Shifting Sands: Collaborative Teaching as a Legal Pedagogy

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COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AS A LEGAL PEDAGOGY

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, greater emphasis has been placed upon how educators teach what they teach, with an analysis of the effectiveness of various methods for teaching law. However, one often-ignored aspect is that of the collaborative method of teaching. Collaborative teaching involves teaching of a subject by a team of two or more educators. This paper attempts to discuss various facets of collaborative teaching, and ways in which the effectiveness of this model can be enhanced, in order to ensure satisfaction of law teaching and, at the same time, to maximise the learning outcomes for the law students. The potential pitfalls and challenges, along with possible mitigation strategies, are also discussed. The paper concludes that the discipline of law lends itself quite naturally to collaborative teaching, due to its multiple standpoints, varied interpretations and a range of solutions. Collaborative teaching can also be a key to successful implementation of the interdisciplinary approach. This paper draws upon the professional experiences of and perspectives derived by the author in collaborative teaching of law. It may, however, be relevant to the teaching of other social science subjects too.

Keywords:
Collaborative, Interdisciplinary, Law, Pedagogy, Team teaching.

Many who teach law in India today, are successful students and beneficiaries of conventional teaching methods in traditional law schools and universities. While seminars and training

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programmes have focussed on developing an understanding of the contents of law, there has been a considerably lesser emphasis in equipping the law educator with newer skills, innovative strategies and creative approaches for the effective teaching of the law.

However, in recent times, greater emphasis has been placed upon how educators teach what they teach, and scholars undertake research, and evaluate the effectiveness of various methods for teaching law. Teacher-centred, student-centred, content-focussed and interactive / participative methods are four major approaches to teaching which are being discussed in considerable detail. The case law method, problem-based teaching, the case study method, story-telling in law teaching, clinical legal methods, simulation activities and role play, and the use of newer technology are some of the more discussed aspects of legal pedagogy. However, one often-ignored aspect is that of the collaborative method of teaching.

Collaborative teaching involves teaching of a subject by a team of two or more educators. Literature points to the fact that team teaching was first adopted by McGill University’s Faculty of Law in doing comparative teaching of American and European law.\(^2\) It was adopted by the Hanse Law School in the late 1980s, and by many other law schools and universities thereafter.\(^3\) Collaborative method of teaching law in India was perhaps first adopted by the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bangalore in its early years (1988 onwards). As an alumnus of the institution from those early years, the author has benefitted from the perspectives shared in class by four law professors on specific provisions of Constitutional law. Over the years, replicating the efforts of NLSIU, collaborative teaching may have been adopted by some of the other national law universities in India and subsequently abandoned due to its negative aspects. There has been an attempt to adopt the collaborative teaching method in Maharashtra National Law University, Mumbai where the author teaches presently.

The collaborative model of teaching law has several advantages. It is especially useful in teaching comparative law, where two or more educators who specialize in national or regional laws and legal mechanisms may synthesize their knowledge by offering a course. It also lends well to interdisciplinary approaches to teaching law and to the teaching of

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\(^3\) Ibid
transnational and international law along with their application to domestic jurisdictions. Students may also benefit from educators with varied traditions in legal reasoning and legal systems (common law / civil law or mixed), as well as from litigation experience of the educators in varied fields and contexts. Students benefit both from a wider range of contents as well as from varied teaching methodology. Collaborative teaching can also provide stimulus to educators to increase their horizons of understanding substantive contents of law and of legal pedagogy.

This model of teaching is not without its share of criticism. It has sometimes been dismissed as an ineffective, resource-intensive and counter-productive method, both from the perspective of the educators concerned as well as the students, particularly if the pre-requisites of such a model of teaching are not adhered to. While being aware that it is not a perfect model of teaching, this paper attempts to discuss various facets of collaborative teaching, and ways in which the effectiveness of this model can be increased, in order to ensure satisfaction of teaching and, at the same time, to maximise the learning outcomes for the students. The experiences and perspectives are drawn from the teaching of law courses; however, the principles discussed herein may be applied, to a substantial extent, to the teaching of other social science disciplines too.

A. UNDERSTANDING COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

The collaborative teaching method is known by varied names - cooperative teaching, team teaching, co-teaching, joint teaching, coordinated teaching and collective teaching among a few. It is a model in which two or more educators work together and address the learning needs of all the students of a class, through a joint and coordinated response.

One doubt that often lingers in our minds is – should it be referred to as collaborative or cooperative teaching? Do collaboration and cooperation have distinct meanings and import, and ought not to be conflated?

