Teaching Teamwork to Law Students

Janet Weinstein, Linda Morton, Howard Taras and Vivian Reznik

Despite demand in law firms for first-year associates who can work collaboratively, law schools continue to graduate students who are unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the concept of working in teams, particularly interdisciplinary teams.

Teamwork concepts are infrequently taught in legal education. In addition, law professors unfamiliar with teamwork theory and practice are unlikely to use teams to engage students in learning.

In our courses, Problem Solving in Healthcare, and Community Organizing and Problem Solving, faculty from the disciplines of medicine or social work join with law professors at the law school to teach teamwork to students from these disciplines.[1] One explicit goal in each course is to increase students' knowledge, skills and attitudes toward working in teams and with professionals from other disciplines. These courses reflect and support our attempt to change the legal education paradigm of student isolation in hopes of nourishing students' intrinsic values and healthy attitudes towards group work.

Each year we have analyzed our accomplishments informally and the changes we need to make to achieve our goals. Two years ago, we decided to assess our efforts more formally. We wanted to better determine whether our students believed they were improving in their knowledge of teamwork theory, as well as their skills and attitudes, and, if so, which components of the courses they believed were most effective in accomplishing this improvement.

We began by articulating several assumptions that had guided our teaching:

- Law students have not had much experience with teamwork.
- Students will feel uncomfortable working with members of another profession.

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1. Faculty members from UC San Diego Health Sciences and California Western School of Law have been teaching teamwork to classes of multidisciplinary students—law and health—since 2004. Faculty members from the San Diego State University School of Social Work and California Western School of Law have been teaching teamwork to classes of law and social work (MSW) students since 1992.

- Students do not particularly enjoy being on a team or sharing a team grade.
- Students do not have experience working with students from other disciplines.
- Students appreciate and learn from our classroom lectures and readings on teamwork but they would prefer more content about the underlying subject area (i.e., health law or community organizing) than teamwork skills training.
- Students most enjoy the teamwork experience because of the enhanced results produced by the team effort.

We were surprised by the results of our assessment, which proved many of our assumptions to be incorrect and gave us additional useful insights.

This paper, which discusses our results as well as new insights, is designed to assist professors who want to enhance students' learning about teamwork. Our use of the term "teamwork" does not apply to the occasional use of teams in class exercises, or to a "loosely structured coordination between or among students."[2] Instead, we adopt the definition—under the rubric of "cooperative learning"—promoted by our colleagues:

> Students participate in activities more structured and planned . . . [which focus upon] "(1) positive interdependence among . . . participants; (2) individual accountability . . . ; (3) appropriate rationale and task purpose . . . ; (4) structured student interactions with designated activities rather than free-form discussion; (5) instructor or expert peer facilitation; and (6) attention to development of social skills such as interpersonal communications and leadership development."[3]

Katzenbach and Smith provide a more succinct definition of a team that is consistent with our teaching goals: "A team is a small number of people with complementary skills, who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable."[4] These authors and others emphasize the importance of mutual dependence as well as trust between members.[5]

2. Linda B. Nilson, Teaching at its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors 127 (2003), *cited in* Roberta K. Thyfault & Kathryn Fehrman, Interactive Group Learning in the Legal Writing Classroom: An International Primer on Student Collaboration and Cooperation in Large Classrooms, 3 J. Marshall L.J. 135, 139 (2009) (describing this type of loose structure as "collaborative learning").

3. Thyfault & Fehrman, *supra* note 2, at 139–40 (citing David R. Arendale, A Glossary of Developmental Education and Learning Assistance Terms, 38 J. C. Reading & Learning 16 (College Reading & Learning Association 2007)).

4. Jon R. Katzenbach & Douglas K. Smith, The Discipline of Teams, 71 Harvard Bus. Rev. 111, 112 (1993).

5. Lack of trust and interdependence can provide initial impediments to law student teamwork, particularly when a team grade is involved—hence the need for team-building exercises and team contracts. *See generally*, Janet Weinstein & Linda Morton, Interdisciplinary Problem

We first provide a rationale for teaching teamwork and a brief description of what professional graduate schools are currently doing to incorporate teamwork instruction. We then explain how we use teams within our courses, and how we teach teamwork, borrowing from theories used in other disciplines. We then discuss the methodology and findings of our surveys. Next, we analyze what we have learned from our survey results and how the results, along with our experience, have changed our views and practices of teaching teamwork to law students. We conclude with some questions for further research.

I. The Rationale for Teamwork Instruction

A. Enhancement of Students' Professional and Interpersonal Skills

Teaching teamwork involves instructing students in critical life skills, including communication, planning and coordination, leadership and cooperation,[6] as well as conflict resolution, problem solving, and creative thinking. In addition to gaining these life skills, students derive other benefits from the experience, including interpersonal satisfaction:

> The benefits of team-building activities have . . . been investigated in education. Studies have found that participants who had team-building experiences had significantly higher levels of trust, social support, openness, and satisfaction. The findings from another study indicate that, when participating in a team project, students who had previously participated in team-building activities had better interactions with team members than those who had not.[7]

Small group work promotes higher academic achievement.[8] Professor David Dominguez argues that cooperative learning also prepares students for public interest work and improves their marketability and career options.

Solving Courses as a Context for Nurturing Intrinsic Values, 13 Clinical L. Rev. 839 (2007) (discussing the attitudes and environment conducive to nurturing intrinsic values. In turn, when students are operating from these values, they experience more satisfaction with their work and a higher sense of competence, and they are better communicators and more flexible). Medical literature also emphasizes the need for trust in teamwork: "Teamwork . . . is defined in terms of the behaviors (e.g. closed loop communication), cognitions (e.g. shared mental models), and attitudes (e.g. collective efficacy, trust) that combine to make adaptive interdependent performance possible." Sallie J. Weaver et al., The Anatomy of Health Care Team Training and the State of Practice: A Critical Review, 85 Acad. Med. 1747 (2010).

6. *See also* Karl S. Okamoto, Teaching Transactional Lawyering, 1 Drexel L. Rev. 69, 90–91 (2009) (discussing the importance of teaching teamwork to students who intend to do transactional work); Janet Weinstein, Coming of Age: Recognizing the Importance of Interdisciplinary Education in Law Practice, 74 Wash. L. Rev. 319, 326 (1999).

7. Melody Alexander, Team-Building Skills: Value-Added Education, *in* Classroom Strategies: The Methodology of Business Education, 34 National Business Education Yearbook 164 (Heidi R. Perreault ed., National Business Education Assn. 1996) (citations omitted).

8. *See* Gerald F. Hess, Student Involvement in Improving Law Teaching and Learning, 67 UMKC L. Rev. 343, 350 (1998) (citing James Cooper et al., Cooperative Learning and College Instruction: Effective Use of Student Learning Teams 1–5 (1990)); David

> Cooperative learning equips students with new vision and strategies to perform pro bono legal services, training them to get at the sources of social breakdown and not simply its latest legal symptoms. . . . Academic excellence and professional skill development are reasons enough to introduce cooperative learning to the law school curriculum. Yet it is the third benefit—a fresh perspective on volunteer law work for clients of limited means—that compels us to do so.[9]

B. Recognition of Need for Teamwork Skills in the Professions

Today, physicians are expected to become part of interdisciplinary health care teams in the clinical setting to ensure quality patient-centered care, as well as in the research enterprise to solve complex questions.[10] "Medical school graduates will be expected to understand how teams function and be capable themselves of functioning as part of a team. They will need to be competent in the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teams and teamwork."[11] As a core competency of medical education, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education has acknowledged the need to train physicians to "work effectively as a member or leader of a health care team or other professional group."[12] Two different reports from the Institute of Medicine recommend further teamwork development. In 2001, the Institute's *Crossing the Quality Chasm* report included the "development of effective teams" as a recommendation to improve health-care quality.[13] In 2003, the Institute's report, *Unequal Treatment*, recommended the implementation of multidisciplinary treatment and preventive care teams "as [a] strategy for improving care delivery, implementing secondary prevention strategies, and enhancing risk reduction."[14] A report by the American Academy of Family Physicians on the future of family

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Dominguez, Principle 2: Good Practice Encourages Cooperation Among Students, 49 J. Legal Educ. 386, 387 (1999); John Magney, Teamwork and the Need for Cooperative Learning, 47 Lab. L.J., 564 (1996); *but see* David F. Chavkin, Matchmaker, Matchmaker: Student Collaboration in Clinical Programs, 1 Clinical L. Rev. 199, 209–10 (1994) (stating that studies have produced mixed results).

