

EMBODIED NEGOTIATION: PREPARING FUTURE LAWYERS THROUGH INTEGRATIVE PRACTICE

Malin Stearns Johnson,^{*} Carolyn Wilkes Kaas,^{**}
Kara McCarthy Perry,^{***} and J. Kim Wright^{****i}

ABSTRACT

The legal profession is changing rapidly: accelerating technological change, political pressure and polarization, and a documented crisis to

^{*} Malin Stearns Johnson, JD, M.Ed., is an integrative lawyer, mediator, educator, and yoga teacher based in Missoula, Montana. As an adjunct professor at the University of Montana School of Law, she taught courses in civil procedure, employment law, legal writing, trial practice, and negotiation. After transitioning from a traditional litigation practice to an integrative law practice, she assists in teaching the well-being component of Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation Course at Quinnipiac University School of Law.

^{**} Carolyn Wilkes Kaas is a Professor of Law Emerita at Quinnipiac University School of Law. Until her retirement, she was the Associate Dean of Experiential Education, and has taught law clinics, externships and several other lawyering courses over the years. She also served as the co-director of the law school's Center on Dispute Resolution and remains a Senior Fellow at the Center. She identifies as an integrative lawyer and has worked for many years on reforms to legal education and to the practice of law.

^{***} Kara McCarthy Perry is an integrative lawyer, educator, and speaker who brings together two decades of legal experience as a corporate lawyer with training as a Conscious Contracts® practitioner, yoga and meditation teacher, and coach to promote well-being and sustainability in the legal profession. She is a Senior Fellow at Quinnipiac University School of Law's Center on Dispute Resolution and an adjunct professor at Seton Hall University School of Law. She is also the founder of Just Brilliant LLC, an organization dedicated to advancing well-being and values-based leadership in law and beyond. *See* JUST BRILLIANT, <https://www.justbrilliantlife.com/> [<https://perma.cc/Q2LH-T7MH>] (last visited Dec. 15, 2025).

^{****} J. Kim Wright is a Senior Fellow at Quinnipiac University School of Law's Center on Dispute Resolution and a central figure in the Integrative Law Movement. She co-created the Conscious Contracts® process and supports a network of practitioners doing business in 21 languages. A practicing lawyer, coach, and consultant; Kim integrates values-based, relational approaches into law practice, negotiation, and conflict resolution. She is the author or co-editor of three American Bar Association (ABA) books and contributor to numerous publications. *See* J. KIM WRIGHT, <https://jkimwright.com/> [<https://perma.cc/6SHQ-9N3Q>] (last visited Dec. 15, 2025).

i. The authors gratefully acknowledge the use of OpenAI's ChatGPT for grammar and sentence refinement. All content was reviewed and finalized by the authors. In addition, they thank their students for allowing them to share their insights and work. The authors also thank past faculty co-instructors of the course and the companion negotiation clinic, including Jacqueline Horani, Debra Norwood, Rhiannon Thomas, and Nicole Kopping-Pavars, as well as the many guest lecturers who have enriched the lessons over the years.

lawyer well-being. Legal pedagogy must prepare future lawyers for the uncertain world that lies before them. Gone are the days where educators must rely on doctrines and skills alone. There must be a shift in priority – we must foster human-centered capacities essential for these times of uncertainty.

This article introduces the Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation course, a course designed to frame negotiation as a relational, values-based practice with a real-world application that supports students in developing their presence, empathy, and well-being. Fit with well-being plans, reflection essays and weekly journals, group assessments, the course provides students an opportunity to develop and improve their professional identity while continuously evaluating their well-being. The program has also evolved to address the changing American Bar Association (“ABA”) guidelines for legal education, the continuing development and proliferation of AI, and current threats to democratic institutions. As the world and legal industry changes, this course aims to meet those changes, and foster student growth, head on.

INTRODUCTION

How do we prepare law students for both the known challenges of legal practice and the unknown ones that lie ahead? As the legal profession faces escalating stressors—from political polarization and threats to the rule of law, to accelerating technological change and a documented crisis in lawyer well-being—legal educators must do more than teach doctrine and skills. We must foster human-centered capacities essential for navigating complex systematic change, building trust, and upholding justice in times of uncertainty.

What are the skills for a good lawyer now and how can we prepare law students for developing those skills for their futures? What makes a good lawyer and a good person?¹ These fundamental questions drive our work teaching the Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation course.

1. See, e.g., James E. Moliterno, *A Good Lawyer and a Good Person*, 43 WM. & MARY L. REV. i. (2001) (evaluates the importance of being whole lawyers and good character in the practice of law); see also ALLI GERKMAN & LOGAN CORNETT, FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE: THE WHOLE LAWYER AND THE CHARACTER QUOTIENT 2 (2016), https://iaals.du.edu/sites/default/files/documents/publications/foundations_for_practice_whole_lawyer_character_quotient.pdf [<https://perma.cc/5VPJ-UFCE>].

Negotiation, traditionally taught as a technical skill, offers a powerful opportunity to meet this call. We approach negotiation not just as tactics or strategies, but as a way of being. Rooted in the integrative paradigm, our course explores negotiation as relational, values-based practices that draw on interdisciplinary tools, somatic learning, reflective inquiry, and real-world application to support students in developing the presence, empathy, and clarity needed to thrive in modern legal contexts.

Our program has evolved in response to four interrelated challenges that define the current moment in legal education and practice: the profession's well-being crisis, evolving American Bar Association ("ABA") guidelines for legal education, threats to democratic institutions and the rule of law, and the transformative influence of artificial intelligence on legal practice.

I. EVOLUTION SINCE 2020

In 2023, we published an article in the *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* titled "Teaching from the Integrative Paradigm: The Negotiation Clinic at Quinnipiac University School of Law."² The article introduced a values-based and relational approach to negotiation through the lens of integrative law. It centered on teaching an innovative transactional clinical course that framed negotiation as a relational and identity-shaping process. Rather than relying on hypotheticals, students engaged in real negotiations—with peers, professors, and themselves—building presence, self-awareness, and ethical clarity through lived experience.

The course invited students to explore negotiation not just as a legal skill, but as a personal and professional practice. Grounded in the Conscious Contracts® approach,³ students reflected on their purpose, values, and vision—and learned to bring that self-awareness into their work with

2. See generally Jacqueline Horani et al., *Teaching from the Integrative Paradigm: The Negotiation Clinic at Quinnipiac University School of Law*, 70 WASH. U. J.L. & POL'Y 121 (2023).

3. CONSCIOUS CONTRACTS® is a trademark for an integrative law model of contracts. It focuses on a process of contract formation that emphasizes relationality. See generally *Conscious Contracts®*, CONSCIOUS CONTRS., <https://consciouscontracts.com/> [<https://perma.cc/EP6P-64AA>] (last visited Sep. 27, 2025). Integrative law represents a shift in how law is practiced and understood, focusing on collaboration, holistic approaches, and healing rather than just resolving disputes through traditional adversarial methods. See *Integrative Law*, INTEGRATIVE L. MOVEMENT, <https://www.integrativelaw.com/what-is-integrative-law/> [<https://perma.cc/N8Y3-9BYX>] (last visited Sep. 27, 2025).

clients.⁴ Rather than relying on adversarial tactics,⁵ they practiced negotiation as a collaborative process rooted in clarity, emotional intelligence, and presence. Through journaling, experiential exercises, and group work, students examined their own habits regarding conflict and power, beginning to redefine what it means to be “effective” in lawyering.⁶ The article offered a hopeful vision: that negotiation training could serve as a gateway to more humane, values-aligned law practice. It positioned the clinic as a laboratory for reimagining the role of the lawyer—not just as an advocate or dealmaker, but as a bridge-builder, guide, and collaborator.⁷

Since that publication, the legal landscape has continued to evolve—with increasing calls for reform, growing awareness of lawyer well-being, and the disruptive rise of generative AI. Meanwhile, our course has matured in content, structure, and scope. What began as a bold experiment has become a replicable model.

A. Structural Evolution

The original course was offered as a 3-credit hour summer clinic with both a seminar and casework. Over time, the course evolved from a clinic into a sequenced, two-semester experience that fosters greater depth and

4. Students are assigned a detailed workbook with exercises and journaling about each of the headings. They may choose to use the headings or to create their own expression.

5. We recognize that many traditional negotiation classes teach interest-based negotiation and that we are not alone in teaching law students alternatives to adversarial negotiation. HOW we do it is different.

6. Calls to reimagine what “effective lawyering” means and to transform legal education to better prepare law students for the practice of law have been topics of scholarly and professional inquiry for decades. *See, e.g.*, ROBERT MACCRATE ET AL., LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT — AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM 5 (Am. Bar Ass’n ed. 1992); *see also* WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW 4 (2007). For a history on how American legal education evolved from an apprentice system to Christopher Columbus Langdell’s caselaw system (often referred to as the Langdell or Harvard System), *see* Peter A. Joy, *The Uneasy History of Experiential Education in U.S. Law Schools*, 122 DICK. L. REV. 551, 552–57 (2018); *see also* Jerome Frank, *Why Not a Clinical Lawyer-School?*, 81 U. PA. L. REV. 907, 909 (1933).

7. *See* Horani et al., *supra* note 2, at 125 (explaining a fundamental principle of dispute resolution courses is “to embrace the notion that peacemakers and problem-solving lawyers are equivalent to doctors who practice preventive medicine” recognizing, however, that “[t]hey are overshadowed by surgeons, in the same way that problem-solving lawyers can be overshadowed by litigators.” (citing MARY ANN GLENDON, A NATION UNDER LAWYERS: HOW THE CRISIS IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION IS TRANSFORMING AMERICAN SOCIETY 107 (1994))). *See also* SULLIVAN ET AL., *supra* note 6, at 4 (supporting a more integrative, human-centered approach to legal education noting that it could “benefit from the approaches used in education of physicians, teachers, nurses, engineers and clergy, as well as from research on learning”).

mastery. It now begins with a 3-credit experiential simulation course⁸ focused on negotiation theory and integrative practices. If students choose, they can then take the 3-credit law clinic to apply their learning with clients. This structural redesign creates space for students to integrate their insights over time rather than rushing through them in a single semester without sufficient time to work with clients. Additionally, increasing the pre-requisite course from two to three credits (and weekly classroom hours) provides more room to intentionally incorporate well-being practices and embodied exercises. These structural changes reflect our commitment to creating an educational environment that supports transformation—not just information.

B. Enhanced Assessment Models

Our assessment approach aligns with experiential course standards but goes further with an emphasis on reflection and professional identity. Instead of an assessment via a single final exam or paper, students engage in layered evaluations—peer feedback, self-assessment, and ongoing reflection—building a fuller picture of their growth. Our learning outcomes align with ABA standards on identity formation and programmatic assessment.

A distinctive feature is our “negotiated grade” system, where students co-create their workload and propose a final grade based on demonstrated integrity and accountability.⁹ Most students contract for an A, though a few fall short of their own benchmarks. In those cases, disappointment becomes a chance for reflection and continued negotiation, rather than a challenge to the instructor—reinforcing self-responsibility and internal growth.

II. CORE COMPONENTS

The course is structured around a series of assignments designed to support students’ personal and professional development. Assignments

8. The simulation course was originally offered for two credits and increased to three.

9. For examples and discussions of alternative grading approaches, see generally David M. Kaplan & Monika K. Renard, *Negotiating Your Syllabus: Building a Collaborative Contract*, 39 J. MGMT. EDUC. 400 (2015); see generally also Kristina Meinking & Eric E. Hall, *Letting Go of Grades: Creating an Environment of Autonomy and a Focus on Learning for High Achieving Students*, 10 TEACHING & LEARNING INQUIRY 11 (2022).

emphasize reflection, collaboration, and embodied learning, offering practical tools aligned with the course's relational and values-based philosophy. We do not teach negotiation through hypotheticals and fact patterns. Instead, students negotiate in real time with each other to create projects, with professors about assignments and grades, and within themselves as they engage in personal identity and reflective work.