Cooperative vs. Collaborative Teaching
The terms ‘cooperation’ and ‘collaboration’ are often conflated, though they have distinct meanings and fundamentally different approaches of contributing to a group. Collaboration entails people working together towards achieving shared goal(s) / vision. The shared vision binds all the members of the group, and the service – teaching – is not the culmination of any individual’s effort. Cooperation involves people working together for their selfish purposes, even as they pursue a shared goal. Quite often, cooperation involves exchanging relevant information and resources to support and fulfil each other’s goals, as opposed to a shared goal. Cooperation also entails a division of labour among the members, so that each member is responsible for solving part of the problem. In other words, cooperation is about how each member of the team executes his / her part of the responsibility in order to ensure progress in work, while collaboration is about how the team members work together in tandem, with mutual trust and accountability, towards progress in work.

Experts state that collectives collaborate while connectives cooperate. Collectives give priority to the group over the individual, and adopt a joint identity that binds them to one another through shared goal(s). On the other hand, connectives do not give priority to the group over the individual; there is no shared sense of identity as each pursues their own goals.

‘Cooperative teaching’ would therefore indicate that the teaching process is undertaken, not as a collective effort, but as the effort of individuals in the group in coordination with each other. Conversely, in an interdependent organization such as a university, ‘collaborative teaching’ forms the foundation for creative solutions to teaching through innovative methods. Hence, this paper uses the term ‘collaborative teaching’.

Collaborative Teaching and Collaborative Learning

As in the case of collaborative teaching, the concept of collaborative learning, which is perhaps more well-known, is an educational approach that involves a group of students

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4Collaboration vs. Cooperation. There is a Difference’, Huffington Post, 7 June 2016
working together to solve a problem or achieve the learning objectives. In the words of Smith and McGregor:

“Collaborative learning” is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually, students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. Collaborative learning activities vary widely, but most centre on students’ exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher’s presentation or explication of it.  

Collaborative learning marks a paradigm shift away from teacher-centric models of teaching, where educators consider themselves less as transmitters of all knowledge, and more as facilitators, guides and motivators of the learning process of the students. It is an active and constructive process of learning by learners with diverse skills and perspectives, based on rich contexts.

The quality of outcome of collaborative learning processes has the potential to be augmented, when it is complemented by collaborative teaching, where students look to a team of educators as role models for team work, cooperation, free flowing two-way communication, coupled with shared responsibilities and a shared understanding.

**Elements of Team and Team Work**

While it is clear that this pedagogy is based on team work in teaching, rather than a solo performance inside and outside of the class, what constitutes a team often varies. The team could consist of two or more law educators with similar passion and with varied expertise and levels of experience; it could comprise of educators from multiple disciplines including law and the social sciences; in exceptional circumstances, the team could also consist of a group of educators and selected students, working in tandem to address the learning needs of all the students. Irrespective of what the composition of the ‘team’ would be, all members of the team would come together to achieve a common goal, through a high degree of interdependence, shared responsibility and credit, and shared accountability for collective performance.

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7 Barbara Leigh Smith and Jean T. MacGregor, ‘What is Collaborative Learning?’, retrieved from http://evergreen.edu/facultydevelopment/docs/WhatisCollaborativeLearning.pdf, last visited on 9 November 2016, 11:15 AM
The old acronym for team is Together Everyone Achieves More. The four key aspects for effective team work are indicated by the acronym GRIP – goals, roles, inter-personal relationships and processes and procedures. For effective team work, it is imperative that:

- common goals that provide a unified purpose and synergy;
- clearly defined but not necessarily rigid roles that all members of the team know so that each one has the opportunity to contribute through their skills and expertise;
- inter-personal relationships that are based on mutual trust and cooperation, with the ability to learn from and listen to each other. It would be highly challenging to work in team with persons that we do not have a cordial relationship with, without such a relationship affecting the productivity and efficiency of the team itself; and
- well-defined processes and procedures, that govern the behaviour of the members of the team and set boundaries for their action. Such processes and procedures also help the team members know what is expected of them.

If we transpose these elements to a context of teaching law in a law school or university, it is clear that for collaborative teaching to be successful, not only should the goals of teaching and roles of each educator be clear and identifiable; strong inter-personal relationships founded on mutual trust, transparency and a spirit of sharing and cooperation rather than competition, jealousy, self-importance and egoism, are non-negotiables. Additionally, openness to unlearning and learning, along with democratic functioning, would be keys to effective collaborative teaching. The mode by which the team of educators operates, the division and distribution of responsibilities among them, ranging from classroom management and student discipline to teaching to evaluation, is highly essential for the smooth functioning of the team.