9. Dominguez, *supra* note 8, at 387, 394.

10. Gail Morrison, Stanley Goldfarb & Paul Lanken, Team Training of Medical Students in the 21st Century: Would Flexner Approve?, 85(2) Acad. Med. 254–55 (Feb. 2010).

11. *Id.* at 254.

12. Accreditation Council for Graduate Med. Educ. (ACGME), July 1, 2011, Common Program Requirements 9, *available at* http://www.acgme.org/acgmeweb/Portals/0/dh_dutyhoursCommonPR07012007.pdf.

13. Committee on Quality of Health Care in Am., Inst. of Med., Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century 12 (National Academies Press 2001) [hereinafter Crossing the Quality Chasm].

14. Committee on Understanding and Eliminating Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care, Inst. of Med., Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Healthcare 18 (Brian D. Smedley et al. eds., National Academy of Science 2003) [hereinafter Unequal Treatment].

medicine recommends a team approach as well as team-based care.[15] Given this paradigm shift in medicine from individual achievement to group work, medical educators are grappling with how to incorporate training that will equip students to become competent team players.[16]

Teamwork appears to be a key factor in business practice. Since the 1990s, there has been an enormous increase in the number of teams used in work organizations. Seventy-nine percent of Fortune 1000 companies reported using self-managing work teams.[17] "Teamwork skills are in high demand in business, and the ability to work in a team has become one of the top five characteristics necessary for applicants to secure a professional position."[18]

An interest in teamwork skills in the legal profession is relatively recent.[19] "Effective teamwork is critical to law firms. Increasingly, clients expect firms to work effectively across departments, offices, and even jurisdictions."[20] Traditionally, when the term "team" has been used in law practice, it has

15. Norman B. Kahn, Jr., MD, The Future of Family Medicine: A Collaborative Project of the Family Medicine Community, 2 Annals Fam. Med., supp. 1, s3, s14 (2004), *available at* http://www.annfammed.org/content/2/suppl_1/S3.full.pdf+html.

16. Morrison et al., *supra* note 10, at 255. In fact, the change is so dramatic that Dr. Darrell Kirsch in his 2007 presidential address to the Association of American Medical Colleges [AAMC] addressed it as "the changing culture of medicine . . . from the need to be rewarded for one's personal best to a reward system for one's team effort." *Id.*

17. David A. Whetten & Kim S. Cameron, Developing Management Skills 494 (7th ed., Prentice Hall 2007) (citing Edward E. Lawler, Strategies for High Performance Organizations 98 (Jossey-Bass 1998)); Edward E. Lawler, Susan Albers Mohrman, & Gerald E. Ledford, Creating High Performance Organizations: Practices and Results of Employee Involvement and Total Quality Management in Fortune 1000 Companies 95 (Jossey-Bass 1995).

18. Alexander, *supra* note 7, at 164. Another survey states that the most desired skill of new employees was the ability to work in a team. Whetten & Cameron, *supra* note 17, at 495 (citing R.S.Wellins, W.C. Byham & J.M. Wilson, Empowered Teams (Jossey-Bass 1991)).

19. Regarding the paucity of discussion on interdisciplinary collaboration in various legal standards, including the MacCrate and Carnegie reports, see Linda Morton, Howard Taras & Vivian Reznik, Encouraging Physician-Attorney Collaboration Through More Explicit Professional Standards, 29 Hamline J. Pub. L. & Pol'y 317, 325-29 (2008). For a discussion of the potential conflicts lawyers engaged in teamwork face, see Mary Twitchell, The Ethical Dilemmas of Lawyers on Teams, 77 Minn. L. Rev. 697 (1988).

20. Julia Hayhoe & Larry Richard, The Secret Lives of Teams, The American Lawyer, July 2006, at 59; Mark Curriden, Future of Law Panel: Change with the Times or Find Another Line of Business, A.B.A. J., Feb. 12, 2011, *available at* http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/future_of_law_panel_change_with_the_times_or_find_another_line_of_business/ ("William Henderson, director of the Center on the Global Legal Profession at Indiana University-Bloomington, said law schools need to adjust their curriculum to better equip students to the changing world. The key is to give them better training in communication skills and working together in a more collaborative environment."). "'Law schools need to rethink legal education to encourage lawyers to work together as a team, especially in the global marketplace," agreed fellow IU law professor Carole Silver. "We need to teach lawyers how to do a better job of playing in the sandbox.'" On the role of teams in the management of law firms, see Tracy LaLonde, Collaboration Made Easy: Strategies for Building Better Work Teams, 26 Legal Mgmt. 66 (March/April 2007).

referred to a particular department within a law firm, such as "the litigation team" or the "transactional team." In this context, the team is those people in the firm who are doing particular litigation or transactional work or a group of employees working on one large case. However, in our informal discussions with law firm attorneys, we found no evidence of teamwork training.[21]

In fact, much of legal training, with its emphasis on individual work and achievement, is an impediment to developing effective team players.[22] As the awareness of the power of teamwork grows in the legal community, we can expect greater appreciation of the need to teach teamwork skills in law school.[23]

II. How Graduate Schools Are Incorporating Teamwork Skills

To be successful, teamwork teaching must be explicit. "[R]esearch has shown that merely putting students in groups and telling them to work together does not, in and of itself, promote higher achievement"[24]—a concept that is supported in the legal literature.[25]

21. Interview by Janet Weinstein and Linda Morton with Professors K. Klein and A. Cato (March 16, 2011).

22. Thyfault & Fehrman, *supra* note 2, at 149 (citing Carole Silver, Adventures in Comparative Legal Studies: Studying Singapore, 51 J. Legal Educ. 76, 85–86 (2001)). *See also* Clifford S. Zimmerman, "Thinking Beyond My Own Interpretation:" Reflections on Collaborative and Cooperative Learning Theory in the Law School Curriculum, 31 Ariz. St. L.J. 957, 986 (1999) (citations omitted) ("[C]ooperative and collaborative learning cut right to the heart of traditional legal education and challenge its underlying traditions."). "Cooperating with others may lead to charges of copying and even plagiarism. [Students in higher education] are socialized into resisting team-working and collective problem-solving." Peter Levin, Divided They Surely Fall, Times Higher Educ., Feb. 6, 1998, *available at* http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storyCode=105800&sectioncode=26 (arguing that the failure to encourage students' teamwork skills erodes students' value to employers).

23. Julie MacFarlane, The New Lawyer: How Settlement is Transforming the Practice of Law 236–42 (UBC Press 2008).

24. Diana Page & Joseph G. Donelan, Team-Building Tools for Students, 78 J. Educ. for Bus. 125 (Jan./Feb. 2003) (citing earlier studies); *see also*, Judith A. Kolb & Louise E. Sandmeyer, Supporting Project Teams: A Framework Used in a University-Community Collaborative Initiative, 21(1) Performance Improvement Q. 61, 63 (2008) ("Individuals do not intuitively know how to work together."); Susan Bryant, Collaboration in Law Practice: A Satisfying and Productive Process for a Diverse Profession, 17 Vt. L. Rev. 459, 486 (1993) ("Simply working together does not ensure that students will develop the emergent knowledge that collaboration can yield. Law also must teach students to overcome barriers associated with joint work."). The importance of explicit team training was tested empirically by professors from the Information Sciences and Technology Department at Pennsylvania State University. The study found that freshman who received formal training in teamwork had higher scores in teamwork knowledge than did sophomores, juniors and seniors at the university, who had had more teamwork experience, but no formal training. D. Smarkusly, R. Dempsey, J. Ludka & F. De Quillettes, Enhancing Team Knowledge: Instruction vs. Experience, S.I.G.C.S.E Proc., 460, 464 (2005), *available at* http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1047493.

25. Bryant, *supra* note 24, at 486 ("Simply working together does not ensure that students will develop the emergent knowledge that collaboration can yield. Law schools also must teach students to overcome barriers associated with joint work.").

