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Cover Page Footnote
The author wishes to thank her research assistants Cyrah Khan, Elizabeth Leonard, and Kathleen Fergus. Thanks also to Professors John Mitchell, Elizabeth Porter, Paul Miller, and Paula Lustbader for their patient feedback. She also wishes to thank the Seattle Journal for Social Justice Editorial Board and staff for their work on this article.

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Tired of Talking: A Call for Clear Strategies for Legal Education Reform: Moving Beyond the Discussion of Good Ideas to the Real Transformation of Law Schools

Sara K. Rankin*

Legal education reform efforts have persist for over one hundred years, supported by substantive expertise, empirical data, cutting-edge curricula, and effective pedagogy. But today, the normative face of legal education remains essentially unchanged. If the substance behind legal education reform is valid, then what is the problem?

This article examines the stasis of legal education through the lens of historical reform efforts, political science, and contemporary organizational change theory. The author argues that legal education

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reform efforts are marginalized and have limited normative impact because reformers underestimate the strategic demands of systemic change. As a result, reformers have yet to build a coherent, collective strategy for the transformation of legal education. The author contends that reformers must shift from an exclusive focus on the substance of legal education reform to adopt a new focus on strategy. Finally, the author offers some starting points on how to begin a new strategic discussion on the transformation of legal education.

I. INTRODUCTION

School reformers often reinvent the wheel with little or no knowledge that many of their practices have rich historical precedents.1

[H]istory could provide direct solutions of sorts to present-day problems. At the least, it could keep us from repeating old mistakes.2

The law is a creature of language.3 Legislators debate definitions and codify specific terms into law; lawyers search for nuances in statutes and contracts; judges construe precedential language and write new opinions that may be binding on future disputes. While most other professions are

1 SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, SCHOOLS OF TODAY: WHAT HAPPENED TO PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION (HISTORY OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOLING V. 8) xvi (Susan F. Semel & Alan R. Sadovnik eds., 1999) [hereinafter SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW].
defined by products or services, the legal profession is uniquely defined by
definition: the law is obsessed with words and their specific meaning.

And yet, when it comes to legal pedagogy—how law students are taught
to read, write, and communicate like a lawyer—law schools operate in a
sort of rhetorical fog. Faculty can skillfully debate the specific meaning of a
legal term or write lengthy analyses of a single case; but for most faculty, it
remains a challenge to have a substantive discussion\(^4\) about transforming
legal education. How do students learn? What should they learn? What are
the best means to assess student progress? What are the implications for
how we teach law? What are the implications for evaluating law faculty and
law schools? For many law school faculty and administrators, these
questions simply raise more questions. And so the rhetorical fog descends,
ensuring stasis.

The collective inability to define and refine effective legal pedagogy
continues to impact the legal profession. A 2007 Carnegie Foundation
Report underscored this failing when it announced that graduating lawyers
are not practice-ready, that the legal community has become divorced from
the communities it serves as the social and human dimension of the legal
profession atrophies, and that this crisis affects us not only as individuals,
but also as a larger society.\(^5\) The Carnegie Report’s sobering diagnosis

\(^4\) Substantive discussion is distinct from rhetoric. See infra Part IV(A)(2). See also
[hereinafter FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE] (observing the “need to replace . . .
Pollyanna-ish rhetoric with informed action.”).

\(^5\) WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE
PROFESSION OF LAW (2007) [hereinafter CARNEGIE REPORT]; for extensive coverage of
the Carnegie Report and other contemporary critiques of legal education, see ROY
STUCKEY ET AL., BEST PRACTICES FOR LEGAL EDUCATION: A VISION AND A ROAD MAP
(1st ed. 2007) [hereinafter BEST PRACTICES]; AM. BAR ASS’N., LEGAL EDUCATION AND
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM: REPORT OF THE TASK
FORCE ON LAW SCHOOLS AND THE PROFESSION: NARROWING THE GAP (West 1992)
(commonly referred to as the “MacCrate Report”); AM. BAR ASS’N., SECTION ON LEGAL
EDUCATION AND ADMISSION TO THE BAR, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
TASK FORCE ON LAWYER COMPETENCY: THE ROLE OF LAW SCHOOLS (1979)
sparked an explosion of legal scholarship, adding to a compelling case for the need to reform legal education.

Spurred by the Carnegie Report and the increasing economic pressure to produce “practice-ready” graduates, several law schools are hosting conferences on education reform, some are adopting terms such as “student-centered” and “active listening” into their strategic plans, and still others are announcing more intensive reform measures. Various websites and blogs are now specifically devoted to innovation in legal education. Not to be


See generally A PLACE TO DISCUSS BEST PRACTICES FOR LEGAL EDUC., ALBANY LAW BLOGS, http://bestpracticeslegalized.albanylawblogs.org/about/ (last visited Dec. 14, 2011) (“This site was created with two goals in mind: 1) to create a useful web-based source of information on current reforms in legal education . . . [and] 2) to create a place where those interested in the future of legal education can freely exchange ideas, concerns, and opinions.”); Center for Engaged Learning in the Law (CELL), ELON UNIV. LAW SCH., http://www.elon.edu/e-web/law/cell (last visited Mar. 26, 2011) (“This site is intended to serve as a nexus for law teachers, students, administrators and practitioners to share different perspectives on how learning can be improved in law schools.”); Center for Legal Pedagogy, TEX. S. UNIV. SCH. OF LAW, http://www.tsulaw.edu/centers/legal_pedagogy.html (last visited Oct. 6, 2011) ("[T]he
outdone, the American Bar Association’s (ABA) law school accrediting body, the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, began a comprehensive review of the ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools in September of 2008. The section’s Standards Review Committee has been at the center of a maelstrom around reforms to accreditation that some predict could cause “a sea change” in legal education. Other examples of contemporary reform efforts are too numerous to survey in detail.

Given the Carnegie Report’s dire prognosis, the revived discussion about legal education reform is not surprising. What is surprising, or at the very

Center for Legal Pedagogy uses principles from the cognitive sciences about learning and discourse theory to study, implement, and evaluate law school teaching methodologies.