Much like the ongoing responsibilities, shifting priorities, and evolving client needs that lawyers must navigate, the course structure reflects realities of legal practice. Students learn to collaborate and build skills in ways that mirror the complexity of real-world legal work while also maintaining a habit of reflection. This approach supports the implementation of ABA Standard 303(b)(3), which calls for substantial opportunities to support the development of professional identity.¹⁰

A. Individual Assignments & Activities

1. **Check-ins.** To foster self-awareness and build a supportive learning community, we begin class with a check-in ritual. We use two models: PIES¹¹, where students reflect on their **Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, and Spiritual** well-being, and the **Weather Metaphor**,¹² where students describe their internal state

10. STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROC. FOR APPROVAL OF L. SCHS. § 303(b)(3) (A.B.A. 2024) [hereinafter ABA Standards], https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2024-2025/2024-2025-standards-and-rules-for-approval-of-law-schools.pdf [https://perma.cc/RS9Z-BJZ2].

11. In 2022, South African lawyer Rhiannon Thomas was a co-teacher for the class. She introduced the PIES check-in as a tool from her women's circle. While no single source for the practice was identified, PIES check-ins are used in a variety of other settings. *Build Your Resilience with the PIES Framework*, OCM ENABLE (2022), <https://www.theocm.co.uk/sites/default/files/2022-01/ENABLE-%20Resilience%20PIES.pdf> [https://perma.cc/ED9T-T6YL] (describing use of the PIES framework as a tool for building resilience) (last visited Sep. 29, 2025); *POLITICAL HEALERS PIES PRACTICE*, POL. HEALERS PROJECT, <https://www.politicalhealers.org/pies> [https://perma.cc/75TK-74S2] (last visited Sep. 29, 2025) ("PIES is a practice of listening and encountering one another such that we allow ours and others' holistic selves to show up in the space . . . a tool for creating spaces of validation within our work and in our engagements with one another."); CITY OF PHILA. DEP'T OF BEHAV. HEALTH & INTELL. DISABILITY SERVS., P.I.E.S. INTERVENTION CHECK-IN (2020), <https://dbhids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NNRV-PIES.pdf> [https://perma.cc/K68U-QSQ7] (describing PIES check-in as "the intervention best suited for frontline workers" during the COVID-19 pandemic).

12. *See Want Team Unity? Try a Weather Report*, CRAFTED LEADERSHIP (July 23, 2020), <https://craftedleadership.com/blog/want-team-unity-try-a-weather-report/> [https://perma.cc/V636-

using metaphors like “clear skies,” “scattered storms, or “tornado warning.”

2. **Touchstone.** A component of the Conscious Contracts® process, the Touchstone is a personal statement articulating each student’s vision, mission, values, and principles.¹³ The Touchstone offers a compass for guiding the student’s decisions and forms the foundation for collaboration and negotiation.
3. **Operating Manual for Me.** Students create comprehensive self-assessments using tools such as the Enneagram, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, or similar frameworks. While these assessments are not presented as scientific or definitive, they offer a shared language for exploring personal tendencies, communication styles, and stress responses. Using these frameworks, students gain insight into their own patterns and develop appreciation for the differences among their peers. This creates a foundation for deeper collaboration, empathy, and self-awareness.
4. **Book Reports (Written & Oral).** Students choose from a list featuring diverse authors such as adrienne maree brown, Donna Hicks, and others whose work spans systems thinking, trauma-informed practice, narrative theory, and interdisciplinary perspectives on identity, justice, and leadership. This assignment supports student autonomy by allowing each student to select a book that resonates with the student’s interests and learning goals. While we have considered removing the book report to lighten workload, students consistently advocate for keeping it, often describing the experience of reading a non-textbook as both meaningful and refreshing. Oral reports are assigned

VB27] (attributing the internal weather check-in, which is “a quick method for sharing one’s internal state with neutral language for the purpose of connection,” to psychologist Julie Colwell).

13. CONSCIOUS CONTS., *supra* note 3.

throughout the semester, matching book reports to class content.

5. **Weekly Journals.** Journals include reflective writing assignments, which are often tied to course themes or specific prompts about well-being, identity, and integrative law.
6. **Wheel of Life.** The Wheel of Life is a self-evaluation exercise done monthly to track personal well-being across various domains of life. It is a coaching tool that offers a quick way to measure how balanced one's life is.¹⁴ Balance is not something to achieve once and then forget—it is an ongoing process of leaning first one way, then the other, like riding a bicycle. We do not grade on whether the student's wheel is balanced, only whether the student did the work.
7. **Well-Being Plan.** At semester's end, students submit a plan, synthesizing what they've learned through weekly well-being experiments and setting out plans for maintaining well-being during law school and beyond.
8. **Final Reflective Essay.** As their final assignment, each student writes a reflection summarizing their accomplishments, challenges, growth throughout the course, and feedback for instructors.
9. **Timekeeping.** Surprisingly, one of the hardest assignments for many students is completing weekly timesheets documenting hours spent on course and clinical work. Timesheets ensure compliance with the ABA requirement that experiential courses include sufficient work to satisfy the credit hour definition (approximately 45 hours of total work per credit, i.e.,

14. See Una Byrne, *The Wheel of Life: Effective Steps for Stress Management*, 64 HEALTH EDUC. J. 45, 45–47 (2005).

150-170 hours for a 3-4 credit course)¹⁵ and introduce a practice skill.

10. **Class Participation.** Class participation is an essential component of the course and is evaluated based on: engagement in discussions, quality of contributions, willingness to receive and apply feedback (coachability), preparation for class activities, and emotional intelligence. Because this course is online, students are expected to have their cameras on to support connection in the virtual classroom. Students are expected to be present not only physically, but also mentally and emotionally. Attendance and meaningful participation are vital to creating a collaborative learning environment; absences, lack of engagement, or turning off cameras without prior communication may negatively affect a student's grade.¹⁶

B. Group Assignments

Halfway through the semester, our focus shifts from individual work to group work. Students integrate their Touchstones and Operating Manuals into group assignments as they form their "law firms" or teams.

1. **Class ACED (Addressing Change and Engaging in Disagreement).** A key component of the Conscious Contracts® process, ACED is a customized recipe for Addressing Change and Engaging in Disagreement.¹⁷ This unique framework teaches students how to navigate conflict relationally and proactively. Students design systems for handling change, tension, and

15. ABA Standards, *supra* note 10, §§ 303(a)(3), 304, 310(b)(1) (defining a credit hour as one hour of classroom instruction and two hours of out-of-class work per week for fifteen weeks; thus a 3–4 credit experiential course typically requires 150–170 total hours of student work).

16. We discuss the differences in participation as introverts and extroverts and often include the book by SUSAN CAIN, *QUIET: THE POWER OF INTROVERTS IN A WORLD THAT CAN'T STOP TALKING* (1st ed. 2012) on the book report list; or TED, *The power of introverts* (YouTube, Mar. 2, 2012), <https://youtu.be/c0KYU2j0TM4?si=V2aGgPLtQy6klx7K> [<https://perma.cc/Q2QS-UK9P>].

17. CONSCIOUS CONTS., *supra* note 3.

disagreement in peer and future client relationships. It emphasizes communication agreements, recognition of emotional and somatic signals, and iterative reflection.¹⁸

2. **Group Conscious Contracts® Agreement.** Each team creates a contract including all the components of the Conscious Contracts® process: Touchstone, Operating Manuals, ACED, and Action Plan, using plain language and visual design. Similar to the Individual Touchstone, the Group Touchstone sets forth the vision, mission, and values of the group. The Group Operating Manual defines how the group will work together. Each group also creates its own, more bespoke, ACED to set forth how the group will address change and engage disagreement. During most semesters, students get an opportunity to practice the framework through real-time team tension as they negotiate their final projects. When students struggle to fully engage due to competing priorities, ACED is a real-time opportunity for resolving conflict. ACED reinforces that conflict is not a failure but an invitation to deepen trust and re-align around shared purpose. Finally, each group creates an Action Plan setting forth its terms, promises, and plans for group work.
3. **Multimedia Group Project.** Historically, we have assigned a different project each semester. But all

18. The syllabus requires professors and students to follow the ACED process to address issues and conflicts that may arise throughout the course, specifically providing:

In your personal and professional life, you'll often have the opportunity to have to address conflict. This is probably one of the safest places where you can practice and learn these skills, so we're asking you to do so and then notice what comes up. We support your success and will work with you to build the skills you need to be a successful lawyer. We won't, however, work harder than you do . . . If at any point, you are not meeting expectations, we will request a meeting with you to discuss what actions might be necessary to preserve or restore your chosen grade.

J. Kim Wright et al., Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation Course Syllabus Fall 2024 16 (2024) (on file with the *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*).

- projects are visually engaging and suitable for publication or resumes. At semester's end, students invite people from their lives (e.g., other professors, family, employers) to attend as audience members for presentations.
4. **Homework Summary Presentation.** The Homework Presentation assignment emerged as a practical response to a common challenge: students weren't always completing readings, which limited the depth of classroom discussion. To address this, each student signs up for a class session and delivers a 10-minute overview of assigned materials at the start of that class. This creates a consistent foundation of shared knowledge, supports peer-to-peer learning, and encourages accountability. It also gives students an opportunity to practice distilling and communicating complex ideas—a valuable skill in both negotiation and legal practice.
 5. **The Awards Ceremony.** The course concludes with an awards ceremony that honors the growth, creativity, and courage each student has demonstrated throughout the semester. More than a feel-good ending, this celebration is a powerful ritual of recognition that affirms the course's core values: dignity, belonging, and personal transformation.

III. EMBODIED PEDAGOGY

The course is grounded in the belief that professional identity formation is not a passive process—it must be nurtured through deliberate practice of self-inquiry, reflection, collaboration, and embodied experience. Assignments are not isolated; they are invitations into a rhythm of inquiry, feedback, integration, and evolution that mirrors the dynamic realities of legal practice.

A. Well-Being as Professional Foundation

Well-being has always been integral to the course, but our methods have evolved based on student feedback and experience.¹⁹ The course is intentionally structured to offer consistency and psychological safety to encourage vulnerable communication, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and intuitive decision-making.²⁰ Early iterations required students to engage in weekly well-being practices outside the classroom, logging experiments across various domains of life. We later introduced a mentor program—pairing students with Conscious Contracts® practitioners who supported both their client work and their personal development, and moved the well-being work into class time.

i. Well-Being Mentors

When the course transitioned to a two-semester sequence in 2022, the simulation course had a larger class size than previous semesters.²¹ At that time, we created small well-being groups of 3–5 students led by well-being mentors, who were volunteer lawyers with wellness expertise.²² These

19. Throughout the course, we use the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being's definition of well-being: "a continuous process whereby lawyers seek to thrive in each of the following areas: emotional health, occupational pursuits, creative or intellectual endeavors, sense of spirituality or greater purpose in life, physical health, and social connections with others." NAT'L TASK FORCE ON LAWYER WELL-BEING, THE PATH TO LAWYER WELL-BEING: PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE 9 (2017) [hereinafter NAT'L TASK FORCE], <https://lawyerwellbeing.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Lawyer-Wellbeing-Report.pdf> [https://perma.cc/7X2G-CTS2].