> The empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests that students working in teams may perform better in representing their clients and may learn more from the clinical experience than do students providing representation alone. At the same time, that evidence suggests that the benefits of pairing will not accrue automatically and that steps must be taken to increase the likelihood that these benefits will be realized.[26]

More and more disciplines, including law, now include specific teaching of teamwork skills. In 2005, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine implemented a mandatory longitudinal four-year team training and leadership program for all medical students in collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania Wharton MBA program. The program, using small group teams throughout the curriculum, recognizes and measures specific teamwork competencies, including knowledge of team mission and objective, understanding team members' characteristics, flexibility and adaptability, conflict resolution, team leadership, shared vision, collective efficacy and mutual trust.[27]

> [T]he only way to inculcate this ethos in the team is for medical schools to value assessing and affirming the competence of each student as he or she functions as a member of a team. This requires team-based exams and a school's willingness to accept the team's performance as an indicator of the competence and knowledge base of individual team members.[28]

Wayne State University incorporated teamwork in a family medicine residency clinic by training the clinic employees in specific teamwork skills. The study found an improvement in employee satisfaction, learning opportunities for residents, teaching quality, awareness of and respect for staff roles, and employee autonomy as a result of the teamwork training and use of the model.[29] In addition, the Medical University of South Carolina has developed a toolkit for assessing graduate students' readiness to work as part of interprofessional teams.[30]

26. Chavkin, *supra* note 8, at 232 (recommending (1) explicit identification of collaboration as a goal; (2) explicit focus on maximizing collaboration in student work, including identifying and explaining models of collaboration; (3) explicit inclusion of collaboration in evaluation criteria and (4) explicit decisions on how to pair students in clinical work).

27. "The School of Medicine and Wharton collaborated on designing a new model for medical education—small-group teams. Used throughout the curriculum, the teams teach students how to work effectively in a team and the importance to physicians of basic team skills." Morrison et al., *supra* note 10, at 256.

28. *Id.* at 258.

29. Linda M. Roth, Ph.D., Tsveti Markova, M.D., Joseph C. Monsur & Richard K. Severson, PhD, Effects of Implementation of a Team Model on Physician and Staff Perceptions of a Clinic's Organizational and Learning Environments, 41 Fam. Med. 434, 439 (2009).

30. Jeannette O. Andrews, Melissa J. Cox, Susan D. Newman & Otha Meadows, Development and Evaluation of a Toolkit to Assess Partnership Readiness for Community-Based Participatory Research, 5 Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action, no. 2, 183 (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press 2011).

Recently, six national health professional associations have collaborated to create a national organization, the Interprofessional Education Collaborative (IPEC), with the purpose of better coordinating the education of health professionals. IPEC's 2011 report, Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice, lists one of the four Core Competency Domains as "Interprofessional Teamwork and Team Based Practice."[31]

Business, engineering, social work[32] and nursing schools, also explicitly teach teamwork. Some business schools offer courses specifically focused on learning teamwork.[33] For years, business school texts have carried chapters on teamwork.[34]

There has been some discussion in the legal literature on the necessity of collaborative learning, particularly in clinical programs.[35] Legal education has more recently begun to attribute value to the idea of teaching teamwork and, in some cases, to teach it explicitly. For example, Northwestern Law proposes to:

- Consider teamwork in admissions.
- Emphasize teamwork more throughout its programs.

31. Core Competencies for Interprofessional Collaborative Practice: Report of an Expert Panel. Interprofessional Education Collaborative Washington, D.C. May 2011, pp. 24–25, *available at* http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education-resources/IPECReport.pdf.

32. Judith L. Howe, Kathryn Hyer, Joanna Mellor, David Lindeman & Marilyn Luptak, Educational Approaches for Preparing Social Work Students for Interdisciplinary Teamwork on Geriatric Health Care Teams, 32 Soc. Work in Health Care 19 (2001) (describing how teamwork is particularly emphasized in areas where social workers are part of an interdisciplinary team such as in the field of gerontology).

33. *See generally* Marie McKendall, Teaching Groups to Become Teams, 75 J. Educ. for Bus. 277 (2000); Alexander, *supra* note 7, at 165–71; email exchange between recent Stanford MBA graduate Tara Mohr, July 27, 2009, to Vivian Reznik, discussing required course for all business school students, Managing Groups and Teams. In addition to this course, the school offers Organizational Design and High Performance Leadership, both of which offer insights into teamwork.

34. *See, e.g.*, Peter M. Senge, The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of he Learning Organization 216–257 (Doubleday 2006); Whetten & Cameron, *supra* note 17, at 493–535; Alexander, *supra* note 7, at 164.

35. For an excellent discussion of the benefits and challenges of cooperative and collaborative learning techniques in the law school classroom, *see* Thyfault & Fehrman, *supra* note 2, at 146–50. *See* also Elizabeth Tobin Tyler, Allies Not Adversaries: Teaching Collaboration to the Next Generation of Doctors and Lawyers to Address Social Inequality, 11 J. Health Care L. & Pol'y 249, 286–88 (2008); Andrea M. Seielstad, Community Building as a Means of Teaching Creative, Cooperative, and Complex Problem Solving in Clinical Legal Education, 8 Clinical L. Rev. 445, 495–503 (2002); Shin Imai, A Counter-Pedagogy for Social Justice: Core Skills for Community-Based Lawyering, 9 Clinical L. Rev. 195, 203–06 (2002); Dominguez, *supra* note 8; Zimmerman, *supra* note 22; Chavkin, *supra* note 8, at 203–228; William M. Sullivan, Anne Colby, Judith Welch Wegner, Lloyd Bond & Lee S. Shulman, Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Profession of Law 139 (Jossey-Bass 2007) (criticizing overemphasis on individual and competitive focus and deemphasizing social skills and values).

- Provide students with social science understanding on teamwork.
- Teach students tools for evaluating and learning from their teamwork experiences.
- Infuse cross-cultural teamwork experiences into courses.
- Provide faculty with training, tools and assistance to integrate teamwork more effectively into its courses.[36]

Northeastern University School of Law teaches teamwork in its innovative first-year Legal Skills in Social Context Program. Upper class students, who direct first-year students working on social change projects in simulated law offices, undergo two days of training in leadership and teamwork skills. The students attend a class on teamwork and complete team charters.[37] Teamwork skills was identified as a desirable attribute for law graduates at Queensland University Technology School of Law when the school redesigned its curriculum to incorporate social, relational and cultural skills and attributes. Teamwork skills are incorporated throughout courses in the curriculum, including classes in which students participate in distance learning.[38] At the Pennsylvania State University Dickinson School of Law, Kate Cramer Lawrence teaches interdisciplinary teamwork to students in her Children's Advocacy Clinic.[39]

Although a handful of law faculty are now teaching teamwork and literature on the subject is abundant, there has been little concrete information about *how* to effectively teach teamwork, particularly in law schools.[40] In short,

36. Plan 2008 Executive Summary Findings and Recommendations, pp. 3–4, *available at* http://www.law.northwestern.edu/difference/documents/Plan2008ExecSummary.pdf.

37. Telephone conversation between Prof. Susan Maze-Rothstein, Director of the LSSC Program, Northeastern University School of Law, and Linda Morton, May 2, 2011. For additional information regarding the program, see www.northeastern.edu/law/academics/curriculum/lssc/index.html.

38. Anne Matthew, Cooperative Student Learning in Undergraduate Law: Fostering Teamwork Skills in External Students, 10 E Law: Murdoch Univ. Electronic J.L. (2003), *available at* http://www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/issues/v10n2/matthew102.html.

39. The team teaching model was created by Kate Cramer Lawrence, Lucy Johnston-Walsh and Gary Shuey. The curriculum includes models of group functioning, team theory, as well as values of diversity and self-awareness. Students are graded specifically on their professional relationships with students and with other professionals. E-mail from Professor Kate Lawrence to Linda Morton (July 21, 2011) (on file with author).

40. For helpful information on teaching teamwork in business school, see, e.g., McKendall, *supra* note 33; Julie Siciliano, A Template for Managing Teamwork in Courses Across the Curriculum, 74 J. Educ. for Bus. 261 (1999) (templates for teaching teamwork); Christine A. Yost & Mary L. Tucker, Are Effective Teams More Emotionally Intelligent? Confirming the Importance of Effective Communication in Teams, 42 Delta Pi Epsilon J. 101 (2000) (describing a framework for building more effective business communication teams in the business classroom). There are also texts on teaching teamwork, or cooperative learning, to college students. *See, e.g.*, David W. Johnson, Roger T. Johnson & Karl A. Smith, Active Learning: Cooperation in the College Classroom (Interaction Book Co. 1991). Undergraduate publications also offer helpful modules on teaching teamwork. *See* Harold

"many legal educators invoke the platitudes of collaborative education but far fewer develop methodology for implementation."[41] A few articles now provide exceptions. Professor Clifford Zimmerman provides specific guidelines on teaching collaboration to students, as well as describing his own experiences teaching it in his first-year legal analysis course. [42] Professor David Dominguez also provides instruction.[43] And Professors Roberta Thyfault and Kathryn Fehrman explain theories of group work with specific examples of its use in the classroom.[44] Professsor Barbara Glesner Fines provides additional resources and insights to team-based learning. Her website,[45] including her essay, "Easing into Team Based Learning,"[46] offers several suggestions on how to teach teamwork in law school classrooms.[47] Here we hope to expand upon these analyses on teaching teamwork with our own experience and empirical data from teaching teamwork in upper-level courses.

