, focusing on the Centre for Human Rights & Legal Pluralism's program. This course has since become a part of the curriculum for all students participating in those internships.

G. Faculty of Law retreat (June 1-2, 2011): Co-planned a highly successful 1.5-day retreat that addressed topics such as program outcomes, the curriculum, students, and reflected upon the LTN program's first year and next steps. Collected evidence in the context of the LTN project that led to activities promoting meaningful, data-driven discussions involving everyone concerned.

H. Program outcomes (2010-2011): Facilitated the development of undergraduate program outcomes in the Faculty. These program outcomes are intended to help guide curricular decisions and ensure a more intentional progression of skills and knowledge through the curriculum, thereby providing a more coherent student experience.

- A curriculum inventory involved an intensive process of consultation (Winter 2011). A series of focus groups (potential employers, graduating students and faculty members) helped to gather information about various audiences’ expectations regarding the program, as well as their assessment of how the program is doing. Guiding questions considered participants’ expectations for graduating students, desired program outcomes, and strengths and weaknesses of the McGill law program, among others, on eight different occasions:

Group	Date(s) held
Civil law career day	Jan. 19 2011
Clinical education working group	Jan. 24 2011 Feb. 15 2011 Mar. 15 2011
Common law career day	Jan. 26 2011
Graduating / graduated students	Feb. 7 2011 Mar. 2 2011
Public interest career day	Feb. 16, 2011

- An extensive document analysis was carried out to complement the focus groups, in order to identify relevant program outcomes for McGill Law graduates. This included Faculty Reports (2004-2008), McGill Law Documents for external audiences (e.g., recruitment documents, alumni magazines), articles and key monographs in Legal Education.
- The resulting draft program outcomes were discussed and revised in various faculty forums (Faculty survey, Faculty retreat) and finalized in 2011-2012 by the Ad Hoc Committee on Curricular Reform.

3) INSTRUCTOR ENGAGEMENT IN TEACHING AND LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

A. Workshops and events:

Planned and facilitated:

- Teaching Strategies Workshop: Instructors learned about numerous teaching strategies customized for legal education, and considered ways to incorporate these strategies in their courses.
 - August, 2015: Eight sessional instructors attended
 - August, 2014: Twelve sessional instructors attended
 - August, 2013: Seven sessional instructors attended
 - August, 2012: Nine sessional instructors attended
 - August, 2011: ~Twenty sessional lecturers attended
- Short Written Assignments Workshop: Provided guidelines for designing meaningful, engaging, short written assignments, as well as efficient grading strategies. Involved instructors (in-person and via vignettes on posters) who described example assignments from the Faculty of Law and other disciplines illustrating a range of assessment possibilities. Participants began developing assignments for one of their courses.
 - February, 2016: 10 instructors attended.

- December, 2013: 11 instructors attended. A follow-up meeting in February 2014 discussed creative ways to offer feedback and evaluation. As a result, after creating a new assignment for her Death and Property course during the workshop, Professor Angela Campbell's students presented their projects in class in April 2014 during a Public Education Fair. Two LTN members were invited to attend the fair. Student feedback on the assignment was elicited.
- Assessment of Students' Learning Workshop: Instructors explore best practices for assessment of student learning and review a range of assessment materials and methods in legal education, including McGill Law-specific examples.
 - August 2012: Eleven law instructors attended
 - November, 2011: Seven law instructors attended
- Teaching Portfolio Workshop: Law instructors worked with law-specific examples of exemplary teaching portfolios.
 - December, 2010: Eight law professors attended

Co-planned and coordinated:

- Indigenous Law in the World: Research, pedagogy, and application (February 18, 2013): Dr. Val Napoleon (University of Victoria, Faculty of Law) and her colleague Hadley Friedland gave a presentation about indigenous education, to move forward the Faculty's continuing reflections on expanding the transsystemic program beyond common and civil law traditions.
Follow-up initiatives:
 - Students may participate in a collaborative research project with Professor Val Napoleon of the University of Victoria in a summer course, or in a cross-university seminar (via videoconference) on integrating legal traditions that involves student responses to faculty papers and discussion.
 - Instructors at McGill and the University of Victoria may contribute to a special issue of the *Canadian Legal Education Annual Review* focusing on teaching across legal traditions.
- Interdisciplinary Teaching Workshop (May 24, 2013): This event developed the Faculty's reflections on interdisciplinary and experiential/clinical teaching. Visiting scholars Dr. Joshua Cohen and Dr. Julie Haack spoke to inspiring programs at their institutions. This workshop was co-sponsored by the Marcel Desautels Institute for Integrated Management and the CREATE in Green Chemistry program.
Follow-up initiatives:
 - A collaboration with the [SEDE](#) Office will permit students from across disciplines to work on governance questions with an aboriginal band.
 - The McGill School of the Environment (MSE) will offer a cross-listed field course exploring environmental governance in Montréal.
 - An Engineering faculty member is preparing a course on green product design and bringing ideas from the laboratory to the market.