11 For example, the MacCrate Report pushed clinics from the margins closer to the mainstream of legal education. See, e.g., Russell Engler, The MacCrate Report Turns 10: Assessing its Impact and Identifying Gaps We Should Seek to Narrow, 8 CLINICAL L. REV. 109 (2001). Other resources, such as the AALS Sections on Teaching Methods, the AALS New Law Teachers Conference, and the Institute for Law School Teaching continue to impact pedagogical reform and to produce scholarship based upon sound learning theories. For more information on these programs, see Section on Teaching Methods, AALS, https://memberaccess.aals.org/eweb/dynamicpage.aspx?webcode=ChpDetail&chp_cst_k ey=7f6a02b7-e5a2-4d18-bfcd-d464ad64e42b (last visited Dec. 14, 2011); 2009 Workshops, AALS, http://www.aals.org/events_2009nltprogram.php (last visited Mar. 26, 2011); INSTITUTE FOR LAW SCHOOL TEACHING, http://lawteaching.org (last visited Mar. 2, 2011). Despite their impact, none of these efforts constitute systemic change. See infra notes 21–22.

12 See, e.g., Rebecca Sandefur & Jeffrey Selbin, The Clinic Effect, 16 CLINICAL L. REV. 57, 59 (2009) (“Recent critiques [of legal education] have sharpened the current focus on
least, disappointing, is that the discussion is still mired in rhetoric and is woefully short on specifics.

This article contends that legal education reform efforts have limited normative impact because advocates tend to adopt a myopic focus on the substance of reform and underestimate the strategic demands of systemic change. As a result, reformers have yet to build a coherent, collective strategy to transform legal education. This deficit calls for a revision of focus: to invite systemic and lasting change, advocates must move beyond discussions of the substance of reform and adopt a new focus on strategy.

This article also examines the persistent stasis of legal education through the lens of historical reform efforts, political science, and organizational change theory. Part II challenges the one-dimensional construction of reform as a change in product, content, or substance. Instead, for any substantive change to succeed, reformers must appreciate their task as a subversive, political, and strategic process. Part III compares contemporary legal education reform efforts to the progressive education movement, which began in the late nineteenth century. Part IV analyzes the reasons legal education’s curricular deficits, and law schools have begun to respond with individual and collective reform efforts.”);

13 See Fullan, Educational Change, supra note 4, at 354 (observing the “need to replace . . . Pollyanna-ish rhetoric with informed action.”).

why progressive education reform efforts failed, highlighting a botched experiment at Columbia Law School in the 1920s. This section observes that progressive education reform failed in large part because reformers underestimated the strategic demands of change. Part V grafts this lesson onto contemporary reform efforts. The article concludes that in order to transform legal education on a normative level, reformers must become educated about the strategic and systemic challenges of effecting change; they must define clear, shared terms for the reform, and they must organize for collective action at the institutional, regional, and national level. The core thesis of this article is simple: like any epic battle, the transformation of legal education cannot be won on the basis of a righteous cause alone.

II. LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM IS ABOUT PROCESS AND POWER (AS MUCH AS IT IS ABOUT SUBSTANCE)

A reform is a correction of abuses; a revolution is a transfer of power.\footnote{Quote attributed to English statesman, Robert Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873). Samuel Arthur Bent, Short Sayings of Great Men with Historical and Explanatory Notes 363 (James R. Osgoode & Co. 1882).}

Efforts to reform legal education are nothing new.\footnote{See generally Legal Education and Professional Development—An Educational Continuum: Report of the Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap, supra note 5 (identifying areas for reform); Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Lawyer Competency: The Role of Law Schools, supra note 5 (identifying areas for reform); Best Practices, supra note 5 (discussing contemporary pedagogical and curricular reform); Carnegie Report, supra note 5 (identifying areas for reform); Fine, supra note 5 (summarizing various reform efforts); Edward Rubin, What’s Wrong with Langdell’s Method, and What to Do About it, 60 VAND. L. REV. 609 (2007) (reviewing the advent of the Langdellian method and alternative views of legal education). See also infra Part IV (discussing the Columbia reform experiment in the 1920s).}

Although reformers have been wrestling with the form of legal education for more than 140
years, it essentially remains unchanged.\textsuperscript{17} Many factors contribute to the remarkable persistence of the traditional law school model, ranging from apathy, to inertia, to the common resolved belief that legal pedagogy does not need to change.\textsuperscript{18} But far more significant reasons for the stasis of legal education are often overlooked.

One fundamental reason underlying the stasis is that reform is often narrowly understood as an effort to change content; in terms of education reform, this understanding translates into a myopic focus on changing curriculum or pedagogy. But this singular focus on content ignores the most

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item See generally Sandefur & Selbin, supra note 12, at 60; see also Rubin, supra note 16, at 612 (“We are trapped inside a pedagogical fossil, marvelously preserved from a vanished era by the adamantine rock of a licensed monopoly.”).
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
challenging task of education reform: systemic change also requires a subversion of power.

Schools are “norming” institutions; they express and perpetuate the status quo. Dominant ideologies determine what schools teach and how they teach it. Education, in turn, shapes the ideologies of the future. Reform is an epic intervention in this cycle.

As such, efforts to reform education are “inherently subversive.” Reform is a struggle because it is an ideological battle, a contest to define and assert the dominant social ideology. Reformers cannot afford to envision their goal as simply one of content or substance. For any substantive change to succeed, reformers must also appreciate their task as a political process—a revolutionary undertaking. And no revolution, no matter how valid and compelling its basis, can succeed without a tactical plan.

To advance legal education reform, advocates must prepare a strategy—a campaign—to ensure the acceptance and long-term viability of the reform. Reformers must try to articulate a coherent movement and create the necessary environment to secure a meaningful, enduring impact. Any other result is not true reform. That is not to say there is no cause for celebration in isolated or localized instances of success. But in terms of a normative

19 KLEIBARD, supra note 2, at 288.
20 Id. at 274–75; Rubin, supra note 16, at 649.
22 If we care about issues of access, we cannot be complacent with localized reform. See, e.g., SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 11 (noting that although progressive education schools had social-reconstructionist goals, they ironically “served a primarily affluent population.”). Moreover, marginalized reform will never impact how law schools are evaluated on a national or comparative level. In other words, isolated reforms will continue to be undervalued because they will be evaluated by a metric that is biased toward traditional schooling. Education reform requires systemic change. See FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at xiii; BURKE, ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT,
discourse, such efforts will appear piecemeal and marginalized. Well-intended efforts may be viewed in hindsight as a fad. For those who support reform, this would be a tragic result.

