The Direction of Legal Education Reform: Facilitating Access to Justice

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Introduction:

In Canada, the image society has of our justice system is one of an archaic institution, where satisfaction towards access to justice seems to be at an all-time low[1], where confidence in it is steadily decreasing[2] and where it is described as being 'abysmal' in a report by the Canadian Bar Association.[3] One of the reasons put forward by Supreme Justice McLachlin is that its service is reserved to the wealthy[4], and because of this, many citizens, up to 40% of litigants[5] in Canada, end up representing themselves before the courts[6], proper representation being impossible for most. The outcome is dire, citizen needs remain unmet and dissatisfaction prevails.

Our justice system is at an inflection point. To address its challenges, we as jurists require a completely new set of skills than what was required even 15 years ago. In order to adequately prepare jurists, law schools require a clear vision of what is to come and of what is required in terms of legal education so that students are adequately prepared for that future. Of course, there has been much debate on the direction legal education 'should' take. In fact, an entire journal devotes its content to issues in legal education (Journal of Legal Education). It comes as no surprise that the way the curriculum is currently being presented to law students seems to be failing its mandated purposes, at least in theory, where, even clearly defining the vocation of law schools seems arduous. We wonder then, which direction legal education reform should take. In this paper, we posit that the direction legal education reform takes should have an impact in such ways that it facilitates the access to justice while improving the image society has towards our legal system, which stands as a pillar of a just, democratic yet modern society. It will be argued that legal education reform based on a framework focused on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, such as mediation, aligned with other people-oriented and critical skill sets are not only useful but also deemed necessary for the betterment of our justice system as a whole. This is not to say that the vocation of a law school needs to take on a purely skills based orientation over a knowledge based curriculum, but rather, that the skills training law schools provide, should be aligned with not only what will make a jurist a better lawyer, but also with elements that foster in lawyers, interest to enact positive change. In order to support this premise, we will first illustrate the growing dissatisfaction with our justice system, identifying potential root causes for its

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[1] « Study Finds Canadians Have Little Confidence in our Justice System », CBC (17 February 2014), online : < http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/study-finds-canadians-have-little-confidence-in-justice-system-1.1689727>.

[2] Julian Roberts, *Public Confidence in Criminal Justice: A Review of Recent Trends (2004-2005)* (report prepared for Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada, 2004); see also, www.angus-reid.com/polls/47831/most-canadians-dissatis ed- with-the-state-of-the-justice-system/; and www.angus-reid.com/polls/48758/british-columbians-dissatis ed- with-current-state-of-justice-system/.

[3] Canadian Bar Association, Reaching *Equal Justice: An Invitation to Envision and Act- Final Report* (Ottawa: CBA, Nov 2013), online at: <http://www.cba.org/CBAMediaLibrary/cba_na/images/Equal%20Justice%20-%20Microsite/PDFs/EqualJusticeFinalReport-eng.pdf>.

[4] The honourable Beverley McLachlin, C.P, "Les défis auxquels nous faisons face", conference delivered before the Empire Club of Canada Toronto, in Toronto, March 8, 2007, online: Supreme Court of Canada http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca/court-cour/judges/spe-dis/bm-2007-03-08.3ng.aspxn.

[5] Ontario Bar Association, *Getting It Right: The Report of the Ontario Bar Association Justice Stakeholder Summit* (Toronto: OBA, 2007), online at < http://www.oba.org/en/pdf/Justice%20Summit_sml.pdf>, at 8.

[6] The honourable Beverley McLachlin, C.P, "Self-representation creating chaos in courts: chief justice", *Canadian Bar Associations annual conference*, delivered in St.John's NL, August 2006, online: CBC NEWS <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/self-representation-creating-chaos-in-coursts-chief-justice-1.586871>.

failures, which legal education does not generally currently address. Following, we'll assess the status of legal education as it stands. Finally, we'll propose reform recommendations and argumentation to the effect that what we advance is deemed necessary for the betterment of legal education, and our legal system as a whole.