20. See R. A. Kusrkar et al., *Twelve Tips to Stimulate Intrinsic Motivation in Students Through Autonomy-Supportive Classroom Teaching Derived from Self-Determination Theory*, 36 MED. TCHR. 962, 979 (2012) (explaining how autonomy, competence, and relatedness support intrinsic motivation to learning, which may enhance the teacher's experience as well). One student reflected that: "A very refreshing aspect of this course was the safety of open dialogue. It is one of the few courses that provides genuine safety in disagreement with the instructor. In fact, the professors enthusiastically seek out alternative opinions and philosophies, and not just to strengthen their own."

21. The clinics were limited to ten students. The new two-semester model had 22 students in the first semester.

22. See *Meet the Mentors*, QUINNIAC SCH. OF LAW CTR. ON DISPUTE RESOLUTION, <https://www.qulawdisputeresolution.org/new-page-1> [https://perma.cc/23LW-DAZ8] (last visited June 23, 2025). Mentors volunteered additional time and resources to educate others about the initiative by speaking at national and regional legal conferences. See Kara Perry & Pearlette Ramos, *Courageous Leadership and Storytelling as a Gateway to Mental Health and Well-Being: Empowering Law Students as Healthy Future Leaders*, Presentation at the Institute For Well-Being in Law 2024 Annual Conference (Jan. 25, 2024), <https://lawyerwellbeing.net/session/courageous-leadership-and-storytelling-as-a-gateway-to-mental-health-and-well-being-empowering-law-students-as-healthy-future-leaders/>

weekly meetings in small groups provided community-building opportunities outside the classroom to discuss well-being themes,²³ explore tools and practices,²⁴ and model storytelling as a critical leadership skill.²⁵ Many students established close professional relationships with their mentors, some continuing beyond law school. Students expressed gratitude for space to share openly and honestly with their peers, which helped many realize they were not alone in dealing with issues like imposter-syndrome and perfectionism in law school.²⁶ Feedback from mentors was positive,

[<https://perma.cc/RK2M-X6MV>]; Michael Kasdan, Heather D. Horton & Kara Perry, Well-Being: A Pillar of the Integrative Law Movement, Presentation at the Integrative Law Summer Institute 2023 (Nov. 5, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CLJZ8vRV8xo> [<https://perma.cc/GY7Q-URRS5>]; Michael Kasdan, Kara Perry & Pearlette Ramos, Courageous Leadership and Storytelling as a Gateway to Mental Health and Well-Being: Empowering Law Students as Healthy Future Leaders, Presentation at the 8th Annual International Positive Psychology Association (IPPA) World Congress on Positive Psychology, <https://ippa-wc-2022.m.asnevents.com.au/schedule/conference> [<https://perma.cc/H6UK-TTU8>] (last visited Oct. 3, 2025); Heather D. Horton, Christina Loftus & Kara Perry, Mentoring and Coaching Programming: Missions to go “where no law student has gone before”, Presentation at National Association of Law Student Affairs Professionals Conference (July 2023), <https://www.nalsap.org/page/2023conf-schedule> [<https://perma.cc/SSZ2-S6QJ>]; Aubrey Davis, Carolyn Kaas, Kara Perry, Pearlette Ramos & J. Kim Wright, Interconnected Allies Springing from the Same Soil, Symposium Presentation at the ABA 25th Annual Dispute Resolution Spring Conference (May 10, 2023); Brendan R. Holt, Carolyn Kaas & Kara Perry, Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept, Is to Go Where No Clinic Has Gone Before!, Presentation at the New England Clinical Conference at Vermont Law School in South Royalton (Mar. 31, 2023).

23. Well-being topics aligned with the topics covered each week: 1. freedom and autonomy; 2. psychological well-being/happiness; 3. alignment with purpose and values; 4. emotional intelligence, mental flexibility and limiting beliefs; 5. boundaries and habits; 6. curiosity, self-discovery and healing; 7. nature, fun and play; 8. physical fitness and rest; 9. communication and problem-solving; 10. creativity, art and culture; 11. spirituality and mindfulness; 12. future planning and resilience; 13. acceptance, flow, and gratitude; and 14. celebration.

24. Recognizing that well-being is dynamic and personal, we invited students to try a variety of practices throughout the semester and to share those that already worked for them, including meditation (e.g., still, moving, visualization, mindfulness); everyday mindfulness techniques (e.g. mindful breaks, meals, walks, and communication); breathwork; somatic movement; mindset shifts; gratitude practices; self-compassion; random acts of kindness; creativity through art, dance, and music; play; digital detox; social connections; and connection with nature.

25. For a discussion on the value of storytelling as a legal skill, see J. KIM WRIGHT, *LAWYERS AS PEACEMAKERS: PRACTICING HOLISTIC, PROBLEM-SOLVING LAW* 232–37 (2010). Several state bar associations have approved courses on storytelling for continuing legal education credit. See, e.g., *Persuasive Storytelling and Presentation Skills for Lawyers*, STATE BAR OF GA. (Jan. 31, 2024), <https://icle.gabar.org/item/persuasive-storytelling-presentation-skills-lawyers-721869> [<https://perma.cc/T5J3-AEUP>]; N.J. State Bar Ass’n, *Mastering the Art of Storytelling: A Workshop for Lawyers*, N.J. INST. FOR CONTINUING LEGAL EDUC. (Mar. 7, 2025), <https://njsba.com/event/mastering-the-art-of-storytelling-a-workshop-for-lawyers/> [<https://perma.cc/SB8S-2X8C>].

26. For a discussion of the prevalence of imposter syndrome in law school and its impact on students, as well as strategies for addressing it, see David A. Grenardo, *The Phantom Menace to Professional Identity Formation and Law Success: Imposter Syndrome*, 47 U. DAYTON L. REV. 369, 373

with many reporting that they received as much benefit from the experience as the mentees gained.²⁷ Four students from the first simulation course continued into the spring clinic. During that course, students met one-on-one with their well-being mentors.

Although student feedback was overwhelmingly positive, the structure presented logistical challenges. The addition of a required well-being hour outside the two-hour, two-credit class stretched students' schedules and did not fully reflect the effort involved. In response, we transitioned to the three-credit, three-hour weekly class format for the simulation course in 2024, integrating well-being work into the classroom even more intentionally.

ii. Integrated Classroom Structure

In 2024, when we transitioned to a three-credit course, the first hour was taught by Professors Johnson and Perry, both yoga instructors who are dedicated to well-being themes related to leadership and self-regulation skills. This part of class began with an opening centering practice²⁸ and class

(2022). For a study examining the effect of perfectionism on lawyers' mental health, as well as providing recommendations for personal intervention and systemic changes, see generally PATRICK KRILL, JORDANA CONFINO, & JENS NÄSTRÖM, THE PERFECTIONIST PARADOX: REPORT ON THE 2024 LAWYER PERFECTIONISM & WELL-BEING SURVEY (2025), https://www.nalp.org/uploads/Perfectionism2024/ThePerfectionistParadox_Reporton2024LawyerPerfectionismStudy.pdf [<https://perma.cc/366W-ES9C>].

27. For more about the benefits of mentoring in high pressure occupations, see generally Michael J. Gill, Thomas J. Roulet, & Stephen P. Kerridge, *Mentoring for Mental Health: A Mixed-Method Study of the Benefits of Formal Mentoring Programmes in the English Police Force*, 108 J. VOCAT. BEHAV. 1 (2018) (finding that mentoring reduced anxiety and increased mental health for both mentees and mentors). See also Christine M. Venter, *Developing a Professional Identity: Lessons For Women, BIPOC, and First-Generation Law Students From the Canaries in the Coalmines*, 31 MICH J. GENDER & L. 173, 195–96 (2024) (distinguishing professionalism from professional identity and arguing that, to develop the latter, “young lawyers must obtain good mentors, be in a supportive community, and be exposed to a welcoming and inclusive discourse that acknowledges their value as individuals,” recognizing the challenge of finding such mentors when one’s identity differs from the dominant workplace culture).

28. Every class begins with a brief mindfulness meditation that invites students to take a few deep breaths and notice how they arrived to class that day. While many well-being topics are covered in the first hour of class, mindfulness is an underlying theme to help students become more aware of their habits. We use Jon Kabat-Zinn’s definition of mindfulness: “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.” JON KABAT-ZINN, *WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE: MINDFULNESS MEDITATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE 4* (Hyperion 1st ed. 1994). For an empirical study on the benefits of mindfulness training for law students, see generally Charity Scott & Paul Verhaeghen, *Calming Down and Waking Up: An Empirical Study of the Effects of Mindfulness Training on Law Students*, 21 NEV. L.J. 277 (2020).

check-ins.²⁹

Throughout the semester, we focused on developing skills in stress reappraisal, mindfulness, boundary setting, and accountability. Class discussions and exercises challenged students to examine their assumptions about stress, their relationships with difficult emotions, and their habits. For example, based on research by Kelly McGonigal, and inspired by an assignment used by Lawrence Krieger, students were asked not to use the word “stress” for a week and replace it with another word (e.g., challenge).³⁰

Many students found the assignment insightful, noting that using different words helped them better understand their feelings. One student explained: “This exercise made me realize that I don’t verbalize these things often, though I occasionally have these thoughts within my internal dialogue.”

To model creativity and the integration of other disciplines into the practice of law, we incorporated artistic expression, including poetry and visual art in students’ work products. We also explored the role of play, laughter, and fun as tools for innovation and collaboration. Throughout the semester, students were invited to explore somatic movement, recognized for its effectiveness in releasing trauma and promoting healing, as well as micro-practices to help re-energize the body and support the mind by alleviating cognitive overload.

iii. The New Billable Hour® Framework

To anchor the well-being hour in a structured yet flexible framework,

29. Check-ins align with Quinnipiac Law School’s “educating the whole lawyer” approach. *See Why Quinnipiac Law?*, QUINNIPIAC UNIV. SCH. OF L., <https://law.qu.edu> [<https://perma.cc/5SQU-N859>] (emphasizing the human side of lawyering) (last visited Sep. 25, 2025); *see also* JAMES M. LANG, *DISTRACTED: WHY STUDENTS CAN’T FOCUS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT* 46, 95–114 (Basic Books 2020) (noting “attention, processing, and retrieval” are all essential to learning, but “the latter two won’t happen without attention” and describing how various professors build community through name use and universal participation).

30. *See generally* KELLY MCGONIGAL, *THE UPSIDE OF STRESS: WHY STRESS IS GOOD FOR YOU, AND HOW TO GET GOOD AT IT* (Penguin Random House 2015); *see also* Kelly McGonigal, *How to Make Stress Your Friend*, Speech at 2013 TED Talk Event (June 2013), https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?utm_campaign=tedsread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare [<https://perma.cc/5H4C-8Q7S>]; Lawrence Krieger, *Balance & Well-Being in Legal Education*, Speed Share Session 4 at the AALS Section on Balance & Well-Being in Legal Education’s Summer Speed Share Series (Aug. 8, 2024), <https://www.aals.org/sections/list/balance-well-being-in-legal-education/> [<https://perma.cc/TRZ9-YGZK>].

we adopted Ritu Goswamy's book *The New Billable Hour: Bill More Hours, Be More Productive, and Still Have Work Life Balance* as a required text.³¹ Most experiential classes require students to track time spent on assignments, legal research, and client communication; using *The New Billable Hour*® framework, our course also allows students to track time spent on well-being practices. In this way, incorporating well-being into law school goes beyond theory. Rather, students learn to truly integrate these practices into their rigorous academic schedules not only to cultivate presence, self-awareness, and emotional health, but also to be more productive.