### B. RATIONALE

Collaborative teaching became a popular method of teaching in the 1970s and thereafter, when students with special needs had to be ‘mainstreamed’, inspiring general and special instructors to experiment with different teaching approaches in order to make the curriculum accessible to all students. Initially, this model of teaching was projected as ‘the power of

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9 Ibid
two’; soon, it gave way to ‘the power of two or more’. In the 1990s, Marilyn Friend and Lynne Cook presented several approaches to collaborative teaching.\(^\text{10}\) The rationale for incorporating collaborative teaching methods includes the following:

a) It reduces the teacher to student ratio, and provides for more personalized learning environment, thereby enhancing the efficiency of teaching;

b) It provides a platform for shared expertise, skills, experiences and perspectives between two or more educators;

c) It combines the strength of educators, reinforcing each other and complementing one another’s weaknesses;

d) It hones a culture of shared responsibility for planning, preparation, execution of teaching and evaluating its outcomes;

e) It breaks down the hierarchy that traditionally exists between a single educator and the students, thereby decentralising and democratising the student-teacher relationships; while hierarchy between student and teachers may still exist, collaborative teaching facilitates a dissipation of power, minimizing the chances for adhoc and arbitrary exercise of power;

f) It lends itself to multiple interpretations and solutions through teaching, through multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary perspectives. This is of particular importance to the teaching of law, which provides for multiple solutions to problems, and shares intrinsic linkages with other social sciences such as Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, History and the languages;

g) It provides for enhanced effectiveness in classroom management;

h) It breaks the monotony of teaching by a single educator;

i) It brings fresh energy and refreshing ideas into the classroom through brainstorming among the educators at the preparatory stage, and provides for innovations in legal pedagogy;

j) It also establishes inter-personal relationships and a bonding / camaraderie between the educators, which is a major gain to the institution; and

k) By reducing person-dependency, it provides for continuity and sustainability in teaching.

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C. STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

There are multiple approaches, strategies and models of collaborative teaching. By and large, the members of the team of educators play multiple roles and functions, often interchangeably. Outside of the classroom, they support, complement, critique, motivate and provide feedback to each other’s teaching performance. In the classroom, they may reiterate, reinforce, and elaborate the other educators’ viewpoints, disagreeing with them as the occasion may demand. A few more common models along with the role of team members are discussed below:

Model 1: A team of law educators along with one specialist who possesses in depth knowledge in the subject. In this model, the general law educators could lay the foundation on the topic, while the specialist could present critical perspectives and raise key issues to stimulate debate and discussion among the students. The specialist may also make linkages with issues pertaining to other law and social science disciplines.

Model 2: A para professional along with a general law educator or a specialist. In this model, the para professional imparts the basic information and contextualises the teaching process, while the law educator provides practical tips and insights into key issues, and acts as a reinforcing element. This model works best in legal literacy camps with marginalized sections of society.

Model 3: Two or more specialists who are equally well-versed in the subject. Here the members may play multiple roles – one might take a lead role while the others play a supportive role on a particular topic, and interchange their roles on another topic. While the lead educator presents the conceptual legal framework on an issue, the supporting educator may ask thought-provoking questions to students. Alternatively, the educators could provide two or more perspectives and standpoints on a particular judgment / doctrine / legal issue with equal vigour and conviction, in order to stimulate discussion among the students. They could also have a pre-planned disagreement in class, in order to polarize the viewpoints of the students and stimulate a debate. In this model, the educators forming the team could also have their expertise in law and various related disciplines.

Model 4: A team comprising of a guest lecturer along with regular educators for the subject. Since the guest lecturer may not be fully aware of class dynamics or the topics taught in class, he / she may deliver an interactive lecture, with the regular educators forging inter-linkages
with past discussions and debates held in class, and with future teaching plans. The regular educators may take advantage of the presence of the guest lecturer, possibly a specialist, to raise key and contemporary legal issues for discussion.

Model 5: A team of law educators along with one or more student educators chosen for a specific topic. In this model, one or more student educators may be chosen for a specific topic, based on their personal interest or specialized knowledge on the issue. The student educators could be encouraged to make short presentations, which could be used as a trigger by regular educators to take the class discussion to a higher plane and to stimulate creative application of legal principles / doctrines learnt.

