

This model postulates that in order for effective teaching and learning of case reading were to take place, the curriculum must ensure that it encompasses four fundamental components which are training, skills, reading strategies and socio-pedagogical dimension.

The most crucial element in equipping law students with the ability to read cases is to provide proper and comprehensive training for students to hone this crucial lawyering skill. As discovered in this study, the law school – Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws – has been proactive in this respect by establishing two legal skill courses namely Legal Method and Compulsory Mooting. The former focuses on the theoretical aspects of the training while the latter focuses on the practical aspects.

Nevertheless, far from being perfect, the study acknowledges a few elements in the training component that require further improvement in its implementation. Firstly, it is considered more useful if the training of legal skills is introduced in the first year first semester of the students' study period. In doing so, it will enable the students to adapt and assimilate themselves comfortably into the new discourse and avoid the 'transition problem' (Krashen, 1981). Furthermore, the exposure gained will provide them the necessary support to face and handle this specialized field more confidently. Secondly, the instructors teaching the skill courses need to be creative and innovative by improvising the instructional methodology to include different types of learners. They need to consider the different students' abilities and their means in acquiring knowledge where some students are visual, audio and tactile. Most importantly they must stop spoon-feeding the students at such elemental stage of their study as this practice will be greatly detrimental in producing independent and capable members of society in the future. In addition to the formal instruction to the training, it might be useful to conduct workshops or seminars which focus on sharing some useful tips on how to handle the common problems in reading cases or any other legal skills.

The next important ingredient in the training of case reading is the skills. As elaborated earlier, among the important skills in reading cases are competency of English

language, knowledge of Legal English and legal terms, knowledge of law and critical thinking skills.

Besides those cognitive-related skills, the study also made an interesting discovery on the role of affective domain as a motivating factor to propel students to succeed in their studies. It was found that despite their incompetence in English language, some students were successful in their studies due to their diligence, patience in facing the challenges in their studies, unwavering determination and undeterred interest to excel in law. On the contrary, students who were proficient in English language might not perform equally well due to the lack of these important qualities.

The third crucial component toward effective training in the reading of cases is reading strategies. The research acknowledged that in order for students to be able to read the legal cases effectively they need to be proficient in English language. On top of that, they need to possess sufficient and appropriate schematic knowledge in reading different types of cases. This schematic knowledge includes content schemata, linguistic schemata, formal schemata and cultural schemata. Besides that, another element which is equally significant is the knowledge of the 'real-world' that readers bring into their reading. This was detected particularly in the reading of the lawyers where they connected to their existing knowledge of the profession and the legal fraternity. It is understood that the law students may not be able to do the same as they are still going through their training but it should be kept in mind that at the end of the day they should be able to do the same.

For the training to be effective, it is opined that the design of the training must include 'real-world' purposes. This means that the law students must be given legal problems that represent the real problems of the society. Additionally, the legal scenarios presented to the students must include their future roles in the legal profession. In other words, the training should be more professionally inclined rather than academically inclined.

This study also brings the important role of strategic reading techniques in case reading to the fore. These techniques include default strategies, rhetorical strategies and problematizing strategies. Since the study has clearly illustrated the ability of the HPG and the lawyers in employing diverse types of these strategies effectively and frequently in accomplishing the goals of their reading, it is highly recommended that law students should be taught and made aware of these three types of strategies and they should be encouraged to employ them when they read cases. Moreover, Berger (1999) in Christensen (2008) accentuates that “law students may more quickly become more expert as legal readers if their teachers base some of their instruction on expert behavior” (p.57).

On top of that, the training should also highlight some useful strategic thinking approaches to be utilized by students. One of the most useful is for them to focus on the material facts and the verdict and later identify the information that represents the legal reasoning brought forth by the judge that leads to the verdict. These approaches will definitely help learners to be more focused as they have already set forth clear objectives for the reading of the cases.

The final component that plays an equally significant function is the socio-pedagogical dimension of the training. The study asserts that for any kind of training to be successfully implemented it must take note of the factors that may become the stumbling block. The obstacles identified in the study were derived from two perspectives – the learners and the lecturers. According to the learners, among the challenges they faced in reading cases were their incompetence in English language, the difficulties posed by legal English, time constraint; and the types, number and thickness of cases. On the other hand, the lecturers perceived the students’ problems as lacking the skills in reading cases, over-relying on textbooks and having attitudinal problems such as taking LM for granted, lacking effort, showing poor attendance, being lazy and lacking inclination toward practice. Problems were also identified among lecturers teaching the legal skill courses which were resistance in

teaching the legal skill courses, manifestation of lackadaisical attitude and presence of 'lay the blame syndrome'.

Besides that, the study also made an interesting discovery on the role of another element in the socio-pedagogical dimension which is important in the students' learning process. This element is termed MKO (More Knowledgeable Other) as propounded by Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. In reference to this theory, Vygotsky asserts that while students are going through the zone of proximal development (ZPD) i.e. the period where they are trying to acquire the mastery of specific skills, they will require as much assistance as possible from people and things around them. The study found that in facing the challenges in their studies, students did refer to their peers, senior students and lecturers; and they did make use of dictionary, internet and other reading sources. Hence, the study opines that this element (MKO) must be taken into great consideration in formulating the design for a legal skill course as it provides the much needed scaffolding or coping mechanisms for the learners as they strive towards higher level of competence in their studies.

It is the hope of this study that the Model on Effective Reading of Legal Cases deliberated above will present useful and meaningful guidelines for any law schools wishing to establish its own training on legal skills particularly the reading of legal cases.