1. The State of the Justice System

To start, let's explore some issues that affect the image of our justice system. We'll address the themes of marginalization, distrust, costs and delays, and finally, we'll explore challenges that arise in a globalization context.

I. Marginalization- Lack of Knowledge and Compassion

While most will acknowledge that the law provides rights and protections, many feel that these are not easily accessible. Barriers such as literacy and language, disabilities, education and racial discrimination all play a role in making access to justice appear seemingly inaccessible. A general lack of knowledge is the greatest hurdle to enforcing rights, and that is without mentioning the emotional stress that ensues while attempting to navigate through the legal system. When members of marginalized groups do seek legal avenues, often, there is a general sentiment that they are being misunderstood, rushed and dismissed. A sentiment where their right to be heard feels annihilated prevails.[7] In the Canadian Bar Association Report, a clear finding establishes that the system is ignorant "of the social and personal realities of people living in marginalized conditions", which has a "multiplying and spiraling effect".[8] In parallel, following a series of public consultations, the findings documented in the Ontario Bar Association Report[9] indicate that the lack of compassion from legal professionals is recurring. From these affirmations, we can infer that some legal professionals are lacking personable skills, where, unfamiliarity with the realities of marginalized people reinforces the dichotomy that exists between those that *have* and those that's *don't*, we'll call them the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. This accentuates general dissatisfaction with the system as a whole seeing that lawyers are often the first, if not the only interaction individuals have with the justice system. Dissatisfaction with ones' lawyer thus translates to dissatisfaction with the justice system. It is not for nothing that lawyers are often depicted as 'sharks', in a 'eat or be eaten' environment. The inability of some lawyers to demonstrate empathy, or at least, some form of understanding of their client's reality is detrimental to our system's reputation. Pop culture, media and movies accentuate the paradigm of the statuesque lawyer; cold, calculating, 'think like a lawyer", out-to-win-go-getter ideal, making it difficult for society to move away from this image associated with the profession. This, supplemented with a, or several negative personal experiences contribute to creating lasting negative impressions held by dissatisfied clients and casts a shadow on our legal system.

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[7] *Supra,* note 3.
[8] L.T. Doust, *Foundation for Change: Report of the Public Commission on Legal Aid in British Columbia* (Vancouver: March 2011), at 21.
[9] *Supra*, note 5.

II. Complexity of the System, Costs and Delays

It is generally accepted that navigating the legal system is expensive and complex for most people. The cost of hiring legal representation is a main reason for self-representation. The very complexity of the legal system creates incredible delays. For instance, citizens at times attend court multiple times for adjournments and court appearances, often waiting months, if not years, considering slowed judicial (judge) appointments. After, lack of information and a general lack of guidance ultimately slows the judicial process, adding to the institutional delays, creating consequences, sometimes, to the extent of compromising justiciable rights, leading to distrust in the system.

III. Distrust

Again, following public consultations, the aforementioned Ontario Bar Association Report[10] illustrates common perceptions of distrust groups hold towards our justice system. To illustrate, here are a few quotes from the report, for instance, an Aboriginal woman from Saskatoon claims "If you believe in the system and think it will help you, you'll get burned", while another says, "Justice is to protect us, not abuse us. It has been used to overpower or manipulate us". A domestic violence survivor says she feels "intimidated and bullied by the legal system". To make matters worse, the report also suggests that when a citizen is finally granted a remedy, even this outcome can appear to be untrustworthy. For instance, as quoted, "women in particular reported enduring the delay, frustration and trauma of family courts only to obtain an order that was meaningless, as not enforced."[11] These are just a few examples illustrating the tenor of the message heard through consultations, where, distrust in the system is a prevalent theme.