Because of the traditional isolation and emphasis on individual achievement in law schools,[48] we see a need to expand and test the discussion of methods in teamwork teaching. In addition to the absence of needed pedagogical descriptions and data, there are additional barriers to teaching teamwork in law school. Team conflict creates discomfort for students and teachers.[49] Faculty

Smith III, Debra Smarkusky & Elizabeth Corrigall, Defining Projects to Integrate Evolving Team Fundamentals and Project Management Skills, 19(1) J. Info. Sys. Educ. 99 (2008); Vivette Payne, The Team-Building Workshop: A Trainer's Guide (AMACOM 2001). For instruction on teaching teamwork in medical school settings, see Roth et al., *supra* note 29, at 435–37; Clyde H. Evans et al., Model Approaches for Advancing Interprofessional Prevention Education, 40(2) Am. J. Preventative Med. 245 (2011). In addition, there are websites on team-based learning generally. *See, e.g.*, www.teambasedlearning.org; www.TBLCollaborative.org.

41. Zimmerman, *supra* note 22, at 1002.

42. *Id.* at 1004–20 (discussing specifically how to build appropriate classroom rapport, how to prepare assignments for group work and how to teach students to work together).

43. Dominguez, *supra* note 8.

44. Thyfault & Fehrman, *supra* note 2.

45. http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/profiles/glesnerfines/bgf-edu.htm#_On_Team-Based_Learning.

46. *Id.*

47. Professors Glesner-Fines, Margaret Sova McCabe, and Sophie Sparrow, conducted a valuable plenary session on the adaption of team-based learning in larger law school classes. Barbar Glesner-Fines, Margaret Sova McCabe & Sophie Sparrow, Using Team Based Learning to Teach Collaborative Practice Skills, Institute for Law Teaching and Learning Summer Conference, June 17–18, 2010, *available at* http://lawteaching.org/conferences/2010/handouts/plenary-UsingTeamBasedLearning.pdf. *See also* Sophie M. Sparrow, Can They Work Well on a Team? Assessing Students' Collaboration Skills, 38 Wm. Mitchell L. Rev. 1162 (2012).

48. For an extensive discussion of barriers to collaborative learning in legal education, see Zimmerman, *supra* note 22, at 971–86.

49. McKendall, *supra* note 33, at 278–79 ("I have found that team members are typically reluctant to deal with those who are behaving in ways that detract from team performance . . .").

members resist spending class time on process when there is so much content to cover.[50] There are also pedagogical concerns that shared responsibility for assignments may decrease student responsibility and motivation.[51] Particularly in the United States, there is a more general culture of individuality which is difficult to change.[52] Despite—or perhaps because of—these impediments, we consider it important to lay out our own pedagogy, in hopes of continuing a richer discussion of the rationale, process and content for teaching teamwork in law school classes.

III. Teaching Teamwork in Our Courses

A. Brief Course Descriptions

1. Problem Solving in Healthcare

This is an interdisciplinary course taught by Linda Morton, a law professor at California Western School of Law, and Howard Taras and Vivian Reznik, two physicians from the University of California San Diego School of Medicine.[53] Students in the course are from either the California Western J.D. program or from the CWSL/UCSD joint master's degree program in law and medicine. Students are placed on interdisciplinary teams[54] of four students and each team is assigned to a community issue that involves both law and medicine.

2. Community Organizing and Problem Solving

This is an interdisciplinary course taught by Janet Weinstein, a law professor at CWSL, and Michael Eichler, from the School of Social Work at San Diego State University. Students in the course are from the J.D. program at California Western, the master's program in social work at SDSU, or the J.D./M.S.W. program at both schools. As in the Healthcare course, students

In our post-survey, many students commented on the difficulty of confronting their team members.

50. For a more detailed discussion of this dilemma, see Chavkin, *supra* note 8, at 234-35.

51. Chavkin, *supra* note 8, at 215.

52. "Despite the growing use and importance of work teams, 50 percent of all workplace team initiatives fail. The United States possesses one of the most individualistic cultures in the world, so it should not be assumed that people enter the workforce with well-developed collaborative skills." McKendall, *supra* note 33, at 277. Zimmerman also discusses the culture of individualism in legal education. *See* Zimmerman, *supra* note 22, at 978-82.

53. For a more detailed description of this course, see Linda Morton, A New Approach to Health Care ADR: Training Law Students to be Problem Solvers in the Health Care Context, 21 Ga. St. U. L. Rev. 965 (2005); Linda Morton, Howard Taras, & Vivian Reznik, Teaching Interdisciplinary Collaboration: Theory, Practice, and Assessment, 13 Quinnipiac Health L.J. 175, 187-92 (2010).

54. In both classes, students indicate their preferences for available issues/topics and we strive to assign them to a topic of their choice.

are placed on interdisciplinary teams of approximately four students, and each team is assigned to a community issue that students work to resolve through a consensus-organizing[55] approach. Each problem has a legal component.

B. What We Teach: A Brief Primer on Teamwork Theory

While there are some minor differences in how we teach teamwork, each course emphasizes more direct, experiential learning about teamwork, rather than teamwork theory. In each course, we set aside a few hours to teach teamwork specifically and we reinforce that teaching throughout the term. In our initial training, we use team-building exercises,[56] as well as communication and conflict resolution exercises.[57] We assign students one or more instruments to evaluate their approaches to conflict and working with others. We require each team to create its own charter and we discuss the contract terms with each team. Contract terms must include how teams will address individual concerns and conflicts. To follow up, we require team self-evaluations, both in group discussions and written evaluations at several points during the course. We provide some handouts and do some presentation on teamwork process but require no substantial reading about teamwork theory.

In developing our team process, we strive to provide the essential elements that allow for the most productive team learning: 1) positive interdependence; 2) individual accountability; 3) appropriate group composition, size and duration; 4) face-to-face interaction; 5) genuine learning and challenge; 6) explicit attention to collaborative social skills[58] and regular meetings to discuss group process.[59] We do this, for example, by: 1) encouraging team members to share experiences and recognize the skills of each member, 2) requiring time sheets from each team member, 3) designing the membership of each team, 4) providing class time for team interaction, 5) providing an actual problem for students to help resolve and community leaders with whom each team works and 6) providing time in class to discuss and evaluate each team's group process. We discuss these various methods in further detail below.[60]

55. *See* Mike Eichler, Consensus Organizing: Building Communities of Mutual Self-Interest (SAGE Pub. 2007).

56. The authors are happy to share any exercises upon request. For examples of team exercises, see generally Adele B. Lynn, Quick Emotional Intelligence Activities for Business Managers: 50 Team Exercises That Get Results in Just 15 Minutes (AMACOM 2007); Alanna Jones, Team-Building Activities for Every Group (Rec Room Pub. 2000); *see also* www.Teambuildinginc.com and www.Businessballs.com.

57. We use specific exercises in listening skills, as well as exercises on team conflicts, such as a member not doing his or her share, or a member dominating the team process.

58. Thyfault & Fehrman, *supra* note 2, at 143–46.

59. Magney, *supra* note 8, at 566.

60. While we do our best to provide our students with enough training to get them through the team process with some level of success, we confess that our training is just the tip of the iceberg. The personal dynamics that occur in the group process go beyond our expertise and beyond what the students expect when enrolling for our courses. We have other goals–

In our class discussions and handouts, we discuss theories of teamwork, interdisciplinary collaboration and professional values. We also teach communication, listening and conflict resolution skills. We focus on two theoretical frameworks for teaching teamwork process: the characteristics of successful teams and the stages of a team.

1. Requirements for Effective Teamwork

We describe the requirements to ensure that students are aware of the attitudes necessary as their team is formed. These criteria can be re-examined when teams falter.

Effective teamwork requires that members of the team share particular knowledge, skills, and attitudes. While the literature on teamwork uses a variety of labels to describe these requirements,[61] there is clear agreement that teams require:

a. Clear Goals

Teams are created to achieve specific goals with certain ending points, which may include a time limit. Every member of the team must understand the team's goals.

