



**SLEEI**  
Strengthening Legal Education  
in Eastern Indonesia



# Working Paper 1

## Interactive teaching in legal education

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**KIT** Royal  
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## Colophon

This paper is part of a series of 5 original working papers of the project “Strengthening Legal Education in Eastern Indonesia” written as key reference material for training law lecturers in Eastern Indonesia. Each paper discusses one of the core themes of the SLEEI project and explains the issues that come up when enhancing law courses on content regarding the themes. The papers also contain practical suggestions on how to integrate the enhancements in existing courses. These five papers compose the core of what will become the SLEEI manual for strengthening legal education. They are co-authored by Indonesian and Dutch experts who cooperate in SLEEI. All the papers as well as more information on the project, events and updates can be found on the SLEEI websites in [Bahasa](#)<sup>1</sup> and [English](#)<sup>2</sup>.

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Leaves of Eastern Indonesia’s iconic lontar palm. Photo: J. Vel

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sleei.law.ugm.ac.id/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/en/research/research-projects/law/strengthening-legal-education-in-eastern-indonesia>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/subjects/institutional-collaboration-projects/>

# Interactive teaching in legal education

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## What is interactive teaching?

Many university-level law courses in Indonesia are organized around long and comprehensive presentations making use of PowerPoints that can easily cover 50 to 100 slides. Interactive teaching refers to all efforts of the lecturer, teacher or trainer to break out of this one-way – teacher to student – form of communication and engage in some form of dialogue and interaction with students.

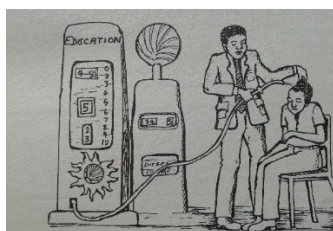
It is a form of teaching that creates the momentum for students to become active rather than passive learners. Passive learners may take notes in a lecture, but often in an unstructured way and without the lecturer being aware of what is noted. When they are studying for a test they just re-read their notes and cram at the last minute, and often this is enough to pass the test. Active learners, however, are guided by the lecturer to reflect on what they heard, organise the content for themselves, ask questions, and try to link it to what they know about practice.

Presentations have a place in university education, if done well, are not too long with good use of supporting visuals such as PowerPoints. Interactive teaching can be used both to increase the effectivity of the “lectures” when interaction is integrated in the presentation and to complement lectures with other forms of teaching that greatly enhance the learning of students.

Interactive teaching only works well if the basic design, planning and assessment of a course are well done. This paper also summarizes a number of basic guidelines to arrive at a solid course design.

## The need of interactivity for adult education to be effective

University law students are not kids anymore. A major motivation for more interactive forms of teaching is grounded in the **understanding of how adults learn**. The following figure shows how adults **do not** learn but how formal education is often done or perceived<sup>4</sup>.



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<sup>4</sup> Hope et al, 1984.

In contrast all evidence shows that adults learn best when conditions are created as follows<sup>5</sup>:

**Adults learn best when the learning:**

**As a teacher, you can:**

**Is autonomous and self-directed**

Involve students in the learning process; what do they want to achieve by following classes?

**Is directed towards a goal**

Show students the big picture from the beginning, what the class is to achieve, outcome for the students

**Is relevant and practical**

Use practical cases and problems, real-life teaching situations

**Acknowledges students' experience**

Realize that students have experiences on the topics, prepare what these could be; link to these in classes

**Matches learner's style**

Teach using a variety of methods

**Is active**

Create ways for reflection and interaction

**Provides feedback**

Give timely feedback to students, positive and negative.

**Takes place respectfully**

Be courteous, learn names, show value in contributions

Providing education as much as possible along above lines is not only more effective but also more fun for both lecturers and students. Whereas teaching through one-way lectures only is known to have a very low retention rate.

### **Interactive teaching and the professional competence of law graduates**

Interactive teaching is of particular interest for preparing students for the challenges of the legal profession. Simply listening to lectures, taking some notes, and reviewing those notes for exams may get a student through a test, but does not prepare him or her for the demanding legal profession at all. Students must be able to apply ideas presented in classes immediately. In general, law is an active discipline in which graduates need to be able to be creative and find solutions where few seem to exist. Students need to develop the highest levels of thinking skills as in the figure below (Bryson, 2013).

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Shorlin, undated.



The capacity for critical and reflective analysis is a core competence that law school graduates need to have to practice law, wherever they come to work. Interactive teaching forms play an important role, even within larger classroom-based courses, to build that capacity. In contrast, passive approaches to learning are conflicting with the very reality of law practice that awaits students.