III. LEARNING FROM THE PAST: PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION AS PRECEDENT FOR CONTEMPORARY LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM EFFORTS

The fate of the progressive education movement, dating back to the late nineteenth century, illustrates the toxic combination of a singular focus on substance and a failure to prepare for the political demands of change. The progressive education movement is a compelling case study of such a fatality because its theories and techniques are a primary instructional source for the development of contemporary legal education reform.24

The discussion warrants a preface on the definition of “progressive education.” While historians continue to debate the definition of progressive education,25 “a common core of progressive education emerges, however hazily.”26 These common elements are largely associated with the influential American philosopher, John Dewey (1859–1952). Dewey’s

supra note 18, at 14; SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at xvii, 16. 23 CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 190 (“[E]fforts to reform legal education have been more piecemeal than comprehensive.”).
24 Rubin, supra note 16, at 648. 25 KLIEBARD, supra note 2, at 273; SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 11 (citations omitted) (internal quotation marks omitted) (“[Progressive education’s] many often contradictory strands make it difficult to provide a capsule definition of progressive education.”). Daniel T. Rodgers referred to the elusive definition of the progressive era as “definitional wrangling.” Daniel T. Rodgers, In Search of Progressivism, REVIEWS IN AMERICAN HISTORY 113, 114 (Stanley I. Kutler ed., 1982). Indeed, this “definitional wrangling” illustrates a key underlying premise of this article: to succeed on a normative level, reform efforts must establish shared definitions of key terms. See infra Part IV(A)(2).
26 Kohn, Progressive Education, supra note 21, at 1.
philosophy is covered in detail in numerous other works, including his own. This article attempts to summarize some of the elements of progressive education below, although such efforts to define progressive education are subject to an inherent tension.

One faces a similar challenge in locating a common phrase to describe our contemporary legal education reform efforts. Some refer to a “legal education renaissance,” while others invoke the rubric of “comprehensive law.” But these phrases are not clearly defined and it is difficult to discern their boundaries.


28 For a sampling of John Dewey’s own writings, see JOHN DEWEY, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION (1916) [hereinafter DEWEY, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION]; JOHN DEWEY, DEWEY ON EDUCATION (Martin Dworkin ed., 1959); JOHN DEWEY, EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION (1938) [hereinafter DEWEY, EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION].

29 See KLIEBARD, supra note 2, at 273; SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 11; see also infra Part IV(A)(1) (discussing the debate about whether a coherent progressive era can or should be defined, especially Rodgers’s and Filene’s critique).


31 See Jess M. Kranich, James R. Holbrook, & Julie J. McAdams, Beyond “Thinking Like A Lawyer” and the Traditional Legal Paradigm: Toward a Comprehensive View of Legal Education, 86 DEN. U. L. REV. 381, 400 (2009) (internal citations omitted) (citing Susan Daicoff, Law as Healing Profession: The Comprehensive Law Movement, 6 PEPP. DISP. RESOL. L. J. 1, 3 (2006)) (“These common threads [of reform efforts] have led some commentators to refer to the changes cumulatively as the comprehensive law movement.”).
Although progressive education shares much in common with current reform efforts, it would be inappropriate to adopt “progressive” as a moniker for contemporary efforts. As explained below, progressive education reform suffered from many missteps, and the term carries its own baggage. Thus, articulated references to historical antecedents can easily become liabilities. Reformers must learn from the past but adapt for the future, so any reference for contemporary reform efforts should reflect its own unique visage. Perhaps as a not-so-subtle message of the need to clarify the terms of reform, this article occasionally uses the acronym “CLEAR” as shorthand for “contemporary legal education reform.”

A. Progressive Education as “CLEAR” Precedent

If one were to brainstorm key hallmarks of CLEAR, the resulting list would read like an executive summary of the hallmarks of progressive education from over one hundred years ago. Many of these theories are recursive and overlapping. These hallmarks include experiential learning, active learning, situated learning, differentiation, service learning, transformative education, collaborative learning, and interdisciplinary teaching.

**Experiential learning.** Experiential philosophies hold that all theory derives from some concrete human experience or practice, so education needs the context of practical experience to restore a sense of purpose and the intrinsic motivation provided by a sense of purpose. Experiential learning is the centerpiece of progressive education. Indeed, Dewey’s seminal text, *Experience and Education*, provided the template for

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32 DEWEY, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION, supra note 28, at 169 (“An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance. . . . [A] theory apart from an experience cannot be definitely grasped even as a theory.”).


LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM
contemporary understanding of situated learning, constructivism, and active learning. In legal education, we have approximated experiential learning to clinical teaching, apprenticeships, externships, class simulations, and role-plays.

Active learning derives from constructivist theories that “knowledge is constructed rather than absorbed.” As the old proverb states, “Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand.” In contrast to passive learning in a straight lecture format, active learning often involves collaborative groups, student-generated classroom materials, and student-led presentations or discussions to develop higher-order thinking skills of analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Students may be involved in curriculum design, class strategy, and peer or self-assessments. Instructional emphasis is placed on students’ interaction with the
environment, reflection, and the engagement of student attitudes and values. Educational theorists and cognitive scientists report that active learning results in higher student motivation, satisfaction, and performance.41

**Situated or “real world” learning.** Situated learning techniques seek to create an educational context that is as close as possible to the real world environment in which the learned skills are applied.42 In other words, education should happen in a context that reflects the messiness and complexity of actual practice.43 The objective of situated learning is the development of sophisticated analytical ability and judgment that cannot be replicated in a theoretical context.44 Situated learning is often referred to as problem-solving or problem-based learning.45 Such experiences are “not separated from the noise, confusion, and group interactions prevalent in real work environments.”46 In legal education, clinical programs typically rely on a combination of experiential, active, and situated learning.47

42 JEAN LAVE & ETIENNE WENGER, SITUATED LEARNING: LEGITIMATE PERIPHERAL PARTICIPATION (1991). See also CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 173 (“The interdependence of knowledge, skill, and sense of purpose . . . is difficult to teach or assess through the usual academic techniques, which focus on procedures and techniques out of context. . . . Practical judgment depends on complex traditions of living, which can only come alive through apprenticeship experiences.”).
43 CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 188 (criticizing law schools as paying “casual attention . . . to teaching students how to use legal thinking in the complexity of actual legal practice.”).
44 See Deborah Rhode, Legal Ethics in Legal Education, 16 CLINICAL L. REV. 43, 43, 51 (2009) (describing the role of experience and clinical education in the development of “reflective judgment”); Rubin, supra note 16, at 639 (“[S]tudents of politics learned . . . that the real world, and not a library, is the true laboratory of the human sciences. Legal academics needed another seventy years or so to learn this, and they have not yet applied those lessons to the law school curriculum.”).
45 MAHARG, LEGAL EDUCATION, supra note 18, at 38–42; SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 8.
47 See, e.g., Ellman, supra note 35, at 884–90.
Interdisciplinary teaching. Interdisciplinary teaching has been described as “an implementation of transactional realism.” The concept is a sort of “curriculum integration” across several disciplines. A team of teachers (each specializing in a different content area) might teach a single group of students, who are then asked to correlate or draw thematic connections. Or a single teacher might teach a unit across various disciplines with some organizing theme. Many law schools offer an array of interdisciplinary courses, such as law and business school combinations, law and social science classes, and jurisprudence courses. Interdisciplinary legal ethics classes are increasingly common in law schools and universities. Other interdisciplinary efforts, such as Writing Across the Curriculum, are also gaining popularity in legal education.