The billable hour is one method by which lawyers bill clients, assigning an hourly rate to a lawyer's time and dividing each hour into six-minute (1/10) increments.³² *The New Billable Hour* goes beyond traditional billing by providing a practical framework for law students and lawyers to integrate a full hour of well-being into their day using six daily micro-practices based on the billable hour method: meditation (0.1 hours), a real lunch break (0.2 hours), an energizing morning routine (0.2 hours), a grounding night routine (0.2 hours), movement incorporating breath (0.2 hours), and connection with nature (0.1 hours).³³ The approach recognizes that the law is a demanding profession and requires lawyers to be productive, but it challenges the belief that competent lawyering must come at the expense of well-being. Goswamy's core message is about creating the mental space to work diligently, competently, and holistically.³⁴

Goswamy's book and our use of it in the course acknowledge that the billable hour framework has been rightly criticized for encouraging overwork, stress, and unhealthy work-life boundaries.³⁵ While it offers an

31. See generally RITU GOSWAMY, *THE NEW BILLABLE HOUR: BILL MORE HOURS, BE MORE PRODUCTIVE, AND STILL HAVE WORK LIFE BALANCE* (Morgan James Pub. 2019).

32. See generally *id.* at 15–20 (explaining that a “billable hour” reflects only time devoted to client work, excluding administrative and other non-billable tasks, which means lawyers frequently work nearly double their recorded time to cover non-billable obligations). For a discussion on the history of the billable hour, see generally Stuart L. Pardau, *Bill, Baby, Bill: How the Billable Hour Emerged as the Primary Method of Attorney Fee Generation and Why Early Reports of Its Demise May Be Greatly Exaggerated*, 50 IDAHO L. REV. 1 (2014).

33. See generally GOSWAMY, *supra* note 31, at 29–76.

34. See *id.* at 77–79.

35. *Id.* at 19 (“This billable-hour system sets you up to fail. You cannot see time in the same way. Your time is not yours and it is not really even time.”). For additional criticism of billable hour framework, see generally DEBORAH L. RHODE, *LEGAL ETHICS* 643–46 (5th ed., Foundation Press 2009); Patrick J. Schiltz, *On Being a Happy, Healthy, and Ethical Member of an Unhappy, Unhealthy, and*

“easy” revenue-generating approach (determining revenue based on time spent multiplied by hourly rate), if the legal profession hopes to effect a true shift in lawyer well-being, it must embrace alternative billing methods.³⁶ Our intention in tethering well-being practices to the billable hour format is not to reinforce the restrictive practice of timekeeping, but rather to prioritize well-being practices alongside other scheduling demands by using the common practice of timekeeping.

B. Self-Awareness as Legal Competency

Self-reflection and self-awareness are taught as essential skills that support ethical, creative, and effective lawyering.³⁷ Reflection is a core pillar of both the Integrative Law Movement and clinical legal education.³⁸

Unethical Profession, 52 VAND. L. REV. 871, 892 (1999). For discussions on the psychological implications of high billable hour requirements, see Mike Lubofsky, *Escalating Big Law Billing Rates and Psychological Implications for Attorneys*, ATT’Y THERAPISTS, <https://attorneytherapists.com/escalating-big-law-billing-rates-and-psychological-implications-for-attorneys/> [https://perma.cc/M359-RWFF] (last visited Oct. 19, 2025); Mike Lubofsky, *The Impact of Financial Pressures on Attorney Well-Being*, ATT’Y THERAPISTS (citing V.S. Pasyk, *The Billable Hour and Its Impact on Lawyer Subjective Well-Being and Burnout* (2019) (Master’s thesis, University of Calgary) (on file with the *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*)), <https://attorneytherapists.com/the-impact-of-financial-pressures-on-attorney-well-being/> [https://perma.cc/Q946-TEXW] (last visited Oct. 19, 2025). See also Debra Cassens Weiss, *More lawyers report billable-hour pressures affect their mental health, survey finds*, ABA J. (May 15, 2025, 9:16 AM), <https://www.abajournal.com/news/article/more-lawyers-report-billable-hour-pressures-are-affecting-their-mental-health-survey-finds> [https://perma.cc/2DZF-KX2D] (reporting that 65.5% of lawyers and staff surveyed said billable-hour pressures negatively affect mental well-being, which was nearly four percentage points higher than in 2024). For resources discussing both sides of the debate on the ethical implications of billable hours from both the academy and the profession, see Christine Parker & David Ruschena, *The Pressures of Billable Hours: Lessons from a Survey of Billing Practices Inside Law Firms*, 9 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 619, 620 nn.2–3 (2011).

36. See Robert E. Hirshon, *Law and the Billable Hour: A Standard Developed in the 1960s May Be Damaging Our Profession*, A.B.A. J., Feb. 2002, at 10 (noting that billable hours is an “easy” approach that “provides both client and law firms a tangible, objective instrument to collective fees,” but cautioning that “ease of accounting should not blind us to the many inherent problems created for lawyers and clients.”); GOSWAMY, *supra* note 31, at 17–18 (discussing alternative billing methods, such as flat fee and hybrid billing). See also Mike Lubofsky, *The Negative Psychological Impact of Hourly Billing on Attorneys*, ATT’Y THERAPISTS, <https://attorneytherapists.com/attorney-hourly-billing/> [https://perma.cc/LA7K-7LFB] (last visited Oct. 19, 2025).

37. Legal scholars, including Hamilton and Sullivan, recognize these skills as foundational elements of competent legal education and ethical practice. See e.g., SULLIVAN ET AL., *supra* note 6, at 7; Neil W. Hamilton, *The Foundational Skill of Reflection in the Formation of a Professional Identity*, 12 ST. MARY’S J. ON LEGAL MALPRAC. & ETHICS 254 (2022). See also ABA Standards, *supra* note 10, § 302.

38. For more on reflection as a pillar of integrative law, see INTEGRATIVE L. MOVEMENT,

Our course invites students to explore their internal landscape with the same rigor they bring to legal analysis. Emotions are reframed as essential data—part of an internal GPS system guiding professional judgment, interpersonal connection, and personal sustainability.

This interpersonal work often brings up emotions that have been buried, particularly for students carrying unresolved trauma.³⁹ Recognizing this, the course is intentionally designed to support students' mental well-being by using a regular agenda, beginning class with centering techniques and check-ins, and ensuring students are aware of resources outside the classroom to support their well-being.

For some students, the reflective work coupled with adopting a new mindset about negotiation can be challenging at first. Students often need to adjust their approach to learning due to the course's emphasis on frequent assignments and collaborative work—an intentional departure from the structure of traditional exam-based classes.

C. Interdisciplinary Approach and Creativity

In addition to the Conscious Contracts® model, the curriculum draws from other interdisciplinary tools and approaches, such as mindfulness-based practices, restorative circles, and nonviolent communication. Students do not analyze negotiation scenarios but experience them, fostering embodied insight and real-time learning.

To further expand students' capacities for creative thinking and critical analysis, the course integrates readings and resources not typically found in traditional law school curricula. Articles and media from the fields of behavioral science, leadership, somatics, philosophy, and narrative theory

<https://www.integrativelaw.com/> [<https://perma.cc/VJ8S-Y2VR>] (last visited Sep. 25, 2025). See also Michele Leering, *Conceptualizing Reflective Practice for Legal Professionals*, 23 OSGOOD HALL L. SCH. J. OF L. & SOC. POL'Y 83, 84 (2014).

39. Trauma is a normal reaction to an overwhelming circumstance that produces feelings of intense fear and helplessness. It is not theoretical; rather, it is somatic and more than just a typical response to difficult circumstances. Trauma is an emotional injury that can overwhelm coping mechanisms and have lasting negative impacts, although recovery is possible with appropriate support and treatment. See Sarah Katz & Deeya Haldar, *The Pedagogy of Trauma-Informed Lawyering*, 22 CLINICAL L. REV. 359, 359 (2016); see generally Myrna S. Raeder, *Remember the Ladies and the Children Too: Crawford's Impact on Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Cases*, 71 BROOK. L. REV. 311, 340–41 (2005). Many students come to law school with unresolved trauma and are often nobly (although often subconsciously) drawn to practice areas related to their past trauma (e.g., family and criminal law) to heal themselves by helping others.

are included to encourage expansive reflection and interdisciplinary synthesis.

Creativity and intuition are treated as essential skills for the next generation of lawyers. Through activities such as storytelling, design thinking, and expressive arts, students are prompted to access non-linear ways of knowing and problem-solving. The appendix features several student assignments that showcase their creativity.

IV. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A. Professional Development

The course design draws intentionally from multiple learning theories that support deep, lasting professional development. While a full discussion of these learning theories is beyond the scope of this Article, we highlight some of the most important.

1. **Transformative Learning Theory.** Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory provides the framework for students' identity shifts from traditional adversarial approaches to integrative practice.⁴⁰ The disorienting dilemma of reimagining negotiation creates space for critical reflection and perspective transformation essential for genuine professional growth.⁴¹ We apply self-determination theory, a hallmark of mediation,⁴² to law teaching.⁴³

40. JACK MEZIROW, TRANSFORMATIVE DIMENSIONS OF ADULT LEARNING 192 (Jossey-Bass 1991); Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice*, 74 NEW DIRECTIONS FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUC. 1, 5 (1997) (defining transformative learning as "the process of effecting change in a frame of reference" through critical reflection on assumptions and beliefs).

41. See JACK MEZIROW ET AL., LEARNING AS TRANSFORMATION: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON A THEORY IN PROGRESS 3, 22 (Jack Mezirow ed. 2000) (explaining how disorienting dilemmas trigger the transformative learning process).

42. See, e.g., Robert A. Baruch Bush, *Self-Determination, Needs Satisfaction and Moral Growth – in Mediation and Negligence Law: A Paradigm Shift in Underlying Worldviews*, 30 HARV. NEGOT. L. REV. (forthcoming 2025).

43. See the rubric for self-directedness, ROADMAP by Neil Hamilton for related competencies. See generally Neil W. Hamilton, *A Professional Formation/Professionalism Challenge: Many Students Need Help with Self-Directed Learning Concerning Their Professional Development Toward Excellence*, 27 REGENT U. L. REV. 225 (2015); Larry O. Natt Gantt, II & Benjamin V. Madison III, *Self-Directedness and Professional Formation: Connecting Two Critical Concepts in Legal Education*, 14

2. **Experiential Learning Cycle.** Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle structures the rhythm of each class and assignment sequence.⁴⁴ Students engage in concrete experiences through simulations and real negotiations, reflect through journaling and check-ins, conceptualize through theoretical readings and discussions, then experiment with new approaches in subsequent interactions. This cycle ensures that learning is not merely intellectual but becomes embodied and actionable.⁴⁵
3. **Adult Learning Theory.** The principles of adult learning theory inform our assumption that students bring valuable experience and should have agency in their learning process.⁴⁶ The choice-based elements of the course—from book selection to grade contracts—honor adult learners' need for self-direction while maintaining rigorous academic standards.⁴⁷

B. Responding to Contemporary Challenges

i. The Well-Being Crisis in Legal Education

Multiple studies over several years have shown that a disproportionate

U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 498, 499–500 (2018).

44. See generally DAVID A. KOLB, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: EXPERIENCE AS THE SOURCE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (2nd ed., Pearson Education 2015); see also Alice Y. Kolb & David A. Kolb, *Learning Styles and Learning Spaces: Enhancing Experiential Learning in Higher Education*, 17 ACAD. MGMT. LEARNING & EDUC. 193, 193–212 (2005).

45. See generally David A. Kolb, *The Process of Experiential Learning*, in CULTURE AND PROCESSES OF ADULT LEARNING 138 (David Boud et al. eds. 1993) (emphasizing that experiential learning requires the full cycle of experience, reflection, abstraction, and experimentation for knowledge creation).