We require every team to state its goals in its written charter.

b. Leadership

There is some uncertainty about whether the team leader should be designated externally or selected by the members, whether an agreed upon rotation of leadership is effective, or whether a leader must be designated at all. Most of the literature, however, subscribes to the theory that one leader is the most effective model for teamwork.[62]

For our courses we have encouraged but not required the selection of a team leader. We have found that if teams do not select a leader, one person tends to assume the position without the title.

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including content about healthcare, community organizing, problem solving, etc., that require our class time and attention. So, in many respects, our explicit attention to teamwork is not as extensive as we would like it to be.

61. Other labels used in teamwork literature for team requirements include: a results-driven structure; positive team relationships; productive group problem solving; and standards of excellence. For further discussion of these labels, see Kolb & Sandmeyer, *supra* note 24; Smith, Smarkusky & Corrigall, *supra* note 40, at 100-01; Catherine B. Ahles & Courtney C. Bosworth, The Perception and Reality of Student Workplace Teams, 59 Journalism & Mass Comm. Educator, Spring 2004, at 44-45.

62. *But see* Susan A. Wheelan & Robert M. Kaesar, The Influence of Task Type and Designated Leaders on Developmental Patterns in Groups, 28 Small Group Research, 94, 117 (1997) (finding that, though the literature demonstrates the importance of a designated leader role, their research did not necessarily support that conclusion).

c. Shared Commitment and Participation

It is essential that each member contribute to the team's work, not only by completing individual assignments, but also by joining the team's discussion of its work and process. Likewise, each member must embrace the commitment to the team's goal. This is reinforced by the team charter we require.[63]

Resentment can build within the team toward individual team members who are seen as not sharing the commitment. We offer suggestions for communication about this issue. We want our students to understand that, as a rule, team members never contribute equally. Students may become frustrated and, if team efforts at remedying the situation are unsuccessful, we may intervene upon request. Some students decide to ignore the issue without confrontation.[64] We require time sheets to be filled out by every team member, reviewed by the team and turned in by each team every week for review by the professor.

d. Mutual Respect

Each member of the team has a role to play and something to contribute. Mutual respect ensures that the members appreciate, support and encourage each other to achieve the group's maximum potential. Respect means that team members acknowledge each other's individual backgrounds and experiences, allowing the team to approach its work using the widest spectrum of knowledge and skills available to it.

Throughout the course, we require students to reflect on their personal strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of their team members. Students bring their written evaluations to class and discuss them with their team. These exercises teach students self-evaluation skills, as well as how to offer and receive feedback. Students learn that the team improves when each member is encouraged to reach her full potential, rather than blamed or criticized.

e. Open Communication

Team members must be open to giving and receiving communication from each other. Teams also must have an agreed method for communicating about their process. Despite our teaching of listening and conflict resolution skills, teams do break down, occasionally requiring professorial intervention.

63. We also provide a team charter exercise which each student completes prior to discussing the team charter. The exercise requires students to think about such things as their own expertise, their concerns, and the role they expect to play on the team.

64. For some students, the discomfort of dealing with such a confrontation does not seem worthwhile, given that the team will disband at the end of the course. It has been suggested that peer evaluations are one method to combat "free riding." Magney, *supra* note 8, at 567. The other category of troublesome teammates is that of "poor drivers," or students who dominate the project, cannot delegate and insist on doing all of the work. Again, a peer evaluation is a consideration in remedying this potential problem. Smarkusky, Dempsey, Ludka & De Quillettes, *supra* note 24.

f. Collaborative Environment

There is no place for competition within a team, nor can the focus be on individual accomplishment. We also warn of the dangers of "groupthink," in which pressures to collaborate can lead to reticence in challenging the direction of the group.[65]

We attempt to model collaboration in the classroom, where we ask teams to help other teams with issues they are facing.

g. Ongoing Team Evaluation

Periodic self-evaluation of the team helps to keep the process on track and to correct problems before they become real obstacles.[66] This evaluation process includes the same requirements (i.e., mutual respect, open communication, collaborative environment, etc.) that are required in working toward the team's goals.

Teams are required to submit written and oral evaluations to the professor and to one another periodically throughout the courses.[67] We tell students that we prefer evaluations that demonstrate students' willingness to manage difficulties over any pretense that the team is operating smoothly.

h. Member Competence

In the context of a course, there may be problems when some team members believe that they must redo or take over the work of a member who is perceived as less than competent. As in real life, not all team members share the same level of competence. On the other hand, the process needs of a team may bring out new competencies among some members. For example, a student may come to the team with strong knowledge and skills about teamwork, allowing that student to make a different kind of contribution to the work of the team. [68]

We have each team discuss the positive competencies of its members during the course and also discuss how to realize maximum competence from each member, as well as how to deal with frustrations.

65. *See generally* Irving L. Janis, Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes (Cengage Learning 1982).

66. For an example of a team evaluation checklist we have used, see Susan A. Wheelan, Faculty Groups: From Frustration to Collaboration 147–50 (Corwin 2004).

67. For example, one midsemester team review exercise requires students to write out and discuss their team strengths and challenges and how to resolve them. We also encourage students to revise their team charters, when necessary.

68. *But see* Maureen Montemuro et al., Training for Interprofessional Teamwork—Evaluation of an Undergraduate Experience, 25 Educ. Gerontology 411, 413 (1999) ("Profession-specific content is often valued rather than experiences which focus on interprofessional problem solving and functioning.").

i. External Support and Recognition

A healthy environment for teamwork is one that provides external support for the team and recognition that what the team is doing is valuable to the organization. In our courses we regularly encourage students, provide them with guidance, and acknowledge their challenges and efforts.

We also ask each team to regularly check in with its community partner representative.[69] At the end of both courses, the students are required to present their projects to the community partner with whom they have been working. The acknowledgement of their work by the community partner is perhaps more meaningful for some students than the grade they receive for the course.

j. Stages in the Team Process

While those who have studied and written about teamwork may use different terminology for the steps in the process, all agree that teams move through different stages and that it is important for members to understand this process. We have found that when team members know in advance that certain stages can be more difficult than others, they tend to more readily accept the difficulties as part of the process, rather than as shortcomings of their members. Perhaps the most well-known model of group process is Tuckman's "forming, storming, norming, and performing."[70] A more recent variation of the Tuckman model reverses the "norming" and "storming" phases, as "forming, norming, storming and performing."[71] We have found through our own experience that the most appropriate sequence and terminology is: "forming, norming, storming, re-forming and performing." Others have added a final phase of "adjourning."[72] We describe these developmental phases, as we have experienced them with our course teams, below.

69. In the Health Law course, the organizational liaison attends at least two classes to review the team's progress. In the Community Organizing course, the team members meet frequently with their community partner outside of class.

70. Bruce W. Tuckman & Mary Ann C. Jensen, Stages of Small Group Development Revisited, 2 Group & Org. Stud. 419 (1977) (foundational work on teamwork); *see also* Susan A. Wheelan, Creating Effective Teams; A Guide for Members and Leaders (Sage 1999) (synthesizes and integrates various theories of group development). For a detailed discussion of the historical development of team theory, see Carol R. Paris, Eduardo Salas & Janis A. Cannon-Bowers, Teamwork in Multi-person Systems: A Review and Analysis, 43 Ergonomics 1052, 1053–55 (2000).

71. Whetten & Cameron, *supra* note 17, at 502–10.

72. *See* Wheelan & Kaeser who describe five stages of team process, adding the fifth stage to describe what may happen as the team nears termination:

> Groups move through five stages or phases (inclusion/dependency issues and member anxiety; counterdependency and conflict—issues of power and authority and competition; development of trust and more mature and open negotiations re goals, roles, structure, division of labor; increased focus in task orientation and exchange of information; "Impending termination may cause disruption and conflict" or positive feelings, or separation issues).

k. Forming

In the formation stage of the team, the members must agree on the team's purpose, what outcomes are expected, whether the team has the authority necessary to achieve the outcomes, how the outcomes will be measured, consequences of success and failure, processes for dispute resolution and how the team's work fits into the larger picture of the institution. The team must also clarify the skills and knowledge of each team member and affirm that each team member is committed to the team's work and personally invested in its success.[73] The formation stage is critical to future success and is often rushed as members seek to deal with the immediate task.[74] Because teams tend to jump into the content of the work without working through these necessary process issues, we require a team charter from every group.

l. Norming

At this stage, the team begins to bond, enhance its commitment, and create a cohesive unit with a team identity. The team moves from a group of individuals with a common goal to a cohesive unit with a character and culture of its own.[75] Our class teams develop their own team names, work on team worksheets together and meet in every class session. Focus is on cooperation, support, and conformity. The danger of this stage is that it can lead to "groupthink" or the tendency to ignore differences and to succumb to group pressures for the sake of conformity. Teams must move on to the storming stage to avoid groupthink.[76]

m. Storming

Once the team gets to work, it is to be expected that conflicts will occur. "Team members are forming opinions about one another, positive and negative, and individuals are still primarily pursuing their personal interests as they vie for positions. Formal and informal leaders emerge, and weaker team members may recede into the woodwork."[77] This phase usually begins after teams receive the first of three grades on their team reports. In the storming stage it is important to refocus the team on its goal and to work on communication to dissipate negative feelings about the team process and team members. While the storming stage may be quite uncomfortable, it is a critical

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Wheelan & Kaeser, *supra* note 62, at 95; *see also* Tuckman & Jensen, *supra* note 70, at 426 (adding "adjourning" as a fifth stage).