Collaborative, cooperative, or group learning. In contrast to traditional schooling, which requires the student to operate primarily or exclusively as an individual, collaborative learning requires students to work

48 MAHARG, LEGAL EDUCATION, supra note 18, at 14. Maharg’s text is an ambitious examination of interdisciplinarity and other progressive methods in the law school context.
49 The phrase “curriculum integration” was coined by education scholar Dr. James A. Beane. JAMES A. BEANE, CURRICULUM INTEGRATION: DESIGNING THE CORE OF DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION (1997).
50 See generally INTERDISCIPLINARY CURRICULUM: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION (Heidi Hayes Jacobs ed., 1989).
51 Chemerinsky, supra note 18, at 597 (“[L]aw is inherently interdisciplinary and must be shaped by understanding fields such as economics, philosophy, and psychology.”).
interdependently towards both personal and team goals. The learning environment stresses an interactive dynamic among multiple learners. Students must learn to work as a team, enduring the various stages of group formation and growth in order to work effectively. Cooperative learning techniques appeal to the social reality of legal practice, which involves clients, opposing counsel, teamwork, and other complex social dynamics.

**Differentiation.** Differentiation involves curricular and pedagogical adaptations for students’ different learning styles and experiences. Differentiation is a natural outgrowth of constructivist theories, which

55 Id. at 1008.
57 BEST PRACTICES, supra note 5, at 199–221 (discussing the benefits of collaborative learning). See also MAHARG, LEGAL EDUCATION, supra note 18, at 83 (internal quotations omitted) (citing JOHN DEWEY, THE LATER WORKS, 1925–1953 (J.A. Boydston ed., 1981)) (“[L]aw is through and through a social phenomenon; social in origin, in purpose or end [and an] inter-activity[, . . . which] can be discussed only in terms of the social conditions in which it arises and of what it concretely does there.”).
59 Constructivism is a very broad conceptual framework in cognitive science and is generally attributed to Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jerome Bruner. See, e.g., JEROME BRUNER, THE PROCESS OF EDUCATION (1977); JEAN PIAGET, TO UNDERSTAND IS TO INVENT: THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION (1973); VYGOTSKY, supra note 38. However, the roots of constructivist theory incorporated Dewey’s philosophies, including those articulated in Democracy and Education, published in 1916. DEWEY, DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION, supra note 28. See also Jong Suk Kim, The Effects of a Constructivist Teaching Approach on Student Academic Achievement, Self-Concept, and Learning Strategies, 6 ASIA PAC. EDUC. REV. 7 (2005) (reviewing Deweyan and constructivist theories).
hold that the learner brings a unique background and perspective to any learning environment, creating a unique dialectic. In legal education, differentiation remains a controversial topic but has gained popularity in contemporary reform efforts. Some educators cast differentiation as a means to achieve “inclusive” education, reaching diverse populations and learning styles.

Transformative goals. Dewey believed that a primary function of school was to prepare students for meaningful participation in society. Education influences the development of our individual and collective values, ethics, and identity. Therefore, progressive schools openly sought to facilitate individual and social change through student development. The Carnegie Report stressed a similar “transformative” potential for legal education. Transformative values are sometimes expressed in law school curricula or institutional messaging: commitments to difference and diversity, social justice, international law specialties, and pro bono clinics are a few examples. The transformative potential of legal ethics programming—and the impact on students’ ethical identities—is at the core of current debate.

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61 See, e.g., Lustbader, supra note 58.
63 CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 28; BEST PRACTICES, supra note 5, at 51–53.
64 SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 5–8, 367.
65 CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 138–40.
66 For more on the transformative potential of law school, see Krannich, Holbrook & McAdams, supra note 31; Anthony Alfieri, Against Practice, 107 MICH. L. REV. 1073, 1083–86 (2009) (discussing the Carnegie Report and “pedagogical transformation”).
67 See generally Rhode, supra note 44; Michael Robertson, Providing Ethics Learning Opportunities throughout the Legal Curriculum, 12 LEGAL ETHICS 59 (2009).
Community service. One means of transformative education is public or community service. Dewey envisioned an integration of the school, the individual, and the individual’s surrounding community. For Dewey, the individual’s participation in a democratic society placed civic engagement at the core of progressive pedagogy. Today, community service has an increasing role in higher education, including law schools. The rationale for community service in legal education includes the value to society, as well as the ethical and moral development of the student. In law school, community service often entails clinical work, marrying the value of experiential learning with the fulfillment of ethical obligations to society.

Alternative methods of assessment. Alternative student assessments reflect the progressive philosophy that true knowledge is not amenable to quantitative measurement; instead, the focus should be on qualitative reflections of student understanding and experience. Progressive schools resist summative, grade-based student evaluations in favor of formative, 

68 SCHOOLS OF TOMORROW, supra note 1, at 5–7.
69 Id. at 375–76.
71 Today, at least thirty-six law schools require noncredit hours of pro bono, community service, or public service as a graduation requirement. Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service and the Center for Pro Bono, AM. BAR ASS’N. (June 24, 2011), http://www.abanet.org/legalservices/probono/lawschools/pb_programs_chart.html#graduation_requirement.
72 CARNEGIE REPORT, supra note 5, at 21–22, 138–39, 176–80, 183–84 (discussing the importance of teaching and supporting the development of ethical, moral, and social responsibility in legal education).
73 Id. at 32–33, 41–42, 194–95; HOLDING VALUES: WHAT WE MEAN BY PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION 176–81 (Brenda S. Engel and Anne C. Martin eds., Heinman 2005); Kohn, THE SCHOOLS OUR CHILDREN DESERVE, supra note 27, at 21, 25–40, 196–97.
portfolio evaluations. Emphasis is placed on student self-evaluation. Alternative assessments also remove motivational barriers that compel students to focus on “how well they’re doing” instead of “what they’re doing.” Alternative methods of assessment can relate to student evaluation (summative or formative), teacher evaluation, as well as the evaluation and ranking of the educational institution itself. The redefinition of outcomes and assessments is an increasingly active topic in the law school context.