46. MALCOLM S. KNOWLES, THE ADULT LEARNER: A NEGLECTED SPECIES 120, 139 (4th ed., Gulf Publishing 1990); MALCOLM S. KNOWLES, ELWOOD F. HOLTON III & RICHARD A. SWANSON, THE ADULT LEARNER: THE DEFINITIVE CLASSIC IN ADULT EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT 22 (8th ed., Routledge 2015).

47. See Malcolm S. Knowles, *Andragogy: An Emerging Technology for Adult Learning*, in ADULT LEARNING METHODS: A GUIDE FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION 53, 57–58 (3rd ed., Michael W. Galbraith ed. 2004) (describing self-directed learning as a fundamental principle of adult education that increases motivation and retention).

number of law students experience distress⁴⁸ in law school⁴⁹ that carries into their careers.⁵⁰ As awareness increases, more legal educators are recognizing that the emphasis on legal analysis and analytical thinking is insufficient to prepare law students for a sustainable career in law.⁵¹ While

48. The term ‘distress,’ as opposed to stress, is used intentionally. Stress, in and of itself, is not inherently harmful to our well-being. See MCGONIGAL, *supra* note 30, at xi–xxiii. Stress activates the nervous system, which can motivate us to act in healthy and constructive ways. See HEIDI BROWN, *THE FLOURISHING LAWYER: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH TO PERFORMANCE AND WELL-BEING* 48–49 (2022) (discussing eustress stress, which is the concept of positive stress, introduced by Hans Selye in the mid-1970s); see also TRACI CIPRIANO, *THE THRIVING LAWYER: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL MODEL OF WELL-BEING FOR A SUSTAINABLE LEGAL PROFESSION* 16–27 (2024). Prolonged or intense stress that accumulates in the body, as well as one’s relationship with and attitude about stress, can lead to unhealthy coping mechanisms and distress or chronic stress. See generally CIPRIANO, *supra*; Lawrence S. Krieger, *Roasting the Seeds of Law School Stress*, 5 J. COLL. & CHARACTER 1 (2004).

49. See G. Andrew H. Benjamin et al., *The Role of Legal Education in Producing Psychological Distress Among Law Students and Lawyers*, 11 AM. B. FOUND. RES. J. 225, 226 (1986); Lawrence S. Krieger, *Institutional Denial About the Dark Side of Law School, and Fresh Empirical Guidance for Constructively Breaking the Silence*, 52 J. LEGAL EDUC. 112, 112 (2002); Kennon M. Sheldon & Lawrence S. Krieger, *Does Legal Education have Undermining Effects on Law Students? Evaluating Changes in Motivation, Values, and Well-Being*, 22 BEHAV. SCI. & L. 261, 261–62 (2004); Abigail A. Patthoff, *This Is Your Brain on Law School: The Impact of Fear-Based Narratives on Law Students*, 2015 UTAH L. REV. 391, 412, 424 (2015); Jerome M. Organ, David B. Jaffe & Katherine M. Bender, *Suffering in Silence: The Survey of Law Student Well-Being and the Reluctance of Law Students to Seek Help for Substance Use and Mental Health Concerns*, 66 J. LEGAL EDUC. 116, 116 (2016); Patrick R. Krill, Ryan Johnson & Linda Albert, *The Prevalence of Substance Use and Other Mental Health Concerns Among American Attorneys*, 10 J. ADDICTION MED. 46, 52 (2016); Jerome M. Organ, David B. Jaffe & Katherine M. Bender, *“It’s Okay to Not Be Okay”: The 2021 Survey of Law Student Well-Being*, 60 U. LOUISVILLE L. REV. 441, 443 (2021); Amy Levin, *The Kids Aren’t Alright*, 79 ARK. L. REV. (forthcoming 2025), <https://download.ssrn.com/2025/4/10/4969937.pdf?> [<https://perma.cc/MQT3-TEJ9>].

50. See NAT’L TASK FORCE, *supra* note 19, at 35 (“[L]aw students start law school with high life satisfaction and strong mental health measures. But within the first year of law school, they experience a significant increase in anxiety and depression. Research suggests that law students are among the most dissatisfied, demoralized, and depressed of any graduate student population.” (citations omitted)); Memorandum from Margot Botsford on Report of the Steering Committee on Lawyer Well-Being to Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court 5–18 (July 15, 2019), <https://www.mass.gov/doc/supreme-judicial-court-steering-committee-on-lawyer-well-being-report-to-the-justices/download> [<https://perma.cc/75BB-HHJ8>] (reporting on major issues negatively affecting attorney well-being); N.J. STATE BAR ASS’N, *PUTTING LAWYERS FIRST TASK FORCE: AN EXCERPT OF THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON IMPROVING THE LEGAL PROFESSION FOR LAWYERS* 6 (2023), <https://njsba.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/PLF-ltr-CJ-Rabner-And-Report-Excerpt-4-12-2023.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/Y7Z6-2BDT>] (“[R]espondents reported levels of burnout, depression, suicidal ideation, substance use disorders, anxiety, and thoughts of leaving the profession multiple times higher than in other working populations.”).

51. The Carnegie Report noted that law schools’ “lack of attention to practice and inadequate concern with professional responsibility—are the unintended consequences of reliance upon a single, heavily academic pedagogy, the case-dialogue method, to provide the crucial initiation into legal education.” SULLIVAN ET AL., *supra* note 6, at 6. For a discussion of the strategies law schools

many in the profession have long called for change, and a number of schools have responded in meaningful ways, the issues persist. It remains incumbent on legal education to implement broader, systemic reforms that address the underlying causes of student distress and equip future lawyers with skills to attend to their well-being.⁵² At the same time, law schools must ensure a rigorous educational experience that prepares law students to excel in competencies expected by clients and employers.⁵³

ii. Evolving ABA Guidelines and Outcome-Based Education

Legal education is facing increasing pressure to adapt to a profession in flux and to balance legal education emphases among doctrinal knowledge, practice skills, and professional identity formation.⁵⁴ In some ways, regulators are catching up with innovations in law school curricula that have proven successful, such as clinical legal education, alternative dispute resolution, and legal writing and analysis programs.

The American Bar Association's recent updates to Standards 302, 314, and 315 emphasize a shift toward deeper accountability in legal pedagogy.⁵⁵ Law schools are now required to articulate clear learning outcomes,⁵⁶ implement robust assessment methods,⁵⁷ and ensure meaningful program

implemented to address the concerns raised in the Carnegie Report, see William M. Sullivan, *After Ten Years: The Carnegie Report and Contemporary Legal Education*, 14 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 331, 337 (2018).

52. NAT'L TASK FORCE, *supra* note 19, at 35–40. See also Amy C. Bushaw, *Humanizing the Delivery of Legal Education*, in BUILDING ON BEST PRACTICES: TRANSFORMING LEGAL EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD 73 (Deborah Maranville et al. eds. 2015).

53. The competencies expected by clients and employers are not only technical legal skills, such as research, analysis, and writing, but also intra- and inter-personal skills, such as trust, dedication, integrity, collaboration, active listening, empathy, and good judgment. See RANDALL KISER, *SOFT SKILLS FOR THE EFFECTIVE LAWYER* 34 (Cambridge Univ. Press 2017); see also GERKMAN & CORNETT, *supra* note 1, at 24; Neil W. Hamilton, *Connecting Prospective Law Students' Goals to the Competencies Clients and Legal Employers Need to Achieve More Competent Graduate and Stronger Applicant Pools and Employment Outcomes*, 9 ST. MARY'S J. ON LEGAL MALPRAC. & ETHICS 260, 261 (2019).

54. See Sullivan, *supra* note 51, at 335.

55. See ABA Standards, *supra* note 10, § 302(b).

56. *Id.* at § 302 (requires law schools to establish learning outcomes that demonstrate competency in “[k]nowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law; [l]egal analysis and reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and written and oral communication; [e]xercise of proper professional and ethical responsibilities to clients and the legal system; and [o]ther professional skills needed for competent and ethical participation as a member of the legal profession.”).

57. *Id.* at § 314 (requires law schools to “utilize both formative and summative assessment methods in their curricula to measure and improve student learning and provide meaningful feedback to students.”) (The standard emphasizes that assessment methods should be designed to measure the degree

evaluation that goes beyond traditional grading.⁵⁸ These requirements challenge institutions to bridge the gap between course content and professional competencies—particularly around ethical identity, collaboration, and client-centered practice. The standards also underscore the need for coherence across the curriculum, emphasizing that courses must align with broader institutional outcomes. For many experiential programs, this presents a call to formalize what had previously been intuitive or values-driven, without compromising innovation or flexibility. New Interpretation 303–5 states:

Professional identity focuses on what it means to be a lawyer and the special obligations lawyers have to their clients and society. The development of a professional identity should involve an intentional exploration of the values, guiding principles, and well-being practices considered foundational to successful legal practice. Because developing a professional identity requires reflection and growth over time, students should have frequent opportunities to do so during each year of law school and in a variety of courses and co-curricular and professional development activities.⁵⁹

There are pending proposed changes to the ABA Standards to increase the number of required experiential credits for every law student from six to twelve, and to require at least three of those credits to be real-world experiences inherent in clinics and externships.⁶⁰ The rationale stated by the Standards Committee to the ABA Section on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar is that every law student should have to engage in

to which students have attained competency in the learning outcomes).

58. *Id.* at § 315 (requires law schools to “conduct ongoing evaluation of the law school’s program of legal education, learning outcomes, and assessment methods; and [] use the results of this evaluation to determine the degree of student attainment of competency in the learning outcomes and to make appropriate changes to improve the curriculum.”).

59. Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions, *About Standard 303*, UNIV. OF ST. THOMAS SCH. OF L., <https://law.stthomas.edu/about/centers-institutes/holloran-center/about-standard-303/> [<https://perma.cc/N6C5-5T6Y>] (last visited Sep. 27, 2025).

60. Memorandum from the ABA Standards Committee on Recommended Revisions for Notice and Comment: §§ 303, 304, and 311 Related to Increasing the Number of Required Experiential Learning Credits 8 (May 2, 2025), https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/council_reports_and_resolutions/may25/25-may-experiential-learning-memo.pdf [<https://perma.cc/K5WM-443C>].

authentic practice under supervision while in school, referring to the fact that such a requirement brings legal education in line with the educational requirements in other professions.⁶¹ The ABA's rationale relies on the substantial empirical data regarding competencies for new lawyers, the success of clinical legal education, and the upcoming changes to the bar exam.⁶² It concludes that the ABA has a duty to ensure a quality legal education that prepares students for practice, and that experiential education is the preferred method for this preparation.⁶³ The ABA stresses that too many law schools continue to fall short in meeting student demand for law clinics and externships.⁶⁴

Also significant is that several states will offer the upcoming redesigned "NextGen" Uniform Bar Exam, developed by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, starting as early as 2026.⁶⁵ As of this writing, 46 jurisdictions have announced that they will adopt the Next-Gen Bar between 2026-28, at which point the old uniform bar exam will sunset.⁶⁶ Significantly, the NextGen bar increases the emphasis on lawyering skills and decreases testing memorization of doctrinal knowledge.⁶⁷ It adds several new practice-oriented subjects, such as dispute resolution, negotiation, and client counseling.⁶⁸ It also will offer some "integrated" questions, requiring test-takers to apply a variety of concepts to a common factual scenario, balancing the questions between those with a doctrinal focus and those requiring test takers to make practice-oriented judgments.⁶⁹ These ABA changes are specifically designed to assist with law students being better prepared for the new exam.

Our course requires students to identify core values, practice well-being tools and techniques, and integrate these into their daily lives for personal and professional success, as defined by the students in alignment with their Touchstones and Well-Being Plans. Students learn essential skills to practice self-reflection, build resilience, and deepen cognitive flexibility as

61. *Id.* at 8.