73. In the classroom setting, where the students are sharing a grade for their team project, the investment is built-in.

74. LaLonde, *supra* note 20, at 71.

75. Whetten & Cameron, *supra* note 17, at 503–05.

76. *Id.* at 504–05.

77. LaLonde, *supra* note 20, at 73.

part of team development. "Conflict can be useful for achieving cohesion."[78] Having come through this difficult phase, team members are often drawn more closely together with a more determined sense of mission.[79]

n. Reforming

In this fourth stage of team development, the team goes back to its charter and potentially reforms it. Members successfully resolve their conflicts so they can proceed with the assigned problem and frequently approach one another with renewed respect. In this stage, members work more harmoniously and view themselves less as individuals and more as members of a team. Members clarify their roles and responsibilities as they adopt a renewed focus on their goals.[80]

o. Performing

In this stage, the team is functioning at its highest level. There is a strong sense of team spirit and solidarity. When disagreements arise, they are handled by the team's previously agreed upon process. At this point team members truly share a vision and support one another, even when difficult challenges arise.[81]

IV. Our Survey Methods and Results

A. Methods

All students in the Problem Solving in Healthcare course and the Community Organizing and Problem Solving course were given the same pre- and post-course surveys. Surveys were printed and completed with pen, not on-line. Students completed these in class and at home during their own time.

78. *Id.*

79. *Id.* at 75. At the same time, it is also possible for teams to unsuccessfully pass through the storming stage. These teams make expedient decisions about how to get the work accomplished, basically as a group of individuals tied together by necessity, who will manage to produce some product to get through the assignment. Outcomes of team work usually reflect the team's ability to successfully navigate the process.

80. *Id.* at 73. (Note, LaLonde refers to this stage as "Norming.")

81. Hayhoe and Richard apply the Tuckman and Wheelan models to law firms, stating that the direction provided during the forming stage must be "clear, structured and directive," because there are many psychological issues that can get in the way, diverting attention from the group task. "[A]t first everyone tries to be polite and withholds opinions, but as their comfort increases, their need for autonomy rises and they begin to speak up, so what looked like consensus turns out not to be." Hayhoe & Richard, *supra* note 20, at 98. The authors also discuss how lawyers are used to being adversarial, so they are not necessarily motivated to do what it takes to move out of the conflict that arises during the storming phase and it is more difficult to create trust and group cohesion. The norming stage is critical because it is the first time work can be effectively accomplished. *Id.* at 98–99. (Note, Hayhoe and Richard use the original Tuckman model in which the stage of "Norming" follows "Storming." In our model, we follow the "Storming" stage with the "Reforming" stage.)

Most items were score, rating-scale, or multiple choice questions. Students were also encouraged to add comments. Several questions, not multiple choice, required students to write comments if they responded at all. The surveys were anonymous. Students coded their pre- and post-surveys with the same number so the two surveys could be compared anonymously. Each student's discipline (law, masters, or social work) was elicited so students in the two classes and from different disciplines could be analyzed separately.[82]

B. Quantitative Results

1. Response Rate

Sixteen of nineteen students (84 percent) in Problem Solving in Healthcare responded to both surveys (seven masters students and nine law students). In the Community Organizing and Problem Solving course, fifteen of nineteen students (79 percent) responded to both surveys (nine social work students and six law students).

2. Student Experience and Attitudes Before Coursework

Students were asked in the survey they took at the beginning of the course about previous experience working with teams. Levels of experience differed somewhat between students in the two courses. On a scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (very frequently), the mean score given for prior experience with teams was lowest for law students (2.3), followed closely by masters students (2.8). Social work students had the most experience (mean score 3.8). Students were also asked: "What is your attitude toward teamwork?" On a scale of 0 (very negative) to 4 (very positive), all categories of students scored relatively positively with a mean score ranging from 3.2 to 3.4. The exceptions were law students registered in the Community Organizing and Problem Solving course, whose mean score was only 2.3.[83] Scores regarding students' previous experience and current attitudes toward working with interdisciplinary teams were very similar to those for working with teams in general. When we asked students for the most positive aspect of team work at the beginning of the course and again at the end, "getting to know others" turned out to be an unexpected positive (see Table 1). When we asked students for the most negative aspect of teamwork before and after the course, it was evident that the course experience had elicited some changes (see Table 1).

82. One student in the Community Organizing course was a JD/MSW student. For purposes of analyzing our survey responses, this student was counted as a law student because she was enrolled in the course as a law student.

83. Note, this difference is of unlikely significance. As we had only six responses from law students in the Community Organizing course, it could be that one or two outliers brought the total mean score down; if we repeat this course evaluation we will be sure to repeat this question to determine if we are on to a trend or if this is an aberrational finding, as we suspect. In some ways, the poor number of responses from law students may reflect their tendency to not value social science research and methods.

Table 1: Highest and Lowest-Ranked Aspects of Teamwork Pre- and Post-Course

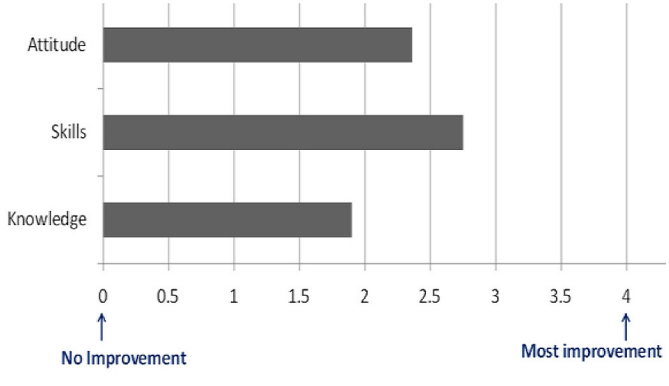
	Pre-course	Post-course
Highest ranked positive aspects	1. Getting enhanced results* 2. Working toward common goal* 3. Intellectual stimulation	1. Getting to know others 2. Getting enhanced results 3. Working toward common goal
Highest ranked negative aspects	1. Not everyone pulling the same load 2. Scheduling and location inconvenience 3. Personal grade dependent on group work* 4. Communication difficulties*	1. Scheduling and location inconvenience 2. Not everyone pulling the same load* 3. Personality issues*

* Two responses were tied for this ranking.

3. Student Reflections at Conclusion of Course

We asked students how much they believed the course improved their knowledge about working with teams, as well as their skills and attitudes toward working with teams. Students in both courses and of all backgrounds had fairly similar responses, showing modest gains in all these three parameters, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Self reported improvement in knowledge, skills, and attitudes



All students thought that the practical experiences (interdisciplinary and group experiences) and faculty mentoring were most important in improving their knowledge, skills and attitudes toward teamwork.

Students in the Community Organizing course reported moderately higher gains in knowledge, skills and attitudes than those in the other course. This is graphically described in Figures 2 and 3 for the Healthcare and Law class and the Community Organizing class, respectively.

