

Program

Saturday, June 9, 2001

4:00–8:00 p.m.

Registration

5:30–8:00 p.m.

AALS Reception

Sunday, June 10, 2001

8:45–9:00 a.m.

Welcome

Harry G. Prince, AALS Deputy Director

Introduction

Alison Grey Anderson, University of California at Los Angeles, and Chair, Planning Committee for the AALS Conference on New Ideas for Experienced Teachers

9:00–10:30 a.m.

Learning Theory and the Classroom

Dr. John D. Bransford, Centennial Professor of Psychology and Education and Co-Director of the Learning Technology Center, Vanderbilt University

Maryellen Fullerton, Brooklyn Law School

Lauren K. Robel, University of Indiana, Bloomington

Kent D. Syverud, Vanderbilt University

This session will present some basic concepts from the current learning theory scholarship and begin to raise questions about their application in the law school classroom. A growing literature on learning theory has recently been summarized and assessed in a report by the National Research Council, [How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience and School](#) (National Academy Press 1999). Professor Bransford, a leading scholar and co-editor of the report, will introduce and explore three fundamental findings from the literature: that all students bring deep preconceptions to learning that are often erroneous but that affect how they learn; that real learning requires deep understanding of a conceptual framework along with a rich factual base; and that effective learning requires a “metacognitive” approach through which students can understand and monitor their own learning. Dean Syverud, Professor Fullerton, and Professor Robel will play the roles of co-teachers of a basic law school course in a hypothetical law school and the conference will follow the course as it unfolds over the course of a semester. This first session will show a typical faculty-student exchange in the first week of class and the three law faculty will then comment on it as they begin to explore how law school pedagogy matches up with learning theory. The small groups will continue this discussion.

View brief summary from [How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice](#)

10:30–10:45 a.m.

Refreshment Break

10:45 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

Small Group Discussions

12:15–1:45 p.m.

AALS Luncheon

2:00–3:30 p.m.

Planning the Law School Course

Dr. John D. Bransford, Centennial Professor of Psychology and Education and Co-Director of the Learning Technology Center, Vanderbilt University

Maryellen Fullerton, Brooklyn Law School

Lauren K. Robel, University of Indiana, Bloomington

Kent D. Syverud, Vanderbilt University

This session steps back in time before the first day of class in our hypothetical course and shows the three co-faculty in a course planning session. The hypothetical course is co-taught because collaborative teaching is an issue worth exploring in its own right but it also requires faculty to articulate and explore their goals and pedagogical methods in a way that solo teaching does not. Our three faculty will explore how to plan the course so that students can achieve the requisite “deep understanding” of the course, while obtaining the metacognitive skills necessary for effective learning. What are the crucial facts, the core concepts and the essential skills necessary for deep understanding, and what materials, pedagogical techniques, and new approaches are required? How can students be taught effectively to monitor their own learning? Professor Bransford will comment on the interaction of the learning theory concepts with law school pedagogy. The small groups will continue the discussion.

3:30–3:45 p.m.

Refreshment Break

3:45–5:15 p.m.

Small Group Discussions

5:30–7:00 p.m.

AALS Reception

Monday, June 11, 2001

8:30–9:15 a.m.

Student Preconceptions in the Classroom

Dr. John D. Bransford, Centennial Professor of Psychology and Education and Co-Director of the Learning Technology Center, Vanderbilt University

Maryellen Fullerton, Brooklyn Law School
Lauren K. Robel, University of Indiana, Bloomington
Kent D. Syverud, Vanderbilt University

Monday's sessions explore barriers to learning in the classroom. This first session addresses cognitive barriers by exploring the role of student preconceptions and how they can hamper effective learning. We are now several weeks into the semester in our hypothetical course, and we overhear a conversation among students outside of class which illustrates some common misconceptions (for example, law consists of rules like the rules of chess) shared by law students about what and how they are learning. Our faculty and learning theorist then discuss how to identify, address and overcome these preconceptions, and the small groups will continue that discussion.

9:15–10:00 a.m.

Small Group Discussions

10:00–10:15 a.m.

Refreshment Break

10:15–11:00 a.m.

Non-Cognitive Barriers to Learning

Geoffrey L. Cohen, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Yale University

This session addresses non-cognitive barriers to learning. There are a range of such barriers, and the small groups will be able to draw on their own experience to discuss barriers created by race, class, gender, language facility, physical handicaps, classroom teaching style and dynamics, and institutional setting. The plenary session will focus on one particular barrier, the notion of “stereotype threat” based on the work of Claude Steele and his colleagues. Steele's work indicates that racial, gender and ethnic stereotypes related to learning (that African-Americans do less well on tests, that women suffer from math anxiety, that Asian-American students are good in math) affect actual test performance when students believe the relevant abilities are being tested, but not when they are told the tests are for other purposes. The basic findings will be presented and discussed.

11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon

Small Group Discussions

Free Afternoon

Tuesday, June 12, 2001

9:00–10:15 a.m.