62. *Id.* at 4.

63. *Id.* at 4.

64. *Id.* at 20.

65. *NextGen UBE*, NAT'L CONF. OF BAR EXAM'RS, <https://www.ncbex.org/exams/nextgen> [<https://perma.cc/NG36-RT7U>] (last visited Nov. 11, 2025).

66. *Id.*

67. *Id.*

68. *Id.*

69. *Id.*

they meet the demands of their coursework. The Integrative Law Approach to negotiation also emphasizes authentic communication, curiosity, compassion, cultural competency, and creative problem-solving skills. These skills prepare students to work with clients by focusing on relational and collaborative skills to engage more deeply with themselves and others, modeling a vision of legal practice grounded in authenticity, compassion, and collaboration.

iii. Threats to Democratic Institutions and the Rule of Law

Since the 2025 inauguration, the ABA has taken a strong, proactive stand in defense of the rule of law, responding to escalating challenges posed by the Trump Administration.⁷⁰ As executive actions increasingly targeted courts, law firms, and individual lawyers—particularly those representing clients critical of the administration or involved in controversial cases⁷¹—the ABA issued a series of public statements reaffirming the independence of the judiciary and the vital role of legal advocates in a functioning democracy.⁷²

What began as condemnations of rhetoric undermining judicial review quickly evolved into broader coalitions with state and local bar associations and, ultimately, legal action. The ABA filed federal lawsuits challenging executive orders that sought to strip law firms of security clearances and federal contracts, describing these actions as intimidation tactics with a

70. See generally LACY L. DURHAM, REPORT (2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/directories/policy/annual-2025/509-annual-2025.pdf> [<https://perma.cc/3WK8-8PRX>] (last visited Sep. 29, 2025) (Annual Report 2025—Policy Directory) (expressing the ABA’s resolution opposing attacks on law firms representing clients critical of the administration); see also, David L. Brown, *ABA Takes Aim at Trump Policies on Law Firms and Immigration*, BEST L. FIRMS (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.bestlawfirms.com/articles/aba-takes-aim-at-trump-policies-on-law-firms-and-immigration/6856> [<https://perma.cc/PJF4-YP3L>] (last visited Sep. 29, 2025).

71. See *The ABA Supports the Rule of Law*, AM. BAR ASS’N (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/02/aba-supports-the-rule-of-law/> [<https://perma.cc/J35F-RECS>] (last visited Sep. 29, 2025) (noting that the resolution responded to sanctions “plainly designed to hurt the business interests” of specific firms, including: a February 25, 2025 Executive Order targeting Covington & Burling LLP for its prior representation of Special Counsel Jack Smith, by suspending security clearances of its lawyers and directing termination of federal engagements; a March 6, 2025 Executive Order targeting Perkins Coie LLP for work on behalf of Hillary Clinton’s 2016 campaign, by cutting government contracts with its clients, denying firm employees access to federal buildings, and suspending security clearances; and a March 25, 2025 Executive Order naming Jenner & Block LLP, among other firms, for representing clients critical of the Administration).

72. *Id.*

chilling effect on the profession.⁷³ Throughout, the ABA has attempted to maintain a non-partisan tone, emphasizing its commitment to constitutional principles and the institutional integrity of the legal system, while urging lawyers nationwide to stand together in defense of democracy, professional ethics, and the foundational role of the law. ABA President William R. Bay wrote:

The American Bar Association supports the rule of law. That means holding governments, including our own, accountable under law. We stand for a legal process that is orderly and fair. We have consistently urged the administrations of both parties to adhere to the rule of law. We stand in that familiar place again today. And we do not stand alone. Our courts stand for the rule of law as well.⁷⁴

Law schools can no longer rely solely on doctrinal training; they must help students develop into ethical stewards of justice who can restore trust in legal systems. In 2025, law schools across the United States have deliberately deepened their focus on professional identity formation as a direct response to the growing threats to the rule of law under the Trump administration.

The deans of 79 U.S. law schools issued a joint letter condemning efforts to sanction law firms and lawyers, warning that such actions violate the U.S. Constitution. The deans, who signed the letter in their personal capacities, stated:

We write to reaffirm basic principles: The government should not punish lawyers and law firms for the clients they represent, absent specific findings that such representation was illegal or unethical. Punishing lawyers for their representation and advocacy violates the First Amendment and undermines the Sixth Amendment. We thus speak as

73. *American Bar Association Files Suit to Halt Government Intimidation of Lawyers and Law Firms*, AM. BAR ASS'N (June 16, 2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/06/aba-files-suit-to-halt-govt-intimidation/> [<https://perma.cc/6MR7-YQU5>] (last visited Sep. 29, 2025).

74. See William Ray, *The ABA Supports the Rule of Law*, AM. BAR ASS'N (Feb. 10, 2025), <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2025/02/aba-supports-the-rule-of-law/> [<https://perma.cc/W8GQ-P8XU>].

legal educators, responsible for training the next generation of lawyers, in condemning any government efforts to punish lawyers or their firms based on the identity of their clients or for their zealous lawful and ethical advocacy.⁷⁵

Furthermore, efforts to embed cultural competence and DEI into legal education have become a source of confusion and uncertainty amid pushbacks. While ABA Standard 303(c) formally mandates bias training, cross-cultural competency, and anti-racism efforts at various stages of law school, enforcement of the rule was suspended in early 2025 following executive orders and federal pressure.⁷⁶ U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi publicly threatened to revoke the ABA's authority to accredit law schools unless it repealed or significantly revised its DEI standard.⁷⁷ With some state supreme courts even weighing whether to drop ABA accreditation over its DEI stance, many law schools now face a fraught dilemma: comply with long-standing professional values or heed shifting enforcement priorities and legal compliance concerns.⁷⁸ This has left students and faculty unsure about what constitutes best practice—and whether institutional investments in DEI could risk legal and funding repercussions.

Educators have linked these reforms to the need for future lawyers to serve as defenders of democracy in a time of constitutional uncertainty, making the classroom a training ground for principled legal leadership in an era of crisis.⁷⁹ Our course meets this moment by integrating values-based

75. Colleen Murphy, *Law School Deans Condemn Government Sanctions on Law Firms as Threat to Rule of Law*, LAW.COM (Mar. 27, 2025, 8:40 AM), <https://www.law.com/2025/03/27/law-school-deans-condemn-government-sanctions-on-law-firms-as-threat-to-rule-of-law/> [<https://perma.cc/A9JG-2AKU>].

76. Sara Merken, *American Bar Association Suspends Law School DEI Rule Enforcement*, REUTERS (Feb. 21, 2025, 3:31 PM), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/american-bar-association-suspends-law-school-dei-rule-enforcement-2025-02-21/> [<https://perma.cc/8YM5-56FN>].

77. Karen Sloan, *U.S. Attorney General Presses ABA to Drop Law School DEI Rule or Risk Losing Accreditor Status*, REUTERS (Mar. 5, 2025, 3:48 PM), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/us-attorney-general-presses-aba-drop-law-school-dei-rule-or-risk-losing-2025-03-05/> [<https://perma.cc/528T-DT9Z>].

78. *See generally* Karen Sloan, *Texas plans to end ABA's role in state's law school oversight*, REUTERS (Sep. 29, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/texas-plans-end-abas-role-states-law-school-oversight-2025-09-29/> [<https://perma.cc/8D6D-N5P4>].

79. The authors have attended several conferences and meetings where the topic has arisen. As lawyers are faced with ethical dilemmas, it becomes more critical to have a solid professional identity as a compass. *See, e.g.*, Kara Perry & J. Kim Wright, Presentation at the Holloran Ctr. for Ethical Leadership in the Professions, Workshop on Professional Identity Formation and the Rule of Law (Oct. 24, 2025).

exercises, embodied practices, and relational frameworks. These approaches help students internalize their role as ethical actors, equipped with the resilience, discernment, and purpose needed to uphold justice—even under pressure. By centering empathy, transparency, and dialogue, the course models how legal education can help restore trust in the profession and reassert the law’s deeper democratic purpose.

iv. Artificial Intelligence and the Human Lawyer

AI is rapidly transforming legal workflows, reshaping firm economics, and expanding access—but it is not a replacement for human lawyers. Rather, it highlights the need for distinctly human capacities in lawyering: empathy, presence, relational intelligence, and moral discernment.⁸⁰ It is a tool that must be handled with care. Future-ready lawyers will need a hybrid of technical competence, human judgment, and ethical awareness to thrive in a profession increasingly influenced by powerful automation. Our course prioritizes these skills through embodied practices, active listening, and real-world collaboration.

We are not alone. Nishat Ruiter, General Counsel of TED Conferences (a non-profit learning organization best known for TED Talks) explains:

Over the past year at TED, I’ve been thinking deeply about how the legal profession can evolve—because the pressures we face today are not just legal, they’re human. From AI to ethical complexity to cultural division, lawyers are being asked to do more—and *be* more—than ever before. And yet, most of us were trained in ways that didn’t prepare us for this. We learned the rules, but not always how to navigate the gray areas with wisdom, empathy, or adaptability. That’s why we’re building TEDLaw—a new learning initiative from TED focused on helping lawyers develop the human skills we need to lead with integrity,

80. For background, see Isabella Loaiza and Roberto Rigobón’s EPOCH (Empathy, Presence, Opinion, Creativity, and Hope) framework that discusses what humans are uniquely good at. *See generally* Isabella Loaiza & Roberto Rigobón, The EPOCH of AI: Human-Machine Complementarities at Work (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://download.ssrn.com/2025/10/1/5028371.pdf>? [https://perma.cc/MEC2-5DJV] (unpublished manuscript).

courage, and creativity in today's world.⁸¹

While we emphasize the human skills AI can't replicate—like ethical judgment, empathy, and relational awareness—students also learn to use AI thoughtfully as a tool. Building upon the skills they develop in designing other assignments, they often integrate AI into their final presentations, using it to generate images, organize content, or support creative storytelling.

V. STUDENT REFLECTIONS & CHALLENGES

Students are asked not just to study well-being but to integrate well-being tools and exercises into their daily lives. Many students reported increased connection, reduced perfectionism, and greater clarity about the kind of lawyer they want to become.

A. Sample Student Reflections:

“I am leaving this course with a perspective and optimism I never thought I would find in law school.”

“This course has significantly enhanced my confidence and competence as I prepare to enter the legal market. I have explored the intersection of personal health and professional excellence at a macro- and micro-level. By addressing the realities of the legal profession and fostering self-awareness, balance, and resilience, I am certain that I am equipped with the mindset I need to navigate the demands of my career while maintaining my well-being.”

“The tools and insights gained from this course have created a foundation for sustainable wellbeing practices that I believe will serve me well beyond my academic career. Rather than seeing self-care as another task to perfect, I now understand it as an ongoing process of

81. Nishat Ruitter attended the presentations session of our Fall, 2024 class. Professor Wright is a member of the core team and Professor Pery is a member of the advisory board for the TEDLaw Project.

growth and adaptation.”

“I am motivated by the humanity of Conscious Contracts and am hopeful that whether or not I pursue contracts, I can bring those skills of understanding myself and those around me, making the law tangible and understandable, and practicing accountability into any work that I do.”

The goal is to help students build emotional regulation, deepen awareness, and expand their cognitive flexibility—capacities that are as critical to creative legal problem-solving as doctrinal knowledge. Of course, not every comment was positive.

B. Challenges and Considerations

Each semester brought its own set of challenges, prompting continuous reflection and adjustment. Some students, more familiar with the traditional law school model of a single end-of-term exam, initially felt overwhelmed by the volume and variety of assignments. Early cohorts complained that the workload was more than reflected in their credit hours. (We listened.) Others were juggling bar preparation, coursework, and professional responsibilities, requiring additional flexibility and support. Occasionally, students enrolled without fully understanding the course’s integrative, non-adversarial approach—and struggled to let go of familiar, competitive frameworks.