Figure 2: Problem Solving in Healthcare course; Aspects of course that improved knowledge, skills and attitudes to teamwork

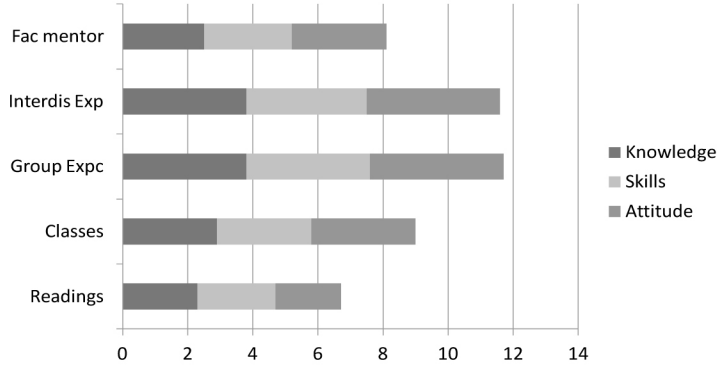
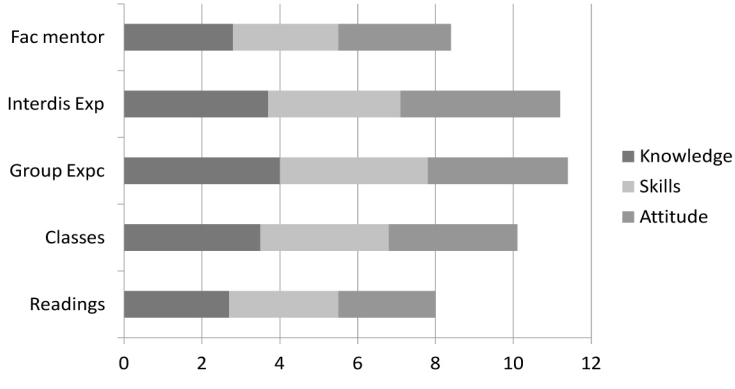


Figure 3: Community Organizing and Problem Solving course; Aspects of course that improved knowledge, skills and attitudes to teamwork



The teamwork aspect students believed to be most positive changed from "intellectual stimulation" to "getting to know others." As for the most negative aspects of teamwork, there were no changes in the most favored responses between the pre-course and post-course survey.

C. Qualitative Results

The comments students wrote in their surveys provide another way to determine the outcome of this coursework.

1. Improvement in Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes

Students reported both quantitative (scored improvements) and qualitative (descriptions) gains, making it apparent that they perceive themselves to have improved teamwork knowledge and skills,[84] particularly in areas of communication, time management, delegation and problem solving. Students appeared confident about their communication skills at the start of the course but at the end of the course indicated that this was their most improved skill, as well as the skill they most needed to work on.[85]

Students in each class had a good deal of experience working with teams, but not much experience working in interdisciplinary teams. Students' attitudes toward working on a team with their peers were in large part positive before the course.

Students' attitudes toward teamwork did not alter much as a result of their experience in the course. Many students' comments had both positive and negative elements about teamwork. Many respondents acknowledged that their concept of teamwork was dependent on individual team experiences.[86] To our surprise, there were fewer negative comments about *interdisciplinary teamwork*, and many positive comments.

2. Improvement in Self-Awareness

Students' comments indicate an increased level of self-awareness, although this trait did not receive high student ranking as a positive aspect of teamwork in our pre- and post-surveys. In this category, we include students' insights about their personal behavior and attitudes. Several students acknowledged having had difficulty trusting their teammates to get the job done on time or professionally—and this attitude was not based on previous experience

84. Though we tried to separate the concepts of knowledge and skills in our survey questions, there was a great deal of crossover in students' responses; therefore we combine them here. In the Knowledge section of our post-survey, we defined knowledge as "an understanding of team processes, including phases of teamwork, the role of team leaders, how teams function, barriers to effective teamwork, and what teams need to do to function effectively." In the Skills section of our post-survey, we defined skills to include "communication skills (e.g., listening, voicing concerns professionally), interpersonal skills (e.g., understanding differences; being collaborative), team coordination skills (e.g., assigning tasks, maximizing individual potential), and creative thinking."

85. In our pre-survey, we asked students the question, "What skills, if any, are required for effective teamwork?" Of the 30 responses, 24 responses included communication skills, listening skills, or both. Our follow-up question in the pre-survey was, "What skills do you feel you already have to work effectively as a team member?" 17 out of 28 students responding mentioned "communication" skills. Interestingly, many students repeated the skills they had mentioned in their response to required skills for teamwork. One student simply responded, "All of the above." In response to our post-survey question, "What skills, if any, do you feel you need more work on?", "communication" was the most frequent area noted (8 students of the 17 responding).

86. *E.g.*, "It all really depends on each individual team. We lucked out that we had a great team." "This was an effective team and showed me it can be successful." "My group was pleasant to work with."

with their teammates. Related to this insight was the awareness on the part of several students that they were "control freaks" and that such behavior/attitude is not conducive to effective teamwork.[87] Many students commented that they learned both to appreciate others' strengths (knowledge, skills, and opinions) and different points of view and to help others maximize their strengths. Other students got in touch with personal issues such as a fear to commit or the need to express one's limits or problematic listening skills, including the tendency to interrupt others.[88] In fact, many students reported a new appreciation for the importance of communication skills and the need to improve them. Several students mentioned the need for patience.[89]

3. Call for More Teamwork Training

Almost half of the students responding called for more teamwork training in the course. Though their response might have been biased because of the wording of the survey question ("What, if anything, could we do in this course to enhance students' knowledge, skills and attitude regarding effective teamwork?"), students did not request more didactic teaching or readings on how to work in teams.[90]

87. In these groups we include students who came to terms with the need to be accountable only for what they could personally do.

88. Perhaps the most extreme of these insights was the comment, "I need to work on actually working."

89. These reflections are consistent with an overall focus on personal and behavioral traits as opposed to professional competence. As Ahles and Bosworth explain,

> At postsurvey, "students formulate a shared vision of effective teams and it revolves primarily around work habits and human relations skills, not professional skills . . . ." Students rated professional skills lower than work habits or human relations skills. The highest ranked professional skills included writing, presentation and tactical.

Ahles & Bosworth, *supra* note 61, at 50 (citation omitted).

> Students held human relations skills in highest regard of the three categories of skills tested. The three highest-rated human relations skills were "reliability," "dedication to the project" and "teamwork attitude." These results suggest a certain selfish egocentrism among students. The students want team members to have personal qualities that will assist them in achieving their goal of a quality campaign and, therefore, a good grade. The remaining human relations skills, including respect for opinions, honesty, open communication, and trust, ability to disagree and flexible attitude all rate relatively high among students.

Id. at 51–52 (citation omitted).

90. *See, e.g.*, Kolb & Sandmeyer, *supra* note 24, at 72 ("The major lesson learned in the area of staffing and training is that *less is more*. People wanted to spend some unstructured time with their group members and with other participants.") (emphasis added).

V. What We Learned From the Survey and What We Do Differently Now

From our survey data, we learned that students believe the courses improved their teamwork knowledge, skills, and attitudes. They believe that teamwork enhances their skills in communication, time management, delegation and problem solving. Students' experience working on teams seemed to increase their self-awareness, though we did not set out to measure this specific trait. Students learn best through their experience working on a team. The students reported that interdisciplinary teamwork can be challenging because it requires meeting outside of class. The components of the courses students found most useful were the interactive interdisciplinary group activities, classroom exercises and faculty mentoring. Students particularly enjoyed getting to know other students on their teams. They also appreciated obtaining enhanced results through their teamwork.

Students indicated that they would like more knowledge about teamwork and the required skills. To them, communication is a particularly important aspect of their learning. We also learned that some students had negative experiences working on teams and—though this may have reduced their positive attitude toward teamwork generally—it did not reduce their positive attitude toward working on interdisciplinary teams.

Many of our initial assumptions were proven to be incorrect. Students in fact had had more extensive team experience than we had assumed and quite enjoyed working with other professionals. Students did not clamor for more course content but rather, if anything, for more time to collaborate with team members. The most pleasurable aspect of the experience was getting to know other team members, not getting enhanced results, as we had assumed. As a result of the survey, we have changed or refocused aspects of the courses.

A. We Place More Emphasis on Training Students to Work in Teams

Students asked for more teamwork training. We now set aside a Saturday early in the courses for teamwork training. During that day, we do team-building exercises, conduct conflict resolution exercises, teach teamwork theory, and have students write their team charters. We try to teach and model how issues can be reframed to remove the focus from blame to problem solving. The role plays we do during our initial training are one aspect of this teaching, but team tensions often require more, so we follow up with evaluations later in the semester.

The Saturday teamwork training is effective. It allows us to teach the teamwork stages before the students experience them and to discuss the qualities required for effective teamwork. We have concluded that we need to do longer exercises, since these provide more opportunity to examine the

issues that often arise in teamwork. It is important to allow the team to bond,[91] and this usually happens best outside the pressure of the actual project.

B. We Encourage Each Team to Develop Its Own Identity and Camaraderie

We learned that students enjoy getting to know others on their teams. We encourage this experience during the semester through team charters, team names, and team experiences.