IV. Globalization

Canada's demography is continuously growing more ethnically diverse, and given the context where borders are prominently inexistent, where practitioners skip from one jurisdiction to the next; from one field of law to another, where diverging political, social and economic implications differ- globalization makes it difficult to clearly define what law actually is or at least- how law education should be reformed in order to address such challenges.[12] Also, globalization, giving rise to potential religious and cultural differences, can lead to conflicts within legal interactions where a lack of familiarity with diverging approaches resonate. Furthermore, as Harry Arthurs argues, given the prevailing context of diversity, large law firms rely on meritocracy as a recruiting policy. This means, the advancement within such law firms is based on merit only. Now, there is nothing wrong with this at face value, but when we take a closer look, we come to understand that meritocracy has implications for law schools, where, jurists graduating from those law schools offering specific practical curriculums, will access "the most coveted opportunities the profession has to offer".[13] In other words, law faculties producing

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[10] *Supra,* note 5.
[11] *Supra,* note 5, at 20.
[12] Lewis Z. Schlosser, et al., "Multicultural Issues in Graduate Advising Relationships" (2011) 38:1 Journal of Career Development 19; Deborah Maranville et al, *Building on Best Practices: Transforming Legal Education in a Changing World* (New Providence, LexisNexis, 2015).
[13] Harry Arthurs, "The Future of Legal Education: Three Visions and a Prediction" (2013) Osgoode Hall Law School – 49 Research Paper Series.

"ready-for-practice" lawyers through a practical curriculum will see their alumni accede to favourable positions, casting a positive outlook on their program, favouring application standings and funding. In short, this does little to encourage innovation and challenge of the status quo. Such findings undoubtedly impact or rather influence the course offerings within law faculties, notably, within those that are more skills-based oriented. Arthurs further argues that "the future of law schools, […] and the future of law as a profession, social institution and intellectual discipline — depends on who controls knowledge."[14] This can be problematic in itself and would make for an interesting analysis, but for the purposes of this paper, we will not dwell on the issue further but note it is to be considered.

Let us now look at how legal education addresses key challenges our justice system faces.

2. Legal Education Reform Challenges

I. Legal Education: Knowledge versus skills?

Looking back to the mid-fifties, Paul C. Weiler describes his legal education curriculum as being "rigidly prescribed […], consisting of basic courses in the traditional areas of law […], taught by active **practitioners**."[15] The purpose of law schools was to teach students how to 'think like lawyers', meaning to develop their legal grounding where competitive currents and an "out to win" undertone is prominent. Ultimately, getting students to think like lawyers meant to produce "practice-ready lawyers"[16] and this was achieved principally through the case method pedagogy, now largely contested,[17] where the stoic professor would stand as an authority figure before his students. Weiler then describes the changes in legal education over a 25-year span as a 'transformation,[18] where, law is being taught mainly by **professors**, and not almost solely by practicing lawyers; where the curriculum is varied and where the student is not "just a passive recipient of someone else's views"[19], but rather, an individual capable of gaining knowledge through intellectual exchanges with his professor[20]. These changes have stirred rumblings in the realm of practice where, members of the bar feel that some lawyers are ill-prepared to confront challenges when it comes to practicing law. While some advance that legal education should better prepare the student for legal practice, others, claim it should appeal to the student's critical sense in order to develop his or her legal ethical judgment instead.[21] Suffice to say, the academy of legal education and the profession are at odds. Therein lies the dichotomy practice and theory; between skills and knowledge training.

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[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Paul C. Weiler, "Past and Future in Canadian Legal Education: Personal Reflections" in Neil Gold *ed*, *Essays on Legal Education: Centre for Studies in Canadian Legal Education* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1982) at 1-8.
[16] *Supra,* note 13.
[17] *Supra,* note 14.
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] Fabien Gélinas et al, *Foundations of Civil Justice: Toward a Value-Based Framework for Reform* (Cham: Springer, 2015), at 58-60.