But law schools cannot measure what they do not teach. Therefore, any efforts to reform outcomes or assessment must contend with the strong iterative relationship between current teaching methods and current

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75 Id.
76 Id. at 28.
77 See id. at 164–66, 171–73, 182–83, 188–89; Best Practices, supra note 5, at 206.
78 Carpenter et al., supra note 18.
80 See supra notes 6–7 and accompanying text. For further reading on reforming outcome measurements in legal education, see Best Practices, supra note 5, at 42–91; Gregory S. Munro, Outcomes Assessment for Law Schools (2000). The Carnegie Report renewed debate over whether current assessments adequately measure necessary lawyering skills. Carpenter et al., supra note 18; Andrea A. Curcio, Assessing Differently and Using Empirical Studies to See if it Makes a Difference: Can Law Schools Do It Better?, 27 Quinnipiac L. Rev. 899, 902 (2009). Fueling the debate are considerations of student diversity and access, motivation and achievement, and the cache attached to U.S. News and World Report rankings, as well as logistical and financial resources. Carpenter et al., supra note 18, at 62–64 (discussing potential costs of establishing an “outcome-oriented accreditation process”); Fine, supra note 5, at 730–31 (discussing how rankings and costs have a negative effect on law school reform); Paula Lustbader, Teach in Context: Responding to Diverse Student Voices Helps all Students Learn, 48 J. Legal Educ. 402, 402–04 (discussing issues of student diversity and access).
81 Curcio, supra note 80, at 904 (“[I]n order to assess different skills, one must first teach those skills”). See also Carpenter et al., supra note 18, at 8 (“Law schools assess what they value.”).
assessment methods: the inadequacies of one perpetuate the inadequacies of
the other.82

Hence, the call for reform. Again.

IV. AVOIDING THE FATE OF PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION

One cannot understand the history of education in the United
States in the twentieth century unless one realizes that . . . John
Dewey lost.83

Each of the CLEAR reform concepts—experiential learning, active
learning, situated learning, differentiation, service learning, transformative
education, collaborative learning, and interdisciplinary teaching—has
important philosophical roots in progressive education. And yet, despite its
compelling substance, progressive education failed to make a normative,
long-term impact. Progressive education is currently marginalized and has
never been mainstream.84 This result can be attributed to another failure: the
failure to openly discuss and analyze a coherent strategy for the reform. In
other words, progressive education failed because of an almost exclusive
focus on substance, and no clear focus on strategy.

To believers in progressive education, this is a disheartening result:
something of tremendous value in extremely limited application. For
supporters of legal education reform, we must consider whether we are
nearing the same precipice.

82 Curcio, supra note 80, at 933.
83 Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, The Plural Worlds of Educational Research, 29 Hist. of
84 Id.; Schools of Tomorrow, supra note 1, at 20.
A. Challenges in Building a CLEAR Strategy: The Columbia Law School Experiment

[T]he more complex the reform[,] . . . the greater the problem of clarity. In short, lack of clarity—diffuse goals and unspecified means of implementation—represents a major problem. . . . [T]eachers and others find that the change is simply not very clear as to what it means in practice.85

Not only does the progressive education movement have much in common with contemporary legal education reform, but it was also admired by legal education reformers long ago. Indeed, today’s legal education could look very different but for a failed attempt to facilitate progressive education reform at Columbia Law School in the 1920s. In his book, Transforming Legal Education, Paul Maharg refers to Dewey’s influence on Columbia Law School as the “road not taken.”86 Columbia’s Dean, Harlan Fiske Stone, was a legal realist dissatisfied with common law tradition.87 Part of the problem, Stone believed, was that “[c]larity, as well as systematization, was a problem for lawyers—what he termed a lack of realistic understanding and of an accurate definition of many of its most fundamental concepts.”88 Stone was attracted to disciplinary reform, complaining that under the common law tradition legal “terms . . . constantly fall from our lips, but always with varying and elusive significance and application.”89 As a legal realist, Stone sought a new form of inquiry: one that rejected the legal formalism associated with the Langdellian case-based method of instruction and instead spotlighted the

85 Vollan, Educational Change, supra note 4, at 71.
86 Maharg, Legal Education, supra note 18, at 77–98.
87 Id. at 80.
88 Id.
89 Id. (quoting Harlan F. Stone, Columbia University Bulletin of Information, Annual Report of the Dean of the School of Law 327 (1923)).
connections between the law, social science, and human experience. But disciplinary reform would require curricular and pedagogical reform too, and Stone knew it.

In 1922, Stone invited Dewey to teach a course on Logical and Ethical Problems of Law at Columbia. Just a few months earlier, Professor Herman Oliphant, also a legal realist, joined Columbia’s faculty. The combination of these three scholars—Dewey, Stone, and Oliphant—was an unprecedented opportunity for systemic legal education reform.

Maharg details how the trio shared many views on legal realism, the role of education, and the need for education reform. Deweyan theory and legal realism expressed similar political, philosophical, and social ideologies: Dewey’s “language [was] pragmatist—[it emphasized] new forms of enquiry, the language of progressive, evolutionary reform, the social ameliorism and underlying optimism; [and] an insistence upon the uncertainty of legal rules and their artificiality.” Legal realism generally resonated with Dewey’s beliefs. Legal realism also emphasized a pragmatic view of legal education and attacked “the generalist tendencies of individualistic, socialist and organic social philosophies.”

The political, philosophical, and social synergies between Dewey’s theories and legal realism extended to education reform as well. When Dewey arrived at Columbia, he was already well known for his critiques of traditional schooling methods as artificial, fragmented, and lacking a

90 Id. at 77–83. The Langdellian case-based method of instruction was developed by Harvard Law Dean Christopher Columbus Langdell in the waning years of the nineteenth century.
91 Id. at 80.
92 Id. at 81.
93 Herman Oliphant of Treasury Dies, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 12, 1939, at 25 (noting that Oliphant joined Columbia in 1921).
94 Maharg, Legal Education, supra note 18, at 77–96.
95 Id.
96 Id. at 82–83.
97 Id. at 83 n.14.
meaningful relationship with society, experience, and the real world.\textsuperscript{98} This sentiment is echoed in Stone’s call for legal education reform:

The curriculum of the American law school is in some respects a makeshift, the resultant of forces many of which bear little logical relation to each other. The exigencies of the personnel of the teaching staff, the form and scope of particular text or case books, the constant tendency manifest in most educational enterprises to multiply courses, the undue overlapping of courses and the failure of any school in recent years to make a systematic revision of its curriculum are some of the elements contributing to the failure of law school curricula to realize to the fullest extent the needs and tendencies of present day legal education.\textsuperscript{99}