Consistent with the literature, we have found that having the teams create a team charter can be a good bonding experience and can be useful for reflecting on team process during the semester.[92] It is essential to require the teams to spend time at the beginning of the process talking about how they will do their work, manage their time, communicate, and deal with disputes. In the Healthcare course, in addition to developing its own charter, each team develops its own name. In both courses, the students report to the class as a team. Teams that ate together found doing so helpful for increasing their cohesiveness. In the Healthcare course, teams took turns bringing snacks for the other teams.

C. We Offer Students More Class Time to Meet as a Team

We learned from our data that students do not learn from readings or lectures as much as they do from working within their teams. As a result, we have placed more emphasis on team meetings and team work than on reading about teamwork, and we offer students more class time to meet.

D. We Provide More Opportunity for Self-Reflection

Students showed increased self-awareness in their surveys. We want to encourage their progress, so we have expanded our evaluation process. Three to four times in each course, students provide written and oral evaluations of their teams. At the end of the course, students also evaluate their individual work as team members. We also require each team member to fill out a weekly time sheet. The teams must compile the time sheets, turn them in to their professors, and discuss their progress in class among themselves and with their professors. We have found that if the evaluations are done regularly they can open the door for further discussion of each team's dynamics and create opportunities for meaningful learning.

E. We Try to Model Teamwork in the Classroom

Students stated that they learned from their experience, from classroom exercises and from mentoring. To provide additional mentoring, we encourage

91. As one student commented in response to the post-survey question about what changes should be made in the course: "Need more time to get to know each other before the task."

92. *See* Ahles & Bosworth, *supra* note 61, at 55 (suggesting encouragement of development of team "articles of incorporation" or "code of conduct" setting out team goals, defining roles, setting schedule/time lines, defining deliverables, identifying how disputes will be handled and identifying a system of self-assessment toward the final goal).

students to help one another in the classroom. For example, when teams encounter difficulties, we have other members of the class offer suggestions, rather than just the faculty. We have found that students will frequently offer resources to other teams. In the process of working on their own projects, teams will often meet community members and leaders of agencies who have something to contribute to a team's work. Faculty members from different disciplines also can serve as role models for teamwork behavior. The students are able to observe how we share information, plan our work and assign responsibility, and how we communicate openly about our concerns.

F. We Focus on Intrinsic Values

Students continue to express concern about a team grade. Acknowledging this concern, we focus on intrinsic motivation in the work (pride in product, collaboration, helping others) as opposed to extrinsic motivation (grades, status) and its path to greater life balance and satisfaction. This concept is reinforced by the positive feedback the students get from community members and leaders on their projects. We encourage students to stop thinking about individual grades, and instead, to think about how to make each other and the team look good. Because the students are receiving a team grade, there is high motivation to help the team succeed, which generally leads to a better product, greater collaboration and more team spirit. This, in turn, gives students the satisfaction that comes from doing meaningful work and collaborating with others. In the Healthcare course, we invite former students to one of the early class sessions to talk about their experiences—especially the ups and downs of the teamwork process—and the great satisfaction that comes with the final project.

G. We Try to Make It Fun

When students are working in an environment that encourages collaboration and open communication and they are engaged in work they feel good about, it should be a positive experience. Yet, very few law classes are designed to be "fun," so this is likely to be a new experience. Students may need "permission" to be more expressive. As teachers, we try to create this environment by developing more personal relationships with our students, creating a sense of comfort—beginning with team training experiences otherwise unrelated to the course content and including food—and engaging with each other in a way that models a professional, yet easy dynamic. This is particularly important because many of the students are working on problems that have a serious, negative impact on members of the community. There is a fine balance between being professional and serious about our work and not taking ourselves too seriously.

Finally, we have become aware that teaching teamwork will take up classroom time and that there will always be tension between teaching teamwork process and teaching course content. Nonetheless, we have learned to live with it, and

to *enjoy* the difference in the classroom environment and our interrelationships when we allot more time to teamwork learning.

VI. Limitations

Our survey results have many limits. First, we have a relatively small group of students and cannot know whether the results could be generally applied to other law school courses. Second, and related, we had a less than desirable response rate, particularly from students in the Community Organizing class. As mentioned earlier, this allowed results to be skewed in a way that might not have reflected the actual sentiments of the class. Third, we only asked about students' perceptions of their improvement in teamwork knowledge, skills and attitudes. We did not measure actual improvements. A future study should be conducted using assessments to determine whether students' reported improvements are empirically supported. Finally, because both of these courses are electives, the students who chose to enroll may not be representative of law students in general.

VII. Further Considerations

This research has left us with a number of questions that might be the subject of future research. Among them: Is teamwork, as we have defined it, really important to lawyers, and if so, why? Is law really a teamwork activity? To what extent are legal employers seeking candidates with teamwork skills? What are the areas of legal work that involve and/or require teams? Which law firms or law agencies, if any, are doing training in teamwork skills? Are the knowledge, skills and attitudes in teamwork transferable to other tasks lawyers perform? For those lawyers not working in traditional firms, are the responses to these questions any different?

There are ample opportunities for true teamwork anytime a lawyer is working with another person toward accomplishing a common goal. However, it is unclear whether lawyers are practicing teamwork as we define it. In our conversations with colleagues who recently practiced in large firms, we found the concept of a team to be quite narrow (all the people who were working in the same area of practice or on a particular case). There appears to be no training provided for effective teamwork. If breakdowns occur, they are resolved through typical hierarchical power mechanisms.

We believe that lawyers could enhance their results, as well as enjoy their work more, by understanding and adopting the principles of teamwork. Whether they are working with clients, staff, other lawyers or professionals from other disciplines, lawyers can only benefit from teamwork skills.

The knowledge, skills and attitudes of teamwork, including clear goals, open communication, mutual respect, awareness of process, collaboration and shared commitment are important to any endeavor involving more than one person. As our students demonstrated, engaging in teamwork in a thoughtful way also enhances self-awareness, which in turn improves both job

performance and job satisfaction. Job candidates who have teamwork skills will benefit prospective employers.

A. What Is the Role of Leadership and How Should It Be Taught?

A strong leader would reinforce the attitudes and skills of team members. While the research is mixed about the need for one appointed leader, most of our groups did have an implicit leader. Though we have not yet trained our students specifically in leadership, we plan to engage students in more specific discussions of leadership skills, responsibilities, and attributes in future classes.

B. Do Students Actually Improve in Their Teamwork Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes?

The students who enroll in our courses know from the course descriptions and from talking with prior students that these are not typical law-focused, doctrinal courses. They know that they will be working in teams on real community problems, which will require field research and interaction with other disciplines. Students who choose this kind of course probably will be more open to teamwork and to learning nontraditional approaches to problem solving. As we consider further empirical research, it would be interesting to compare students from our class to students in more traditional classes, as well as to survey graduates who have practiced for a few years. Though composing a pre-class and a post-class test of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes appears daunting, it could lend further credibility to our objectives. It may also be worthwhile to conduct personality tests of students enrolled in our classes to be compared with students in other classes, or personality tests within each team, to determine how individual traits affect students' inclination toward teamwork or actual team experience.

C. Should Student Evaluations of Other Team Members Be Considered in Grading?

Others have written about student evaluation of teammates.[93] This is an interesting and challenging suggestion as applied to law students. Because of the competitive nature of legal education and concern about grades, students are reluctant to be evaluated by—and to evaluate—their classmates. The policy of evaluating teammates also contradicts the atmosphere of collaboration and trust we attempt to establish in the classroom.[94] On the other hand, the process might help prevent many typical team conflicts, such as members doing less than their expected share.

Recently, we have begun using peer evaluations in our classes, and have found that the resulting team member interaction is useful to confirm students' self-evaluations, and to reinforce the importance of offering and receiving constructive feedback.

93. *E.g.*, Page & Donelan, *supra* note 24.

94. An unresolved question for us is whether our enhanced awareness of team members' work ethic influences our grading.

D. When, if at All, Should We Intervene?

We make every effort to treat our students as autonomous adult learners. Our hope is that they resolve any team problems among themselves. However, our limited 14-week schedule does not always allow teams to resolve problems themselves. Occasionally, when we observe a team behaving dysfunctionally, we intervene. Furthermore, we want our student teams to produce useful results for our community partners. If we can help our students become more effective by intervening, everyone will experience more satisfaction.

VII. Conclusion

Having the opportunity to observe our students successfully solve community problems in teams has been a very satisfying teaching experience. It has made us appreciate how critical teamwork training is to effective problem solving. Our students have confirmed this both in their comments and in their behavior. We have learned that teaching teamwork does not require significant lecture time or materials. It does, however, require significant practice, attention and support.