Helping Students Learn in the Classroom — Teaching Demonstrations

Susan Beth Apel, Vermont Law School
Charles R. Calleros, Arizona State University
Mark A. Weisberg, Queen's University, Faculty of Law, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Moderator: Gerald F. Hess, Gonzaga University

This session assumes that our hypothetical class is now in mid-semester and our three faculty are struggling with the chronic problems of engaging students, helping them learn the material, and thinking about teaching different material in different ways. Aware that they can benefit from the experience of others, they have asked Professor Gerald Hess, co-author of Techniques for Teaching Law, to gather some colleagues with varied teaching styles to demonstrate a range of teaching techniques they might consider for their class. Professor Hess will introduce the teaching demonstrations and relate them to some of the learning theory the conference has been exploring, and Professors Apel, Calleros and Weisberg will give brief demonstrations of teaching techniques which they have found to be effective. Conference participants will play the role of students.

10:15–10:30 a.m.

Refreshment Break

10:30 a.m.–12:00 noon

Small Group Discussions

Each conference participant is asked to bring to the conference a brief WRITTEN description (one page) of either a teaching technique that the faculty member has tried or wishes to try, or a teaching puzzle that the faculty member wishes to pose to the other participants for possible suggestions and solutions. The descriptions will be duplicated for the small groups and made available in some format to all participants as part of our effort to create a community of teachers and shared expertise and concerns. Tuesday morning's small group discussions will provide a forum for individual participants to discuss these individual techniques and/or teaching puzzles with a small group of colleagues.

12:00 noon–2:00 p.m.

AALS Luncheon

Conversation about Technology in Pedagogy

Jack R. Goetz, President and Dean, Concord University School of Law
Peter W. Martin, Cornell Law School

Our lunch panelists will discuss the pedagogy of integrating technology into legal curriculum and its use in distance learning programs. This discussion will examine the justifications for use of technology in legal education, and whether technology detracts or enhances the quality of in-class discussions, the Socratic method, or other teaching methodology. The panel will also discuss the trends in legal education toward on-line courses and the impact of ABA requirements for distance learning programs.

2:00–3:30 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions: Technology Demonstrations and Optional Affinity Groups

Hugh Hanlon Gibbons, Franklin Pierce Law Center

John Mayer, Executive Director, Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI)

Ronald W. Staudt, Chicago-Kent College of Law

Hugh Gibbons has developed a web-based and CD-ROM multimedia authoring tool called Shell Drake that allows professors/authors to develop trial practice, negotiation, and multimedia simulation training tools using audio and video.

John Mayer is director of CALI, which has developed a CALI authoring tool that allows faculty to develop lesson plans, similar to the CALI lessons currently available to subscribers from CALI's website. He will demonstrate the features of the authoring tool, which is text and graphics-based.

Ron Staudt developed an on-line JD program for his law school that would meet ABA requirements for distance learning. He will discuss the mechanics of developing the curriculum, demonstrate the site and discuss the challenges of getting approval.

Three concurrent sessions will demonstrate and explore varied ways to use web-based and other interactive technology for teaching. We will attempt to provide duplicate sessions and schedule the demonstrations so that conference participants may attend more than one of the sessions.

A small number of rooms will be available for groups of conference participants who wish to discuss teaching-related topics of interest to them not otherwise addressed in the conference or who wish additional time to continue the morning's small groups discussions.

3:45–5:00 p.m.

Selected Participant Teaching Demonstrations/Ideas

Eric Gouvin, Western New England College [[view proposal](#)]

Douglas R. Haddock, St. Mary's University [[view proposal](#)]

Christina L. Kunz, William Mitchell College [[view proposal](#)]

Debra Poggrund Stark, John Marshall Law School [[view proposal](#)]

In order to provide a forum for law faculty interested in sharing their ideas about teaching with a wider audience, the Conference Planning Committee solicited proposals for brief presentations by law faculty who were selected by the Planning Committee.

Wednesday, June 13, 2001**9:00–10:30 a.m.**

Assessments and Feedback — We Teach, But Do They Learn?

Dr. John D. Bransford, Centennial Professor of Psychology and Education and Co-Director of the Learning Technology Center, Vanderbilt University
Gregory Scott Munro, University of Montana
Lauren K. Robel, University of Indiana, Bloomington

This session will focus on the important topic of assessment of student learning. As our hypothetical class moves toward the end of the semester, its teachers need to determine how to assess whether their students have achieved the deep understanding and metacognitive skills which they tried to teach. Professor Bransford will survey some of the basic findings of the assessment literature, and the law speakers will explore to what extent traditional law school methods of assessment through classroom performance, papers, and exams provide both reliable and useful assessment of student learning and the kind of feedback to students which encourages development of metacognitive skills.

10:30–10:45 a.m.

Refreshment Break

10:45–11:30 a.m.

Where Do We Go From Here?

David Hall, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Northeastern University

In this session, Provost David Hall will talk about life after the teaching conference. Law faculty who are interested in and committed to teaching often find the community of teachers which they encounter at teaching conferences inspiring and supportive but then return to their own law schools to encounter many barriers to sustained attention to teaching. Some of the barriers include the lack of a scholarly apparatus for the sharing of ideas (scholarly journals, regular conferences), the emphasis on traditional scholarship rather than teaching or the scholarship of teaching in tenure decisions and law teaching careers generally, and the lack of time for the labor intensive work of developing materials, trying new pedagogical techniques, and evaluating the effect of such efforts. Provost Hall will address these issues and send us home with some thoughts for addressing these hurdles.