Oliphant made similar observations, stressing the social, human, and holistic weaknesses of the traditional legal curriculum:

\[\text{T}he\text{ feeling grows that students are going out only partly trained[,] for numerous specialized bodies of law are developing and we have not caught up by our tantalus-like addition of new courses. This suggests that in some of our so-called basic courses we have not got hold of some of those things which are really basic in the functioning of law with the result that this now hidden matter is constantly cropping out here and there as specialized and apparently unrelated problems. . . . It is believed that, if we are really to get at the fundamentals, the organization of the curriculum must be more in terms of the human relations dealt with and less, as largely now, in terms of the logical concepts of the conventionally trained mind.}\textsuperscript{100}

\textsuperscript{98} See supra Part IV(A).
\textsuperscript{99} MAHARG, LEGAL EDUCATION, \textit{supra} note 18, at 78 n.3 (quoting Harlan F. Stone, \textit{COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BULLETIN OF INFORMATION, ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF LAW} (1922)).
\textsuperscript{100} Id. at 88 (quoting Herman Oliphant, \textit{The Revision of the Law School Curriculum} (1923), at 6).
Maharg establishes various other synergies between Stone, Oliphant, and Dewey that sparked Columbia’s reform effort. But the spark never caught flame. Instead, Oliphant and Stone devoted significant time and energy to a reform effort that amounted to the implementation of a few temporary, inconsistent “reformed courses.” Many reasons contributed to the failure, but chief among these was the lack of appreciation for strategy—both in terms of teaching methodology and the coordination of the implementation of reform. Oliphant created careful plans to “outline the problems and the solutions to curricular reform, grouping them as ‘whom shall we teach, how shall we teach, and what shall we teach?’” But in practice, the effort “had the effect of shifting the attention of faculty reformers from functionalist and pragmatic methodology (how they were going to achieve their goal) and led to a concern with empiricism (what they would teach to achieve their goal).” In other words, the question of what should be taught eclipsed the question of how these new courses should be taught. In his exhaustive review of the Columbia experiment, Maharg notes that “nowhere do we find at Columbia a detailed discussion of educational method.” He concludes the faculty and administration needed to “give much more thought to classroom practice and to the definition and implementation of realist educational principles.” Although Stone’s writings reveal “deep thought [about] the redesign of the curriculum,” they also reveal a lack of clarity about how to implement these changes.

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101 Id. at 77–96.
102 Id. at 89.
103 Id.
104 Id. at 87 (quoting Herman Oliphant, The Revision of the Law School Curriculum (1923), at 1).
105 Id. at 90.
106 Id. at 89.
107 Id. at 92.
108 Id. at 80.
109 Id. at 90–91.
Even if one assumes complete faculty buy-in for the content of the reformed curriculum, Maharg’s review shows the Columbia reformers did not have a clear, shared understanding of how to translate the substantive concepts into practice.

Legal realism was a philosophy that needed grounding in established pedagogical theories and practice. Without a clear, shared definition of the substantive terms of reform, and without a clear strategy and consistent guidance for implementing these terms, Dewey’s theories were too challenging to translate into practice. Indeed, “Dewey’s approach allowed others to flourish by giving them the space to flesh out the Deweyan structure; but it was a weakness for a general strategy of legal education which is what the realist endeavor desperately needed.”\(^\text{110}\)

Like many education reform efforts, Columbia’s effort stalled in large part from a failure to ensure clear, common understanding of the terms or strategy for reform. Today, Columbia, like the vast majority of American law schools over the last 140 years, primarily relies upon traditional methods of teaching law.

The Columbia experiment illustrates the consequences of underestimating the process of transforming legal education. It exposes a lacuna between solid theories and successful, systematic implementation: a black hole that devours the best intentions. To avoid a similar outcome, advocates must add a new dimension to the discussion about legal education reform by focusing on building a coherent strategy. As explained below, this focus requires advocates to become metacognitive about the reform process and covers at least three ideas:

1. Consider whether current reform efforts can form the basis of a feasible movement. Is there, or could there be, sufficient coherence of interest among potential advocates for reform?

\(^{110}\) Id. at 95.
What opportunities exist, or could exist, for potential members to identify each other and coalesce around a shared vision for reform? What opportunities exist, or could exist, for recruitment and education of members? Real change is a systemic process\textsuperscript{111} that requires deliberate organization and collective action, so these considerations have important strategic implications.

2. Determine what language best defines the reform. If a critical mass of membership can be identified, do these members share a vocabulary? If so, what are the key terms and how are these terms communicated? Does this shared language center around loose abstractions or does it engage terms with common and concrete meaning? Defining a shared language is a prerequisite to reform.\textsuperscript{112}

3. Articulate an action plan. What is the agenda for the reform? Are there plans that incorporate strategies at the individual level? The institutional level? Regional or national levels? The scope of the action plan necessarily limits the potential scope of implementation. Without a coherent plan for implementation, good ideas generally stay good ideas. Action plans increase the likelihood that good ideas evolve into actual practices; systemic action plans increase the likelihood of realizing systemic transformation.

1. The Challenge of Discerning a CLEAR Movement

How can one tell if CLEAR provides the basis for a movement? Common characteristics distinguish a movement from coincidental or

\textsuperscript{111} See, e.g., Burke, Organization Development, supra note 18, at 14; Fullan, Educational Change, supra note 4, at xiii; Schlechty, Inventing Better Schools, supra note 18, at xvii, 16.

\textsuperscript{112} See generally, Fullan, Educational Change, supra note 4.

LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM
symbiotic activities. Generally, a movement entails: (1) a broad category of people who share certain fundamental beliefs of reform; (2) sufficient coherence that members can identify one another as members of an ideological family; (3) deliberate, self-conscious combination and action among members (4) that results in an advantage of organization, enabling a movement to lobby and build its constituency; and (5) direction of this collective effort to ensure the long-term impact of the reform. Illustrative examples include the women’s suffrage movement and the civil rights movement.

Not every group interest or activity qualifies as a movement. Although various individuals may come together to support a certain reform, they may be prompted by “opportunistic” moments or “improvisation,” as opposed to a shared, “consistent social vision or political program.” Peter Filene, a twentieth century historian, refers to these collective but sporadic or fragmented efforts as “shifting coalitions.”