Despite continuous changes, or dare we say 'improvements' to legal education, there remains criticism towards law schools attempting to offer a balanced critical-knowledge and practice oriented curriculum, where, by the end of the third year of the program, even the archetypal activist, social-justice oriented students seem to have adopted the skills-based, practical mould, "actively shaping their identities and ideologies to conform to status quo expectations".[22] In turn, these students finally display less enthusiasm towards the promotion of social justice interests.[23] In other words, law schools homogenize the views of their students where, it appears that becoming a lawyer loses its vocational dimension, in exchange for one with a characteristically more professional tenor.[24] Leaning towards a more skills-based curriculum is likely what produces lawyers incapable of demonstrating empathy, lawyers that cast an unfavourable impression of the profession and our legal system. On the contrary, leaning towards a critical-knowledge based curriculum risks limiting the competence of practicing jurists. Where is the middle ground?

This persistent divergence between the idea that the role of a law school is to prepare students for practice rather than critical and ethical thinking, or rather, the conflict between teaching 'knowledge', rather than a skills-based curriculum, is a fundamental issue raised by both practitioners and academics. Generally speaking, although we've come a long way from when the case method was the pedagogical ideal used by the most prominent law schools[25], there does not appear to be a consensus today as to the ideal legal pedagogical framework that should be used. We're not even sure exactly what needs to be changed, only that the status quo needs to be challenged. On the one hand, law schools require a pristine vision of the future and what is required to address the changes to come. Today's jurists must absolutely be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. They are expected to not only know the law, but also seek to understand their client's business and what it requires. They have to commit to delivering law services differently by thinking in terms of innovation, technology, creativity, imagination; in other words, to delivering value to the client in ways that are faster, easier, cheaper; yet better. But this is insufficient. Jurists have to become 'agents of change'.[26] How can lawyers be trained to deliver all that precedes, in a most humane way while assuring that they are simultaneously sufficiently prepared for practice? To accomplish this, a practical curriculum is most definitely necessary, but is certainly insufficient. Tomorrow's jurists should be 'architects of society'.[27] Ultimately, we posit that legal education reform should be aligned with the reform our justice system urgently requires. This is key to instilling changes inline with the objectives of making justice accessible to all.

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[22] Buhler, "Journeys to 20th Street: The Inner City as Critical Pedagogical Space for Legal Eduation (2009) 32 Dalhousie, L.J 381 at 394.
[23] *Ibid.*
[24] *Ibid.*
[25] James R. Maxeiner, "Educating Lawyers Now and Then: Two Carnegie Critiques of the Common Law and the Case Method" (2007) 35:1 Intl J Legal Information 1 at 1, 19-46.
[26] Thomas S. Popkewitz & Marie Brennan, "Restructuring of Social and Political Theory in Education: Foucault and a Social Epistemology of School Practices" in Thomas S. Popkewitz & Marie Brennan eds, *Foucault's Challenge: Discourse, Knowledge, and Power in Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1998) at 3-12.
[27] John Willis, "What I Like and What I Don't Like About Lawyers: A Convocation Address" (1969) 76 Queen's Quarterly 1.

II. Legal Education: Hybridity

Identifying root issues with our legal system helps identify the direction legal education reform must take. It follows that legal education should be aligned with the changes our system urgently requires. Our system needs to be accessible. It needs able lawyers, competent in law, but also in human interactions. It requires that jurists have a mind for reform, enacting change when desirable and possible. Most of all, it needs lawyer citizens, sensitive to client needs, be they business oriented, or socially inclined.

To address the opposing curriculum offered by laws schools, practical versus critical-academic, as well as the requirements of the lawyer of the future, a hybrid system is proposed. Law schools should teach students to think for themselves, and they should disperse lessons in law as a proper academic discipline, apart from a professional one. This said, law schools cannot be disconnected from the realm of practice either. The fact of the matter is, those who want to practice law, go to law school. This being said, let us not lose sight of the idea, as stated by Harry Arthurs, that "what lawyers need to know in order to be practice-ready varies considerably from one kind of practice to another", and that "one size of legal education will not fit all law graduates."[28] Law schools must prepare students for the practice of law by instilling in them general legal notions, but also, the people skills to foster positive relationships, likely to help salvage the image of our justice system.