D. Collaborative Teaching as a Key to an Inter Disciplinary Approach

Law ought not to be taught in a vacuum. Law is a social science discipline, which has its inter-linkages with other subjects such as economics, political science, sociology, history, literature, anthropology, psychology and public policy. Law may be taught in two ways: the traditional or ‘pure’ approach which focusses only on an academic engagement with legal principles, concepts, dictums, provisions in legislations and judgments, and an ‘interdisciplinary approach’ that problematizes and contextualizes the law in socio-economic, cultural, political and historical perspectives.

There is a distinction drawn between ‘interdisciplinary’, ‘multidisciplinary’ and ‘cross disciplinary’ approaches. In the words of Casey Jones,

The interdisciplinary approach is uniquely different from a multidisciplinary approach, which is the teaching of topics from more than one discipline in parallel to the other, nor is it a crossdisciplinary approach, where one discipline is crossed with the subject matter of another. Interdisciplinary techniques go beyond these two techniques by allowing students to see different perspectives, work in groups, and make the synthesizing of disciplines the ultimate goal.¹¹

While the interdisciplinary approach is a challenging one to adopt, there is little doubt that legal education would be a far more enriching experience for students, and legal pedagogy far more exciting to educators, if this approach were to be adopted. Experts have stated that

interdisciplinary studies help address current and actual problems, with a focus on finding solutions to the problems through policy-oriented action.12

A desired and plausible outcome is the expansion and deepening of student’s understanding of law as well as other social sciences. Interdisciplinary teaching can also push the horizons of the educators’ knowledge, skills, perspectives and approaches. However, there are challenges that accompany this approach. Curriculum preparation can be an onerous task, with educators from varied disciplines sitting together and chalking a course outline and implementing and evaluating the same. If it is not implemented with sufficient thought and care, the approach can lead to confusion for the student rather than deepening his / her knowledge base.

It may be utopian to expect any law educator to have the expertise to link law with other social science disciplines. Similarly educators grounded in other social science disciplines may be well-versed with theories, but may lack the expertise to explore and articulate their relevance to a law student. Collaborative teaching can be a key to adopting and implementing an interdisciplinary approach to teaching law.

Many experts are sceptical to the use of collaborative teaching methods in interdisciplinary approaches to teaching. For example, Donald Richards states categorically as follows:

"team-taught courses that lay a claim to interdisciplinary often fail to achieve their objectives precisely because the individual members of the instructional team themselves never really begin to understand their common concerns in a fashion that may properly be called interdisciplinary."13

He concludes that it is an undesirable pedagogy for undergraduate education. However, other authors such as Dawn Youngblood and Laura L. Deurr are emphatic that methodology is the key to success in interdisciplinary teaching, over and above the contents in study materials.14 Casey Jones opines that interdisciplinary techniques are not

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only essential for problem-solving through synthesis of disciplines; they also enhance a student’s learning habits, academic skills and personal growth.15

A potential challenge that exists is that educators who adopt interdisciplinary approaches to teaching law may be seen as having a weak knowledge in ‘core’ law, and their academic reputation and credibility at risk. Coupled with the challenges of collaborative teaching, which are discussed below, collaborative teaching as a key to interdisciplinary approaches in legal education may seem a formidable task, though not an impossible one.

E. SOME PRE-REQUISITES AND KEYS TO SUCCESS IN COLLABORATIVE TEACHING

Based on the author’s somewhat limited experiences in collaborative teaching, both at National Law School of India, Bangalore and at Maharashtra National Law University - Mumbai, complemented by an effort to understand and analyse this approach to teaching, some pre-requisites and keys to success in collaborative teaching are discussed below. These are merely indicative and are, by no means, exhaustive.

a) **Shared passion:** An important pre-requisite is a shared passion, interest, motivation and knowledge in the subject. This does not imply that all members of the teaching team ought to be equally well-versed with all the contents / modules of the course. However, it means that the educators share a comparable level of motivation to learn newer facets, insights and perspectives in law.

b) **Team Spirit:** There is no ‘I’ in collaborative teaching; only a ‘we’. This is easier said than done. Which educator would not enjoy additional power, importance or popularity, if approached by students on a pertinent issue? However, the team of collaborative educators do not work for self-promotion of their personal goals, but towards a shared vision of the teaching goals. Hence, adopting a team-centric approach is important. This envisages joint planning, execution and introspection, as well as joint decision making on key aspects of teaching and evaluation.