Educational policy scholar Herbert Kliebard offers vocational training as an example of a shifting coalition. He notes that various reformers joined forces to support the institution of vocational training, but that they came together for different reasons. Some came because they believed in

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114 Kliebard, supra note 2, at 283.
115 Filene, supra note 113, at 27.
116 Kliebard, supra note 2, at 284.
117 Filene, supra note 113, at 21.
118 Rodgers, supra note 25, at 121.
119 Kliebard, supra note 2, at 280.
120 Id. at 284.
121 Id. at 280–81 (citing Peter G. Filene, An Obituary for ‘The Progressive Movement,’ 22 AM. Q. 20, 33–34 (1970)).
122 Filene, supra note 113, at 33–34.
123 Kliebard, supra note 2, at 282.
124 Id.
“preserving the dignity of work in school programs.” Some came because they “despair[ed]” there was no other way to handle a new, diverse student body than to provide “a highly differentiated curriculum.” Others supported vocational training because they believed it “dissolve[d] artificial barriers” between school and the real world. Although different reformers coalesced on this one issue, they were completely opposed on other fundamental matters of education reform.

One can debate whether the institution of vocational training was a success. But Dewey’s theories required a more ambitious transformation of American education, which could only be realized by organizational support on the scale of a movement. Instead, a lack of structure and strategy brought progressive education to its knees.

Historians Daniel Rodgers and Peter Filene have examined the progressive era and reject the notion of a coherent progressive identity. Rodgers reflects on the “Procrustean exercise of trying to stretch those who called themselves progressives over a single ideological frame. . . . [This exercise produces] a list of ideas so general as to be held by practically everyone or so ambiguous, and even contradictory, as to foreclose the possibility that members of the same movement could hold them simultaneously.” Filene similarly rejects singular definitions of progressivism as “hover[ing] between paradox and meaninglessness . . . struggling desperately to fit [a] concept onto data that stubbornly spill over the edges of that concept.” He observes that such definitional “logic [is] elliptical, slurring over the intermediate question of whether the reformers

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125 Id.
126 Id.
127 Id.
128 Id. at 271–91.
129 Id. See also Filene, supra note 113, at 33–34; Kohn, Progressive Education, supra note 21, at 4; Rodgers, supra note 25, at 115–16.
130 Rodgers, supra note 25, at 114.
131 Filene, supra note 113, at 32.
themselves felt a common identity and acted as a collective body.” As a result, Rodgers and Filene conclude that whatever one might call “the progressive era” did not amount to a coherent, lasting identity.

Do contemporary legal education reform efforts resemble a “shifting coalition” doomed to a limited or diffuse impact? Arguably, those of us who support the transformation of legal education are too disorganized to secure systemic progress. Many of us resort to innovation in the privacy of our own classrooms and accept the institutional consequences of operating on the fringes of academia. We must better educate ourselves about the process of change and take seriously the task of deliberate combination, organization, and strategic action. To be sure, this is no easy task. But to have any realistic shot at strategic progress, we must also speak the same language.

2. The Challenge of CLEAR Communication and Action

If ideas are to move action, they must be made accessible to those who will be called on to use them.

Acting on change is an exercise in pursuing meaning.

Clear, shared terms are necessary for the development of group identity, goals, strategic plans, and ultimately, collective action. Consistent use of specific language permits members of an ideological group to identify each other, to communicate, and “to secure political allegiances . . . on behalf of

132 See supra notes 20–21 and accompanying text.
133 See, e.g., Fred R. Shapiro, They Published, Not Perished, But Were They Good Teachers?, 73 CHI.-KENT L. REV. 835 (1998) (discussing how current criteria for promotion and tenure marginalize good teachers).
134 SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at xiv.
135 FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at 351.
136 Id. at 62; SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at 100–17.
In this sense, language is branded and serves as a sort of “ideational glue” or slogan system. But if language is to create meaningful coherence, it needs to be defined beyond the abstraction of slogans and catch phrases. Consider the popular term “student-centered.” As a law professor, I use this term all the time and I have my own conception of what “student-centered” means. It is used in a wide range of legal education materials, journals, law school mission statements, and publicity materials. But I have used the phrase enough to discover that “student-centered” means such a wide range of things to others that I have become concerned that this phrase has no concrete definition at all.

Like slogans, reform rhetoric often has an elusive or elastic quality. Popular reform phrases, like “democracy,” are virtually impossible to reject but even harder to define. Rodgers makes this observation of progressivist terminology, tackling one popular phrase as an example: social justice. “‘Social justice’ is a case in point—a powerful Rooseveltian slogan in 1912 which, in the absence of anyone willing to defend ‘social injustice,’ worked its magic in large part through its half-buried innuendoes and its expansive indistinctiveness.” Slippery and ephemeral, reform rhetoric sounds great, but lack real content that can be translated into action.

A fundamental problem with reform rhetoric is that it often becomes a distraction from action—a sort of academic narcotic. Educators talk about change, and talking makes us feel good—like we are actually doing something. To some extent, this is true: it is necessary to discuss goals, but

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138 Kliebard, supra note 2, at 286. See also Rodgers, supra note 25.
139 Rodgers, supra note 25, at 121.
140 Burke, Organization Development, supra note 18, at 153–54.
141 Cf. Rodgers, supra note 25, at 113–15 (describing historians’ efforts to define “progressivism”) (“[T]he conflicting interpretations of progressivism could not be made to add up.”).
142 Id. at 122.

LEGAL EDUCATION REFORM
missions, and plans. Discussion can open the door to strategic solutions. But unless we forge a clear bridge from discussion to action, then discussion is not a means to a solution. To the contrary, the attempted solution becomes the problem. Rhetoric instills a sense of “false clarity [that] occurs when change is interpreted in an oversimplified way.” As a result, “people think that they have changed but have only assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice.”

At this point, rhetoric masquerades as progress but instead inhibits it. Organizational change expert Michael Fullan refers to a similar phenomenon as the “pacifier effect.” He describes most reform efforts as having “a pacifier effect because they give the appearance that something substantial is happening when it is not.” Rhetoric is such a pacifier, giving the illusion of action. Even at its best, rhetoric prescribes general and abstract goals, resulting in “nonchange.”

Reform rhetoric is distinct from substantive discussion about reform. Substantive discussion is based on data, information, and education; it involves collective and sustained effort; it develops commonly understood goals and strategies; it offers meaningful guidance on implementation and

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143 SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at 60–76; FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at 71.
144 PAUL WATZLAWICK, JOHN WEAKLAND & RICHARD FISCH, CHANGE: PRINCIPLES OF PROBLEM FORMATION AND PROBLEM RESOLUTION 57 (W.W. Norton & Co., Inc. 1974). This phenomenon calls to mind the proverb, “The greatest talkers are always the least doers” (John Ray, English Proverbs, 1670).
145 FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at 70.
146 Id. at 35.
147 Id. at 352.
148 Id.
149 Id. at 34–35.
practice; and it provides ongoing assessment and support. Ultimately, substantive discussion spurs action.