Let us first look at the skills the jurist of the future requires.

a) Technology

Technology has enabled globalization, altering the market for legal services.[29] It has had a considerable impact on legal practice. Digitalization, cited by Arthurs as an example, has allowed law firms to decrease the quantity of interns they hire. The dissemination of legal information online has rendered some of the work of smaller law firms redundant. Search engines have greatly facilitated and sped up research, thus decreasing costs. In short, as Arthurs puts it "technology has expanded law's territorial reach and intellectual horizons while shrinking its market share".[30]

Technology will allow clients the option of consulting legal professionals online in the near future, let's be sure. Eventually, we can imagine the savings on costs for an increasing number of lawyers who work from home, not requiring specific office space. Lesser costs can translate into services that are more affordable for the client. Online consultations can provide clients with greater flexibility in scheduling. Moreover, these may allow working lawyer-parents to better handle the stresses of managing an acceptable work-life-family balance, thus improving work satisfaction, which can translate into better client-lawyer interactions, again, improving the perception towards the profession held by clients.

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[28] *Supra,* note 13.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] *Ibid.*

Tomorrow's jurists cannot afford to fall behind. Jurists need to stay up to date on these technological advances in order to remain competitive and law schools must take this into consideration when establishing their curriculum. Course work, research and presentations must encourage the use of accessible technological tools. At current state, these are implemented in the course work, but greater focus and time needs to be devoted to the use of such tools and platforms, and this, outside research and methodology courses. Students must be familiar and comfortable with editing and citation software.

b) Interdisciplinary and Critical Courses

With globalization, lawyers must be versed in dimensions other than law. The business world is quick-paced, forward-moving and as such, interdisciplinary knowledge is not only desirable, it is required. Businesses expect their lawyers to not only provide counsel, but also expect them to be familiar with their business and objectives. Interdisciplinary research provides a response to changing environments, getting lawyers to "think outside the box".[31] This can be achieved through many ways, such as cross-disciplinary professorial appointments within law faculties, joint degree and course offerings with a critical-perspective design in disciplines such as economics, sociology, political science, philosophy and history, to name but a few. We advance that law faculties should offer a certain amount of interdisciplinary credit courses that are mandatory for degree completion requirements. Furthermore, a set number of credits could also be devoted to such courses with a social dimension. This would be an appropriate segue to introducing the student to policy and reform skillsets. Jurists have this propensity of making realities fit our legal framework when instead, the legal realm should consider society's constantly changing needs. Adapting to these through policy reform requires that jurists be knowledgeable in non-related legal matters.[32] Offering such courses paves the way to acquiring knowledge in other fields. Such courses develop the student's critical thinking skills and broaden their perspective on various notions, perhaps (hopefully) rendering them more sensitive to human plights, such as those of marginalized people, as discussed earlier.

c) Skills for Reform

Learning law, is not- or should not- solely be about applying legal rules to given situations. Wade Channel[33] comments to this effect where, for him, those engaging in graduate studies in law, such as LL.M students, are well positioned to becoming champions of change, claiming they can make a difference through policy reform since their academic training provides them with the necessary tools to broaden their perspectives. This needs not be limited to LL.M students, where, even students at the bachelor's level can be introduced to reform. Law schools are perfect laboratories for teaching students to engage in reform where the idea of teaching students to think like a lawyer can be mutated rather to " thinking like a human being, a human being who is

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[31] *Supra,* note 13.
[32] Cheffins, Ronald I. "Legal Education at McGill: Some Problems and Proposals." *McGill LJ* 10 (1964): 126, online at : <http://lawjournal.mcgill.ca/userfiles/other/8342673-cheffins.pdf>.
[33] Wade Channel, "Making a Difference: The Role of the LL.M. in Policy Formulation and Reform" in Ronal A. Brand & D Wes Rist eds, *The Export of Legal Education: Its Promise and Impact in Transition Countries* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009) 13.