In the fall semester of 2024, we implemented an application process to help ensure students were aligned with the course’s purpose, structure, and outcomes. As a result, the class comprised a highly engaged, curious, and open-minded group of students who were, overall, informed of and better prepared for the depth and demands of the course, resulting in a cohesive and rewarding classroom experience.

VI. SCALING AND REPLICATION

As the legal profession continues to reckon with burnout, mistrust, and the rapid rise of AI, the need for human-centered legal education has never been more urgent. The Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation course offers a model for equipping future lawyers with the emotional intelligence, relational skills, and self-awareness necessary for ethical and resilient

practice. It's not necessary to adopt the course wholesale to realize its benefits; many of its elements can be implemented more broadly across law school curricula through an integrative approach.

1. **Modular Implementation.** Rather than requiring a full semester commitment, faculty can integrate discrete elements—such as the Touchstone exercise, the ACED conflict resolution framework, or Wheel of Life reflection—into existing courses. Well-being exercises—including centering exercises, check-ins, and written reflections—are particularly valuable and simple to implement.
2. **Training and Peer Support.** We envision offering faculty workshops and certifications in integrative pedagogy, creating a shared language and standards while honoring diverse teaching styles. A network of law professors who adopt this model could connect through existing communities such as the Integrative Law Movement.
3. **Student Advocacy.** Students themselves are the strongest advocates for this work. Many leave the course eager to bring its tools into their clinics, internships, or future workplaces. Former students could serve as ambassadors—speaking in new classes, mentoring peers, or even co-facilitating discussions at Quinnipiac and other law schools.
4. **Interdisciplinary Integration.** The course design lends itself to interdisciplinary and clinical integration. The Touchstone and Operating Manual exercises could be introduced in leadership seminars, mediation practicums, or legal ethics courses. The ACED framework for addressing conflict and change is just as relevant in nonprofit governance, corporate counsel teams, and public interest organizations.

CONCLUSION

The legal profession stands at a crossroads. Traditional approaches to legal education are insufficient to prepare lawyers for the complex challenges of contemporary practice. Our Integrative Law Approach to Negotiation course demonstrates that it is possible to maintain academic rigor while fostering the human capacities essential for ethical, sustainable, and effective legal practice.

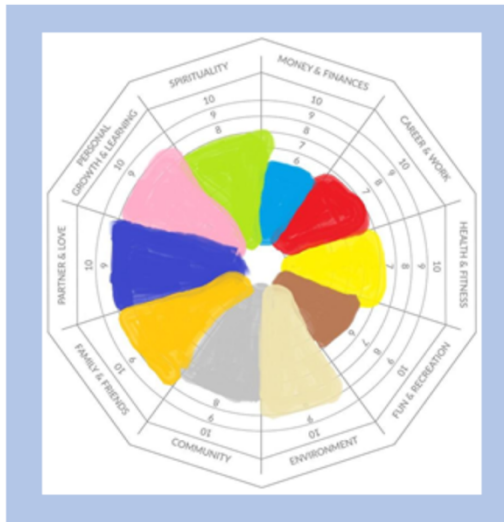
Through embodied learning, reflective practice, and values-based engagement, students develop not only technical negotiation skills but also the emotional intelligence, cultural competence, and self-awareness needed to navigate an increasingly complex profession. As the legal landscape continues to evolve, programs like ours offer a pathway toward a more humane, integrated, and sustainable approach to legal education—one that honors both professional excellence and human flourishing.

This course has evolved into a dynamic, experiential, and deeply human-centered training ground for future lawyers. By integrating personal development, professional identity, and integrative practice, it meets the call for innovation in legal education while preparing students to serve as ethical stewards of justice in an uncertain world.

What began as an experiment in integrating well-being into a negotiation course has become a holistic, evolving model of legal education—one that meets students where they are and equips them to be future-ready lawyers. The seeds of this pedagogy have already taken root. With intentional support, they can grow into a broader movement—one that helps legal education cultivate not just capable professionals, but conscious and compassionate lawyers prepared for the complexities of modern practice.

APPENDIX

Wheels of Life



The Wheel of Life measures how we're doing in the domains of our lives.

Some students were inspired to make it more artistic. This particular student didn't consider himself to be creative at the beginning of class.



*Students become very creative and show their talents in Canva. Even students who don't start out artistic often surprise themselves. All images are shared with permission of the students and clients.

Homework Presentation (PowerPoint)

HOMework REPORT: TRAUMA-INFORMED LAW & INTEGRATIVE LAW
LAUREN BOUCHER

Homework Reports

ASSIGNMENTS
The New Billable Hour - Chapter 1: Being a Lawyer
Integrative Lawyers Podcast
How Integrative Law Can Benefit Your Practice & Clients
Around the World with Integrative Law
Structured Negotiations
Are You an Integrative Lawyer?

HOW TO MAKE INTEGRATIVE LAW WORK IN YOUR FAVOR
Integrative Law is a powerful tool to resolve a more holistic approach to the legal field and requires us to bring our "whole selves."
• Mind
• Body
• Soul
• Emotions
Before we can transform the legal system, integrative lawyers must first do their personal transformation.

"INTEGRATIVE LAW HAS TO DO WITH A FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT IN WORLDVIEW AND EXPANSION OF WHAT WE THINK IS POSSIBLE"

COACH YOURSELF

AUTHOR: ANTONIA BOWRING PRESENTER: CASEY PHILLIPS

Book Report (PowerPoint)

ACTION PLAN:
GOALS
ASSESSMENT
OPTIONS
WAY FORWARD

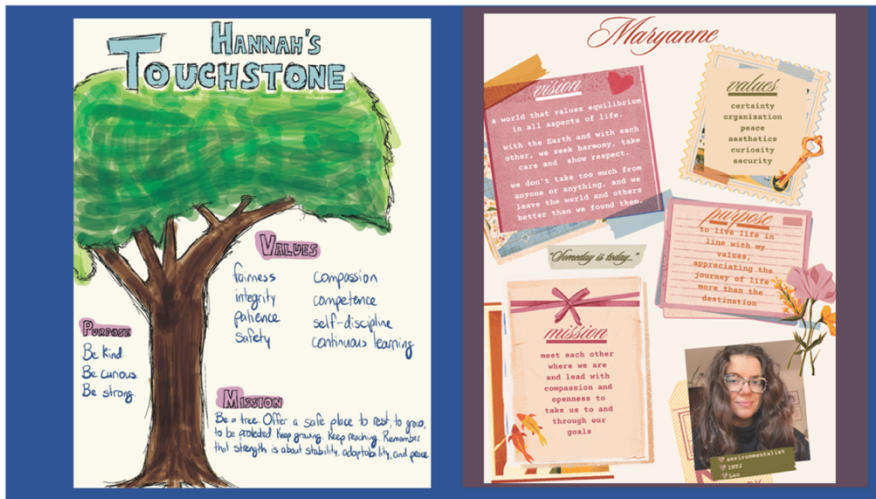
GOALS

**LONG TERM
AMBITIOUS
FEASIBLE**

LONG TERM

**RELATIONSHIPS
PROFESSIONALLY
SPIRITUALLY**

CONVERSATION FUNNEL



Each Touchstone is unique.



My Top Strength is Humor

3- I DELIGHT IN ACCOMPLISHING GOALS, COMPLETING TASKS, AND A JOB WELL DONE
7- I AM VERSITILE SPONTANEOUS AND THAT CAN MAKE ME DISTRACTED QUITE EASILY
8- I AM SELF CONFIDENT, ASSERTIVE, RESOURCEFUL, STRAIGHT TALKING AND DECISIVE

My Conflict Style:
100% COMPETER
66% AVOIDER
64% COMPROMISER
27% PROBLEM SOLVER
0% ACCOMMODATOR

ENTP-A

Strengths

- Intellectual/Problem Solver
- Persuasive Communicator
- Highly Adaptable
- Creative Solver

Weaknesses

- Novelist/Skeptic
- Blunt Communicator
- Difficulty with Follow-Through
- Rule Challenger

How I Communicate Best

Texting
This is the easiest way to get ahead of me. But I still may not answer right away. Sometimes my kids have my phone, and sometimes I'm just busy with life.

Email
Email is the second best way to get ahead of me. During the school year I let the notifications get pushed on my phone.

Zoom or TEAMS
Love it, love seeing peoples faces and feeling like we're in the same room.

Phone calls
I have really bad phone anxiety, even if I know who is calling, I despise talking on the phone.

I'm Not Ignoring You

I promise I'm not ignoring you, I want to get this done and get an A too. I just have so much going on:

- Kids/Dance 3 days a week.
- Kids/Chess 1 day a week.
- Kids/Archery 1 day a week.
- Kids/Volin 2 day a week.
- Kids/Forest School 1 day a week.
- I teach prep 2 days a week.
- I homeschool them 3 days a week.
- I work 5 days a week.
- I have school 2 days a week.

SOMETIMES I GET TOO EXCITED AND DOMINATE A CONVERSATION

I WORK BEST IN THE LATE EVENING, I KNOW THAT'S CRUCIAL TO ME!

What I do when I'm stressed:
Absolutely nothing, because I live in a constant state of stress <3

MY AREAS FOR GROWTH:
• **CONSCIOUS EMPATHY**
• **ORGANIZING OPEN ENDUD TEAM OF TEAMS**
• **CHANGEMAKING LEADERSHIP**

Availability and Scheduling

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
ANYTIME AFTER 2PM	3PM-6:15PM ANYTIME AFTER 8:45PM	TYPICALLY ANYTIME AFTER 10AM	TYPICALLY BETWEEN 10AM - 5PM	TYPICALLY ANYTIME AFTER CLASS	TYPICALLY ANYTIME AFTER 12PM	TYPICALLY ANYTIME AFTER 12PM

I CAN TRY TO SHIFT MY SCHEDULE AS BEST AS POSSIBLE FOR THE GROUP, HOWEVER NO GUARANTEES.

OPERATING MANUAL FOR ME

Amanda Klay

My Stress Triggers:

- Lack of recognition and peer communication
- Last minute changes to plans/ final paper or to make this room
- A culture of blame, which causes me to retreat and play it small
- Perfectionism that results in procrastination "crunch time" situations

I experience conflict when:

I feel that I can't get ahead, that someone is not being taken into account, and when I feel I am being out of order without a willingness to address the problem and work together - however a solution can still be reached through conflict as a planned ending.

How others can interrupt when I'm stressed or upset:

Give me the Benefit of the Doubt.

Know that I will need to see high standards and am using the best that I can. When you understand rights is not my profession, but a coping strategy you help engage the guilt I feel for not allowing an in healthy out vent in during stressful situations.

Check-in, and share.

Making space to genuinely & honestly talk about our feelings, progress, successes, and challenges is incredibly meaningful for me.

Provide Advanced Notice When Possible.

It is essential for me to great when I can not attend to make schedule adjustments on the spot. Request a change either via text or verbally and give me mental space to consider & adjust my schedule before I commit.

Bring a Team Mentality

We all need support and I take great comfort being reminded that I'm not going it alone. Being transparent, understanding, and being open to long conversations.

Encourage Breaks and Balance: Lead by Example.

If others are not taking a lunch break, I probably won't either. When others take breaks, go on walks, and have conversations that recharge, it lets me know it's okay for me to integrate these practices to keep me centered, fueled in, and productive.

2/3

OPERATING MANUAL FOR ME

Amanda Klay

Communication
I thrive on this.