Of course, substantive discussion is far more difficult than rhetoric. That is why so many of us opt for rhetoric, settling for “the quick fix and ... ad hoc, small-scale, piecemeal innovations.” In the context of education reform, this posture is not a compromise; it is a total surrender. If we continue to pay “more lip service than mind service” to the transformation of legal education, we cannot expect real change.

Advocates must critically examine the language we use for contemporary legal education reform. We must move beyond platitudes and articulate specific and comprehensible terms. We must define clear and replicable strategies. At this relatively early stage in the evolution of legal education reform, advocates should not promote elusive concepts that are neither coherently defined by those who support them, nor comprehensible to those who remain to be convinced. We must articulate a clear campaign for the transformation of legal education.

V. SHIFTING THE FOCUS FROM SUBSTANCE TO STRATEGY

If we are not careful we can easily witness a series of non-events and other superficial changes that leave the core of the problem untouched.

So where can legal education reform advocates start? How can we begin to adopt a more strategic perspective for changing legal education? A

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150 Id. at 80–90. See also BURKE, ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT, supra note 18, at 55–65; SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at 134–38, 164–66.
151 SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, supra note 18, at 76 (“The important thing is ... to cause the conversation to occur and to act upon what emerges.”).
152 FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at 6.
153 Id. at 11.
154 Id. at xiii.
A comprehensive answer is beyond the scope of this article, but a few starting points are suggested below.

A. Challenge Ourselves and Our Colleagues

Advocates can start with some honest self-assessment. Consider the following questions:

- How much do I and my colleagues really understand about current efforts to reform legal education?
- What do I/we know about the arguments for reforming legal education?
- What are the bases for these arguments?
- What specific terms of reform have been or should be embraced by my institution?
- Do my colleagues and my administration share a common understanding of these terms? If not, what institutional support exists to facilitate a common understanding?
- Is my administration committed to providing ongoing training or education to support innovation?
- What specific pedagogical and curricular modifications can I/we make to reflect contemporary knowledge about teaching and learning?
- How will I/we measure progress in meeting these reform objectives?

After reflecting on these questions, ask yourself: Do I feel like I could facilitate a substantive discussion about the transformation of legal education? Could many of my colleagues do so? Most of us cannot honestly answer either question in the affirmative. To those of you who can, ask yourself what you are doing to facilitate and maintain substantive discussion at your law school. Whatever you are doing, do more. Advocates must press our colleagues to consider these questions and join us in the quest to find substantive answers.
B. Become Educated About the Process of Change

Legal education reform promises to be a complex journey. If we educate ourselves about the process of change, we will be better prepared to plan, implement, and evaluate reform. A bevy of expertise in organizational change already exists, particularly in the public education context.155 While

law schools differ from these contexts, many principles of organizational change theory are applicable to reform efforts in legal education. Therefore, law schools interested in education reform should secure a means for the administration and faculty to receive substantive (and, ideally, coordinated) training in organizational change theory.

The unique challenges of change in the law school context call for the development of new organizational change studies focused on legal academia. Some legal scholars already possess experience in organizational change theory and should redouble their focus on developing specific primers, training programs, and other resources to assist law schools in becoming educated about the process of change.

C. Organize at Institutional, Regional, and National Levels

Current reform efforts are piecemeal and fragmented. To facilitate systemic change, we must strive to build functioning coalitions at the institutional, regional, and national levels. This requires a shift from insular thinking about the substance of education reform to strategic thinking about coordinated, collective discussion and action.

There are several ways to coordinate our efforts. For example, law schools interested in reform could appoint one or more individuals as delegates to coordinate change efforts at institutional and national levels. The formal designation of delegates streamlines responsibility and creates accountability. Current leaders in legal education reform could facilitate the assembly of regional and national teams of delegates, who are tasked with


156 See supra notes 21–22 and accompanying text.

157 My colleague, Paula Lustbader, has observed that law schools commonly charge an Associate Dean with facilitating faculty scholarship, but currently, no corollary exists for an administrator to facilitate innovation in curriculum and pedagogy.
creating and coordinating substantive discussion about legal education reform. In the spirit of representation, these delegates could be responsible not only for developing expertise in substantive and strategic considerations for legal education reform, but also for making recommendations and facilitating implementation of reform plans.

National organizations and associations, such as the Society for American Law Teachers (SALT) and the American Association of Law Schools (AALS), can also employ their resources to facilitate the collective organization of reform efforts—from the individual to the national level. SALT’s recent conference, “Teaching in a Transformative Era: The Law School of the Future,” is just one example of the coordinated venues that could advance discussion and planning around the strategic and systemic challenges of effecting change.  

VI. CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF LEGAL EDUCATION

*Armed with knowledge of the change process, and a commitment to action, we should accept nothing less than positive results on a massive scale—at both the individual and organizational levels.*  

Education reform experts routinely identify the definition of shared goals, commonly understood strategies, and measurable outcomes as predictors of successful education reform. Despite the support of cognitive science and learning theory, progressive education never successfully incorporated these predictors into a coherent, collective structure or strategy. As a result,

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159 FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, *supra* note 4, at 354.

160 DEAL & PETERSON, *supra* note 18, at 10, 26–27 (education reform requires institutions to develop a shared culture, reinforced by consistent values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms). See also SCHLECHTY, INVENTING BETTER SCHOOLS, *supra* note 18, at 120–21; FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, *supra* note 4, at 94–98, 100–02.
progressive education still lingers on the fringes of the academic world, enjoying only occasional (but fleeting and limited) revivals. The Carnegie Report has temporarily revived interest in many progressive theories and practices in legal education—but so far, legal education reform efforts exhibit the same symptoms that have quashed precedential efforts.

While some of us are trying our hand at the transformation of legal education, we collectively continue to underestimate the task. The status quo is a relentless adversary that enjoys almost every strategic advantage. It will refuse to go down easily. We cannot arm ourselves simply by writing more articles or attending more conferences. We must become more metacognitive about the process of reform. We must organize, define concrete terms, articulate clear strategies, develop and implement plans to validate the impact of these strategies, lobby at the highest levels, and continue to build our constituency until we prevail. The transformation of legal education is an epic battle. We must be prepared to fight—or to lose.

161 FULLAN, EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, supra note 4, at 29 (“We have our work cut out for us. . . . [E]ducational reforms we value do not stand much of a chance.”); Id. at 93 (“The odds against successful planned educational change are not small. Increasing our understanding of implementation may alter them.”).

162 Id. at 354.