tolerant, sophisticated, pragmatic, and engaged."[34]

The law school curriculum should offer a practical course on reform, where legislation in a given area of social justice is dissected and then reconstructed with improvements, following a critical research of the given subject matter. The research portion confronts the student with a subject within the realm of social justice, whilst the reconstruction portion of the legislation aims at honing legal redaction skills of students. We can imagine this being completed as a group project, offering students the opportunity to create a new product through collaboration, a skill that can definitely be put to good use in practice. The finished project would need to be presented for adoption, thus, the development of oral skills through debate would also be an objective for such a course. Alternatively, law schools could offer regulating bodies their services, where, committees composed of law students, championed by tenured law professors would actually engage in research and provide recommendations for actual legal reform. Again, legal redaction skills and research skills would be targeted areas of assessment. Introducing students to such types of practical and critical courses can have a lasting impact where, as practicing lawyers, they may themselves feel the pull towards engaging in real reform. Now, the student who engages in reform, should also be introduced to aspects of comparative law.

d) Comparative skillsets

We should aim at understanding other legal traditions[35]. Channel argues that LL.M students are best suited to enact reform since they are usually familiar with other legal systems, aside than their own, and that through comparative work, LL.M students gain a broadened perspective on how things can be done. Channel posits that understanding domestic and foreign legal systems engage students to become agents of hope,[36] being familiar with different ways of *doing things*. Students at the bachelor's level could be introduced through a research project, to comparative analysis between legal regimes related to a social or critical dimension of an area of law. This would promote the assimilation of transferable skills necessary for any type of legal career. Also, by acquainting students to foreign systems, it raises sensitivity and responsiveness towards ethnic and cultural differences, attenuating difficulties that abound in multi-cultural or religious-related areas of practice. Studying abroad also provides the opportunity to gain perspective and student exchanges should continue to be encouraged, for credit.

e) Clinical Work

Through student participation in community legal clinics, dominant notions of privilege can be broken down where the clinician-student is forced to interact with clients, which are often issued of marginalized communities. Experiencing such interactions can help break down stereotypes and preconceptions held by the student. Prior course work addressing such issues can also benefit the process, where, by the time the student is a practicing lawyer, such barriers will have been broken down, leaving only a jurist more capable of demonstrating empathy rather than apathy.

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[34] *Ibid.*
[35] H. Patrick Glenn, *Legal Traditions of the World,* 5th ed. (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2014).
[36] *Supra,* note 29.

We recommend that all students follow a practical clinical course where, students are taught through role play, observation and feedback on techniques to better interact during client-clinician interactions. This would be done under the supervision of tenured professors who would engage in providing feedback, applicable in practice. Following this course, the student would then participate in a legal clinic, providing him or her with the opportunity of applying legal notions acquired to practical cases, all the while providing legal services to marginalized individuals and or communities.

3. A framework Based on Alternative Dispute Resolution

Comparative-critical-perspective course work will broaden students' perspective of the world. Clinical work will provide empathy-creating opportunities, breaking down barriers and stereotypes towards marginalized people. Innovations in technology will ease and speed up the legal process, rendering it more effective at fewer costs. These innovations within legal education can certainly foster positive change within our legal system, however, because these suggestions are all but new, they remain insufficient in restoring the system's noble appearance.

I. Alternative Dispute Resolution

In the text, "In Their Own Words, How Ordinary People Construct the Legal World",[37] Marshall and Barclay advance that changing the scope of what is believed to be the legal profession by those practicing it, for example, by adopting a mediating-focused approach rather than an adversarial attitude towards the practice of law, will have a direct impact on the public's view of our justice system. In other words, how lawyers perceive lawyers to be, ultimately influences how society views lawyers. The first step is thus shaping the view students have of the legal profession. Previously stated recommendations all work to achieve this purpose. Next, lawyers in practice must also forgo the image of a 'shark' that they have when thinking of their own. The way they practice is key.