I appreciate both planned and spontaneous communication and feel best when I can also contact writers on time. This could mean regular meetings and/or quick texts, frequency will depend on the tasks required of us.

Text

- Quick Check-ins
- Urgent Matters
- Scheduling Requests with "Short Turnaround"

Video Call

- Team Meetings
- Client Meetings
- Human-to-Human

Email

- Client Communication
- Documenting Progress
- Sharing Attachments

Scheduling

I am a morning person and prefer to end my work days by 4pm when possible!

My preferred meeting times include:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8-5pm	1-4pm	8am-noon	flexible	8am-noon
			1:30-4pm	1:30-4pm

*Note: My schedule is shared the 3rd and 4th Fridays of the month.

3/3

OPERATING MANUAL FOR ME

Amanda Klay

Myself: ENFJ **Enneagram: 2-9-4**

It is important to me that you know:

Everything I do is grounded in relationships and consideration of the human impact.

I enjoy serving as a sounding board, a synthesizer and interpreter of ideas, a generator of strategic, and someone who makes others feel good about themselves. I am an extroverted process. It helps me to feel heard and understood when I can share my thoughts and feelings with those around me.

I do my best work when:

- I am loved, supported, recognized, and respected.
- I am working in service to someone or something I believe in.
- I look at the big picture, create a timeline, divide responsibilities, and work at an intentional, calm, and steady pace.
- It's daylight/ I tend to lose sleep at night.

What I need from others:

- I need to know the plan under stress, my schedule becomes intimately tied to my psychological safety.
- Clear expectations. My default assumption is to put in more rather than less work. It helps me if you give me an estimate of the time you expect me to invest in a task.
- Accountability, integrity, compassion.

How others can help me show up as my best self:

The more I am encouraged, celebrated, and reassured by those around me the easier I feel to take risks, the more flexible and creative I become, and the more my true self surfaces.

1/3

Well-Being Plans

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WEEKLY WELLNESS EXPERIMENTS WEEKS 1-5

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WEEKLY WELLNESS EXPERIMENTS WEEKS 6-10

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT WEEKLY WELLNESS EXPERIMENTS WEEKS 11-14

WELLNESS STRATEGIES THAT DO AND DO NOT WORK FOR ME

MY WELLNESS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

From a former student (with permission). These are due later.

Even the professors participate!

PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST THEN HELP OTHERS!

WELLBEING PLAN for J. Kim Wright

DAILY ACTIONS

- Get 7-9 hours of sleep.**
Prioritizing sleep isn't a luxury, it's a vital component of holistic well-being that impacts pretty much every system in the body.
- Move for 30 minutes!**
Movement, in its many forms, is a celebration of vitality. By integrating it into daily life, we support not only physical health but also mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual harmony.
- Stay Connected!**
Social connections are an essential component of navigating stress. Friends provide not only a shoulder to lean on but also a reminder that you are part of a caring, supportive network. This connection fosters emotional resilience and makes life's challenges feel more manageable.

LONGER TERM ACTIONS

- Play**
Spend time with my sweetheart. Take time away from electronics. Create a date night. Take dance lessons!
- Watch more movies. Listen to more music.**
Watching a movie at home contributes to well-being by enhancing emotional connection, reducing stress, improving communication, and creating positive, shared memories.
- Eat good food.**
Good food nurtures both the body and mind, contributing to a happier, healthier, and more fulfilling life.

STRUCTURES FOR SELF-CARE

- Sign up for a class.**
Enroll in yoga, mindfulness, or fitness classes to create a routine and gain structure.
- Get an accountability buddy.**
Partner with someone to share goals, encourage each other, and stay accountable.
- Create rituals and habits.**
Attach a new habit to an existing one, like meditating after brushing your teeth or taking a walk after lunch. Celebrate accomplishment.
- Therapy**
Continue to meet with my therapist biweekly.
- Collaborate!**
Continue to collaborate with innovative folks.
- Inspiring Work**
Meaningful work fulfills fundamental human needs for purpose, connection, and growth.

THE JOY-FULL WELLBEING PLAN

COMMITMENT TO JOY

Choose yourself. Give an offering of love to yourself. Take time away from electronics. Create a date night. Take dance lessons!

JOY IN HEALING

One of the key aspects of my healing journey is becoming a student of myself. It is essential for my progress to be on of forgiveness and practices that my spirit supports me. Progress in healing through multidimensional modalities and sound food practices will be supported by my spirit and my heart and will lead to breakthrough, deep joy, and peace.

THE POWER OF JOY

Reveal delight in myself. Recognize my worth. Take time away from electronics. Create a date night. Take dance lessons!

VALUE OF JOY

Recognize the care you give that I give. I am not just a person, I am a person with a heart, a mind, and a soul. I am a person who is worthy of love and respect. I am a person who is worthy of joy and happiness. I am a person who is worthy of a life that is full of meaning and purpose. I am a person who is worthy of a life that is full of joy and happiness.

CULTIVATING JOY

I take time to develop and maintain beneficial and uplifting habits in the long run. Commitment to joy is a practice that is essential for my well-being. I will be committed to taking responsibility for my joy and happiness, creating a positive shift from within that reflects outwardly.

JOYFUL THOUGHTS

The joy you see in others doesn't have to be your joy. It can be theirs.

A REFLECTION OF JOY

It is a joy to be a part of the journey and to witness the growth and progress of my spirit. I am a person who is worthy of love and respect. I am a person who is worthy of joy and happiness. I am a person who is worthy of a life that is full of meaning and purpose. I am a person who is worthy of a life that is full of joy and happiness.

Sample Contract from Clinic

FULL BODIED SOUND

PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

CASSIE NADEAU AND STARR MELOCHE

TOUCHSTONE

VALUES
The underlying principles that guide our journey.

Holistic Community
Art is more than entertainment, it challenges, opens, and engages an audience with new and diverse perspectives

Vulnerability
A necessity to establish radical honesty, which can only exist when we create a safe space for each other to speak and listen

Radical Honesty
We agree to bring our true authentic selves to our partnership

Creative Growth
We will challenge peoples' perceptions of art -- what they can do and see.

Adaptability
We agree to bring our true authentic selves to this partnership

Clinic students work with clients to create contracts that represent their values and artistic tastes.

Touchstone: Purpose

Our purpose of engaging in forming a partnership is to relaunch Full Bodied Sound with a solid foundation in order to:

- Leverage our complementary talents in events coordination and talent networking with our holistic community values.
- Empower our ability to create opportunities for creative performers with unique unconventional voices.
- Enable performances to be accessible, engaging, and interactive to a wider audience, not just the wealthy, narrow venues.
- Establish an organization that can financially support our Mission, without compromising our Values and commitments to our performers.
- Support voices that have not been heard, in places that are not as often visited, and to support them well.
- Provide the opportunity for untested ideas and radical concepts to be experienced.

Touchstone: Vision

We envision a world where people view the creative arts as an integral part of life; just as important as any other part of their personal development.

- We want people to recognize that the creative arts are for everyone, not just for a band of misfits, where they provide a space where diversity is celebrated and welcomed
- This immersive and inclusive community transcends standard societal boundaries boundaries
- We aim to build a world where engaging in arts can still ensure financial and job stability for artists who wish to pursue their dreams, rather than making them choose between stability and happiness.

The creative arts should be a source of peaceful abundance for both the artists and those who wish to see them.

Asking for a Candle Conversation

We Agree: We call a candle conversation to empower the best versions of ourselves in order to encourage resolution.

To be clear why we want to meet

To wait to discuss the matter of the meeting

To accommodate a meeting with understanding and patience.

When there is a desire for an ACED conversation, the partner who is calling it will email or text their partner with the heading "Asking for a candle conversation"

The body of the message will include the level of urgency corresponding to the scale below, along with language such as:

"There is a specific challenge/conflict affecting me, and I want your help. I am having a problem with _____. Can we meet soon to discuss?"

Levels

Level 1 - URGENT URGENT URGENT

Level 2 - This is very important to me, let's meet soon.

Level 3 - This is important, but can wait.

Level 4 - This is worth a conversation, but can wait.

Level 5 - This might be worth a conversation, and it can wait.

Use the call for a conversation to suggest candle scents!



The Candle Conversation

- 1.) Check In
After lighting the candles together, we will begin the meeting with a check in. Being in touch with each other's feelings along with our own helps us grounded to help us express feelings in a healthy manner.
- 2.) Touchstone Reflection
As we begin our discussion, we commit to first recognizing parables of our guiding principles by reflecting on our Values, Vision, Mission, and Purpose.
- 3.) Make Space For Our Voices
When sharing, we will focus on using "I Feel..." Statements, Not "I Feel You Are" Accusations throughout the discussion.

We recognize that both of our feelings and perspectives are valid, this is a safe space for open, honest communication to flow.

While one person shares, the other should take notes, providing the space for the speaker.
- 4.) Listening And Mirroring
Listening to each other, taking notes to keep track of feelings, and reflecting our understanding to each other is meant to focus our conversation.

The Ritual

The person who calls the meeting will come with a clear, written message to focus our meeting's intention.

We light the candles together to show we are here for a specific purpose: to Address Change and Engage Disagreement. Once the candles are lit, we commit to following the steps to accommodate and address our issues.

When we are together, we share this symbol and this understanding as a sign of our partnership. If we are far apart, we agree to have something that represents our candles regardless of our physical separation.

Reach for "That's Right!"
Find the Common Truth!



Touchstone: Mission

OUR MISSION...

To relaunch Full Bodied Sound as not just a partnership, but within a friendship. We do not want to be bogged down in legalese, a win/lose legal structure. We want each of us as individuals, our friendships, and our business to prosper together. We're not just business partners, we're human!

In service of this mission, we will...

- 1.) Democratize the creative arts in order for people to see the value and impact they can have on their individual lives, and on society as a whole.
- 2.) Provide security for those who have a passion for the arts so that they can pursue their goals.
- 3.) Incorporate modes of promotion that are normally found in traditional business models in order to popularize the arts and foster stability for the artists who wish to perfect their craft.



REMINDERS...

Deception is the enemy of radical honesty

Mutual respect creates a safe space for us to express our emotions

Vulnerability is the foundation for trust

Feelings can't be separated from how we work.
"The best lessons are taught emotionally" - Cassie

Anger is a natural feeling, but uncontrolled anger is toxic

Dehumanizing behavior destroys safe spaces

Excessive Rigidity impedes creative growth

We all have bad days, but **there will be no Persistent Absence of Passion**

When someone's effort is not respected, valued, or reciprocated, it weakens our partnership.



5.) Solution Creativity

Any solution that we craft will include clear language on how we will define "progress" and "success" when we implement our plan.

We agree to keep in mind other challenges that are present in our lives when crafting a solution for a path forward.

Affirmation Reflection
We will demonstrate our readiness to commit to the solution.


When we both say "yes, that's right," this will also demonstrate we both have a clear understanding of what our next step will be.

Following Up on Our Commitments
We commit to use language such as "forward progress" or "yes, that's right" when following up on our partner with their commitment to the resolution. This will avoid blame, confrontation while also keeping each other accountable.

As part of our Candle Conversations, we commit to meeting and reflecting by editing our ACED worksheets. Doing this will help us listen to how we change as individuals in the course of our relationship together.

"Let's blow out the candle"
indicates we are ready to move forward.

*"How can I address this challenge?"
"How can my partner address this challenge?"*



Seeking Outside Help

We commit to bringing in a third party that is knowledgeable on a challenge that we're facing and that we need help in addressing.

This person should be outside our friend circles, but also someone we can both vibe with.

We agree to share the responsibility in researching to find this person.

"We Went to the Doctor, but Need a Second Opinion,"

We agree good faith participation in this ACED/Candle Conversation process is a condition precedent required before any litigation can be filed.