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c) **Meticulous Planning:** Most collaborative educators would vouch for the fact that this model of teaching necessarily demands meticulous planning, to pre-determine and define the role of each educator, his / her approach to and standpoint on the legal issue. Planned utilisation of class hours is also an important consideration, as collaborative teaching runs the risk of multiple players getting carried away with their contributions to the teaching process without considering the time constraint. Planning time is a pre-requisite before each class.

d) **Continuous Introspection:** Meticulous planning of a class and its execution, need to be followed by continuous introspection of what went right in class, and what could be improved upon. Alternative approaches to teaching a particular topic could be discussed and decided upon. The introspection would also entail the educators to provide frank and fearless feedback to each other’s performance. Such continuous introspection strengthens the collective effort of the educators to achieve the learning outcomes.

e) **Common Disposition towards Students:** Each educator has a unique manner in which they relate to and treat the students. Some educators may be more inclusive, patient and respect the students’ agency in class, others may treat them as recipients of the learning process. Some educators may be more cordial and friendly with students, while others set strict boundaries for the students. Some educators may want to focus on enhancing the learning experience for the majority of the class, while other educators want to target only the top 10% and bottom 10% of the students (ranked as per their capacity to learn). Some educators may be strict while others may be lenient with regard to student discipline, punctuality and professionalism. Prior to commencement of the collaborative teaching process, it is important for the educators concerned to re-align their disposition to students, and have a frank discussion on aspects such as student discipline, fairness and transparency in treatment. This is because differences in the treatment of students may affect the teaching process.

f) **Joint Ownership:** It is an imperative that collaborative educators feel a sense of joint ownership of the course contents and the teaching processes. Such a sense of joint
Ownership will encourage each collaborative educator to be proactive and innovative, in terms of contents of the course and the teaching methodologies for the same. Joint ownership has the potential to effectively ward off lethargy and complacency among some of the collaborative educators. It may sometimes entail a temporary ‘stepping back’ of relatively pro-active and extra enthusiastic educators, in order that other educators’ creative ideas and initiatives may be accommodated, explored and tested.

g) Effective Communication and Transparency: Students may, consciously or unconsciously, pit one collaborative educator against another. It is important for the educators concerned to maintain an effective communication among themselves and function with transparency in order to pre-empt possible misunderstandings, ego and personality clashes. For example, students may claim to have obtained an extension for project submission from one of the educators. It would be important to verify with the educator concerned, and preferably take joint and considered decisions except in cases of exigencies.

h) Openness to Unlearning and Learning: Collaborative teaching can be an exciting and rewarding process of intense learning for the educators concerned, provided there is an openness to unlearn past perspectives, and to learn from newer insights and viewpoints on an issue. No educator is perfect in their knowledge of a subject, immaterial of how vast their teaching experience may be. In a team of educators, there may be varied expertise; but no one is inferior or superior to each other. There is always something new to learn from each collaborative educator, however young and inexperienced he / she may appear to be. It is important that we keep our eyes and ears open. Additionally, having a willingness to try newer methods of teaching, even if it meets with limited success, is essential. One educator’s mistakes may provide an opportunity for learning for all educators concerned.

i) Flexibility in Interchanging Roles: Collaborative educators play varied roles and functions. Sometimes an educator may lead the teaching process on a topic; on another topic, he / she may play a supportive role. They may sometimes use the ‘carrot and stick’
policy in their interactions with students. The team of educators may jointly decide the individual responsibilities of each member of the team. One educator could be entrusted with classroom management; another with student discipline and punctuality; a third with essential documentation; a fourth with making key decisions and so on. However, it is essential that all collaborative educators possess adequate flexibility and willingness in changing their roles, so that the students do not erroneously see a set hierarchy among the team of educators.

j) **Shared Understanding on Evaluation:** Since evaluation holds the key to the students’ future, it is important that collaborative educators arrive at a shared understanding of evaluation methods, and play well-defined and distinct roles in the process of evaluation. Division of evaluation responsibilities is essential. The common thread binding varied approaches on evaluation is that of justice and fairness to each student. Highest and lowest marks to be awarded could be agreed upon. It may be fairer to students if collaborative educators evaluate different pre-determined questions in each answer sheet, rather than divide the evaluation responsibilities on a student to student basis.