Recommendations for greater use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms strive to make our justice system more accessible. For example, here in Quebec, legislation imposes an obligation on prospective litigants to take steps to resolve their dispute before going to court in certain areas of law. The direct impact is that fewer litigants actually make it to the courtroom to 'battle-it-out' before a judge. Decreasing the docket load directly impacts the speed at which cases can be heard, improving delays, a common deterrent to the public's view of our legal system. The process is easier, less adversarial and cheaper. What follows is a decrease in stress and negative feelings aimed towards the judicial process – again – likely improving the view of our justice system garnered by potential litigants.

Previous recommendations are all relevant to ADR skill building. The open-minded student, engaged in reform, capable of having a broad view on a given matter, open to seeing how things can be done or achieved differently, capable of finding solutions through negotiating by

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[37] A.M Marshall and S. Barclay, In Their Own Words, How Ordinary People Construct the Legal World-On Legal Consciousness", (2003) 28 Law Soc Inquiry 617.

efficiently communicating, is the ideal mediator-candidate. Having been versed in comparative analysis, reform, clinical work and interdisciplinary work, students should then follow a course on ADR techniques, having mediation as the main ADR approach studied. Students can again participate in role play, presenting mediation sessions to classmates, and gather feedback. This form of active learning also assigns the onus to the student, where he or she becomes responsible for taking ownership for his or her development. A jurist born out of a law school that offers such a curriculum that covers the recommendations in this paper, will beyond a doubt, be inclined to participate in legal reform as an agent of change throughout his or her career.

Conclusion

This paper treated of current issues our justice system is facing and how it is viewed by the public. Growing dissatisfaction is palpable and because of this, our system is in urgent need of reform. Legal education reform should align with our system's proposed reform -where- its mandate also strives to render justice more accessible. Ultimately, we advance that students should be trained to become individuals capable of demonstrating empathy towards clients, devoid of preconceptions towards marginalized people, competent in legal skills such as research, writing and oral speaking, all the while fostering interest to engagement in policy reform when possible. Finally, we suggest that the discussed recommendations will impact the way student-lawyers-to-be view the profession, in turn impacting how society views it as well (Marshall and Barclay). To bring it home, we suggest that encouraging practices falling under alternate dispute resolution mechanisms is key to improving our legal system's image. Mediation should be a skill learned in law school. Mediation, relies on basic communication skills, a desire to avoid adversary conflictual interactions and motivation to resolve a problem. If this area is given its due importance throughout the student's law school years, we can hardly conceive that once the student becomes a practicing lawyer, that he or she would all of a sudden, be swayed into an adversarial role. On the contrary, we believe that mediation skill-building will foster an empathetic view towards the profession, and this will be carried out in practice.

Nevertheless, even with all the proposed innovations, there will always be individuals that cannot afford legal services, even if they are delivered efficiently at lower costs. For this reason, we recommend that basic legal education be offered as part of a public education curriculum. Making general legal information easily accessible, or at least providing the general public with basic notions and guidance as to where information can be obtained at little or no cost, would most certainly serve to deter misconceptions and unfavourable opinions held towards our legal system. Another problem that needs addressing is the erosion of the teaching staff where it is continuously thinning, thus posing a threat to the aforementioned proposed reform. Understaffed faculties can hardly offer a curriculum that would incorporate the supervision of legal clinical courses, comparative analysis, reform service offerings, and the development of research, oral and written skills. Somewhere down the line, it must be recognized that law faculties play an important role in shaping the future of the legal profession, at least, it directly impacts the image society has towards the profession, seeing that it is the law faculty that produces the lawyer, and the lawyer is largely responsible for the opinion the public holds towards the law. Recognizing this could perhaps influence potential funding sources of law faculties, where the importance of grants provided would be considered in this light. This in turn would allow the faculties to provide its students with a rich and engaging curriculum, forming them into individuals that will build the profession, slowly re-establishing its noble appearance, where Justice once again stands as a just pillar of our society.

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