- Teaching and research collaborations with the North American Consortium of Legal Educators regarding transnational environmental issues are being explored and implemented.
 - Experiential Learning and Critical Reflection Day (May 4, 2012):
 - Dr. Patti Clayton visited the Faculty of Law for a series of legal education activities specifically organized around experiential learning, integrating clinical and internship experiences and critical reflection.
 - Instructors engaged with questions around experiential learning and considered how it might be incorporated in current course offerings through a plenary (“Designing Experiential Education as an Approach to Scholarship”) and a workshop (“Generating, Deepening, and Documenting Learning: The power of critical reflection in experiential education/service-learning”).
- B. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs): Designed and facilitated FLCs, which are environments where dialogues about teaching and learning occur among colleagues at all career stages and where innovative educational practices can be developed.
- 2013-14:
 - A systematic evaluation of the FLC program over the past three years was conducted.
 - Twelve structured interviews with past FLC participants were completed in March 2014, with very positive results.
 - This process and results have been subsequently communicated to both internal and external audiences.
 - 2010-2013:
 - 31 law faculty members participated in eight FLCs, which addressed multiple topics based on faculty interests: learning-centered course re-design, concurrently advancing teaching and research, teaching and learning with technologies, sharing and developing active learning strategies, peer observation in the classroom, and assessment.
- C. LTN Funding opportunities (proposals reviewed by Faculty representatives and TLS)
- Coordinated pedagogical funding opportunities to promote research and development of new course materials and approaches to teaching and learning, as well as dissemination, ongoing learning and ways of highlighting the Faculty as a site for innovative pedagogy/education.
 - 2015-2016: the funds were specifically directed towards identifying, developing and implementing new directions in terms of (1) evaluation / feedback / assessment, or (2) experiential learning, as these relate to the creation of high-quality learning experiences for students in the Faculty. Support was also available for conference participation related to teaching, learning and pedagogy. Three instructors received funding for course-related projects, and four people received funding for conference attendance.
 - Experiential/Active Learning Fund (W2015 and previous, now folded into “LTN Funding Opportunities” above) Created and managed LTN funding opportunities:
 - Supports the approaches of instructors who are interested in integrating experiential or active learning components into their courses, and facilitates the creation of high-quality learning experiences for students.

- Professors have received funding for a student poster exhibition, the development and implementation of new active learning strategies, panel discussions, guest speakers, and research assistants for exploring pedagogy-related questions.
- 2014-2015: Three instructors received funding
- 2013-2014: Five instructors received funding
- 2012-2013: Ten instructors received funding
- 2011-2012: Ten instructors received funding
- 2010-2011: Nine instructors received funding
- Conference fund (W2015 and previous, now folded into “LTN Funding Opportunities” above)
 - Makes attending (legal) education conferences more feasible for instructors and teaching staff in the Faculty of Law, and encourages the exchange of information at the Faculty post-conference participation.
 - 2014-2015: Four people received funding
 - 2013-2014: Seven people received funding
 - 2012-2013: Eleven people received funding
 - 2011-2012: Four people received funding
 - 2010-2011: One person received funding

4) STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Student Assessment Workshop (January 13, 2016): 35 students (undergraduate and graduate) participated. Students explored the multiple purposes of assessment in the cadre of their courses, including the possibility of seeing assessment as an opportunity for learning. They identified what types of feedback are most useful, and made suggestions for how instructors might implement these.
- Please see Teaching and Learning Forums (p. 2)
- Student focus groups: Graduating and graduated students provided feedback during two focus groups in the cadre of the curriculum inventory.
 - February 7, 2011: 2 undergraduate students and 4 LLM students participated
 - March 2, 2011: 9 undergraduate students participated

5) COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- A. Interdisciplinary Teaching Workshop (2013): Instructors from multiple faculties were invited to participate.
- B. Career day focus groups (W2011): Potential employers, some of them former students, were involved in the curriculum inventory consultation process during the Civil Law Career Day, Common Law Career Day, and Public Interest Career Day in Winter 2011 (see p. 3).

6) SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE LAW TEACHING NETWORK PROJECT

- A. Peer-reviewed publication
 - Tovar, M., Jukier, R., Ferris, J., & Cardoso, K. (2015). Overcoming pedagogical solitude: The transformative power of discipline-specific Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs). *To Improve the Academy* 34(1-2).
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/tia2.20026/abstract>

Publication in advanced stage of preparation

Piper, T., Ferris, J., & Tovar, M. (2016). Promoting conversations about legal education: A collaborative approach for developing program outcomes and mapping the curriculum at McGill's Faculty of Law.

B. Peer-reviewed conference presentations

Tovar, M., & Ferris, J. (November 2015). One mirror, multiple views: Educational developers and faculty reflect on partnership. Presented at the annual conference of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network, San Francisco, California.

Van Praagh, S., & Ferris, J. (June 2015). Evaluation and assessment in legal education. Presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Law Teachers (CALT), Ottawa, Canada.

Tovar, M., Ferris, J., Jukier, R., & Emmett, K. (June 2014). Overcoming pedagogical solitude: The transformative power of Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs). Presented at the annual conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), Kingston, Canada.

Van Praagh, S., & Piper, T. (June 2014). Opening doors to education – the potential for partnership with university teaching and learning services: More learning, better (Law) teaching? Presented at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Law Teachers (CALT), Winnipeg, Canada.

Ferris, J., Tovar, M., Piper, T., & Winer, L. (November 2013). Creating a comprehensive, discipline-specific faculty development program. Presented at the annual conference of the Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Network, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Piper, T., Tovar, M., Ferris, J., Winer, L., and Hewitt, K. (June 2012). Crossing the boundaries from course outcomes to program outcomes. Presented at the annual conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), Montreal, Canada.

Tovar, M., Piper, T., Ferris, J., Samuel, C., and Winer, L. (June 2011). Creating a shared commitment to excellence in teaching and learning: A collaborative, comprehensive, Faculty-wide approach. Presented at the annual conference of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), Saskatoon, Canada.

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