**F. CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATIVE TEACHING**

As with all other methods of teaching, collaborative teaching too has certain challenges and barriers to effectiveness. Being mindful of the areas of concern and exploring possible mitigation strategies to overcome the challenges could help maximize the benefits of collaborative teaching in the long run.

i. **Lack of time for planning and preparation prior to each class:** One of the major areas of concern is the lack of time for planning and preparation prior to each class. Since a team of educators in involved in collaborative teaching, the team members ought to be able to find time to be engaged in coordinated planning and preparation prior to each class, and have consensus on what would the learning outcomes of the class be, and what pedagogy should be adopted in order to achieve the learning outcomes. Without the time for planning and preparation, collaborative teaching could be reduced to shared
responsibilities in teaching the course, such that each educator in the team assumes the responsibility of specific classes or topics. Such an approach, often adopted due to lack of time in shared planning and preparation, undermines the spirit and objectives of collaborative teaching. Given the fact that an educator is stretched for time, and often combines teaching with research as well as administrative responsibilities, time management and prioritising tasks is a crucial mitigation strategy.

ii. Lack of time for introspection after each class: Collaborative teaching also demands that introspection is undertaken after each class, to briefly discuss if the learning outcomes were achieved, and if not, the reasons for the same, and ways and means of addressing the issues in subsequent classes. As in the case of the first challenge discussed above, time management and clear and frank communication among the team of educators is imperative to substantially address the challenge.

iii. Lack of understanding in shared ownership, control and responsibilities of the course: In collaborative teaching, it is possible that a more pro-active educator assumes far greater responsibilities of the course, while others in the team feel less of a sense of ownership or responsibilities towards the course. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities is essential to avoid such a challenge. Joint control over the progress of the course is key to the success of collaborative teaching. Any course correction, if required mid-way during the execution of the course, ought to be undertaken by consensus among the team of educators. Free, fearless and transparent communication among the team members is a pre-requisite in such situations.

iv. Difference in teaching styles: Most often, there would be a difference in teaching styles among the team members. Some educators may emphasize on explaining concepts threadbare. Others may use analogy and story telling methods. Some educators may employ interactive methods that engage and draw in the students’ involvement, while others may provide a short yet effective one-way lecture. Some may spruce up their teaching with real life examples while others may incorporate mild humour in their teaching. In fact, each educator would have his / her unique style of teaching. While a difference in teaching styles can be positive, in that, students would not find the teaching monotonous or mundane, the difference can also acquire negative shades, especially if
the students start comparing the teaching styles and find some styles more appealing than other styles. As long as the team of educators closely observe each other’s teaching styles, learn through observation and provide constructive feedback on the same to each other, a synthesis of teaching styles is likely to benefit all the stakeholders.

v. Difference in personalities of the educators, leading to ego clashes: The risk of ego clashes defeating the benefits of collaborative teaching runs high, particularly with strong-headed, opinionated educators who are unwilling to compromise on their viewpoint. In fact, collaborative teaching works best when egos are left outside the classroom, and a non-hierarchical approach to teaching is adopted, complemented by free and frank communication.

vi. Differences and deadlock in viewpoints / positions / perspectives on an issue: It is very possible that the team of educators may not have a consensus on all aspects taught in class. They may have opinions and perspectives, grounded in personal experiences and readings, which may be widely at variance with each other. It is possible that there may be some initial awkward moments in class when the varied standpoints are presented. However, in a team where the educators respect each other’s viewpoints, the multiple viewpoints may be presented to the students with equal vigour, and used as a trigger for the students to discuss and determine which of the viewpoints they would support and why.

G. CONCLUSION

The discipline of law lends itself quite naturally to collaborative teaching, due to its multiple standpoints, varied interpretations and a range of solutions. The virtues of adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of law are increasingly becoming apparent. Collaborative teaching can be a key to successful implementation of the interdisciplinary approach. Enormous responsibilities and wide-ranging roles demanded from a law educator are additional ‘push’ factors. Collaborative teaching that involves educators from varied areas of specialization in law, and / or varied disciplines in social sciences, may enhance the learning outcomes provided meticulous planning is undertaken, coupled with well-defined roles of each educator who forms part of the team.
Collaborative teaching has varied benefits, both for the educators and students concerned, if the pre-requisites, non-negotiables and keys to success in collaborative teaching are followed. However, collaborative teaching may pose a challenge to the administrative authorities / management of a university in terms of allocation of human resources, and evaluation of the work of individual educators in the team, as opposed to the conventional method of teaching. As with other methods of teaching, collaborative teaching has certain pitfalls and challenges, which may be avoided / addressed if mitigation strategies are in place.

The realities of present day teaching of law focus on inclusion, reasoned arguments, evidence-based instruction, infusion of debate and discussion, presentation of multiple and interlocking perspectives, innovative pedagogy, clinical methods of teaching and continuous evaluation. Collaborative teaching has the potential to provide a key to meet these contemporary challenges.

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