## Practical methods and tools for interactive teaching

There are many ways to create interaction with students and encourage critical thinking and processing of issues discussed. Not all work well in larger class rooms and some are particularly useful to encourage the reflection and critical thinking by students that needs to be part of legal education. Selected, most practical and effective methods and tools for such context and purpose include:

- *Creating interaction during presentations.* There are many different ways to do this well (Annex 1 lists 37 ways for interaction in lectures based on USF Academy for Teaching & Learning Excellence, undated). Interaction will be facilitated a lot if the presentations themselves are done well, with the use of effective PPTs (Annex 2).
- *Brainstorming and buzzing* is a method to quickly mobilize and organize ideas, views or experiences from students on a particular topic. The “buzzing” refers to the few minutes in which students discuss the issue posed by the teacher with their 1 or 2 neighbor(s). There are quick and dirty methods to collect student responses and more structured ones taking more time (Annex 3)
- *Case studies.* A central educational form for law education that not only allows active student involvement and interaction but also stimulates critical analysis. A case study can be a description in a few sentences of a typical example or a 1-3 page text presenting more complex situations in their specific context. Students are asked to analyze the case - individually or in groups -responding to one or more well formulated questions. Annex 4 has guidelines and further resources for preparing and handling case studies.
- *Role playing, moot and mock courts:* A case of a particular situation, issue or dilemma is studied and analyzed by creating some form of play in which students are to take the position as one of the parties involved and act and make choices as part of that position. Moot and mock courts are elaborate forms in which the “play” is situated in a courtroom type of setting. The discussion after the play on what actors did and choices made is an important part of the process. For further guidelines on using moot or mock courts see annex 6.

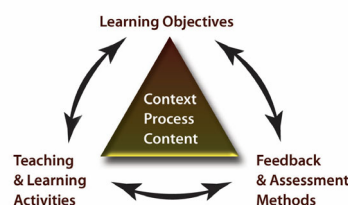
- *Assignments in group work:* Small groups of students (3-6) are formed to jointly undertake an assignment or answer a set of questions that involves working with elements of the content of a course. Actual group work can take place in the class room – e.g. groups of students sitting close to each other – or outside class hours. Assignments can involve simply formulating views of issues presented in a lecture to more complex tasks that require the use of elements of the teaching.
- *ICT facilitated interaction using mobile phones or tablets.* Using one of the currently available apps lecturers can ask students questions, with the answers given through phones or tables being processed in real time for all to see. This can be used to ask direct questions, but students’ interest will increase if these are made into a small quiz or other form of game. Such interaction requires good classroom connectivity, enough students with smart phones with skills to handle the app with the quiz and teachers with necessary ICT skills. Annex 7 lists useful software with examples and suggestions for their use.

All effective interaction starts with formulating good questions for the students. The importance of preparing these well cannot be overestimated. Annex 5 gives guidelines and examples for formulating good questions that stimulate interaction. For questions to be effective they need to be clear (prevent using unfamiliar words and concepts), inviting, and challenging. For example, a question like “is everything clear?” is vague, does not trigger active thinking by students. A better formulation could have been “how would you apply this rule to the given case?”

## Basics of course design and assessment

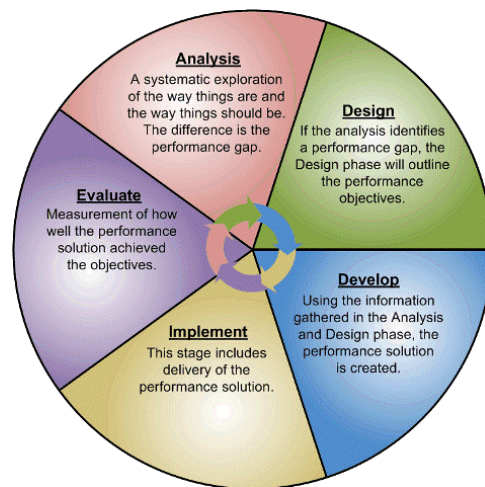
As mentioned, to be able to effectively integrate interactive teaching methods and tools in teaching, university lectures need to have their basic course design and assessment well organized.

The first main consideration is the need for what is called *Constructive alignment* (Biggs & Tang 2011). The central idea is that learning objectives of teaching, the teaching content and methods and the student assessment mechanisms are fully in line, are harmonized and match as in:



This leads to course design questions such as: Are the learning objectives clearly formulated, also for students? Are the used teaching methods the best to achieve the learning objectives? Are the ways and forms to assess students suitable to assess the stated learning objectives?

Secondly the *basics of course design* need to be considered. A good design uses a circular process following Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate, the so-called *ADDIE approach*. (Strickland, 2006)



The analysis part is often forgotten leading to poor course design. It should include an analysis of student performance gap: what do they need to know and what do they know currently? Do we need to review our assumptions on what students know? Collect more info on what they know? And what is the connection of one course with the others in the curriculum? Courses should not be seen as separate islands. Teachers should show and make **connections to other courses**.

Thirdly, a good course design starts with formulating *learning objectives (or learning outcomes)*. These are statements made in specific and measurable terms (SMART), of what students will know and/or be able to do as a result of having successfully completed a course. Good learning objectives relate to student action/behavior by the end of the course and use one verb and one cognitive level only. They should not only repeat or rephrase the course content and should prevent the use of following verbs

Bad words that should not be used as cognitive objectives!				
know	really know	understand	appreciate	become
learn	thinks critically	approach	improve	grow
increase	expand horizons	grasp the significance of		

Usually a course has a maximum of 5 to 7 learning objectives

### Challenges in practicing interactive teaching and how to overcome these

In practice there are challenges to realize active student interaction in university teaching (USF Academy for Teaching & Learning Excellence. Undated b.). These may have to do with the large group teaching context, the capacity of the teachers and the limitations set by the university curriculum. As far as the teaching context is concerned challenges can be the anonymity of people in large groups, which might inhibit interactivity; the fixed position of the chairs can prevent students to form groups and discuss things; monitoring of a large number of student groups is too difficult so students may get off-track. At the institutional level the amount of content to be covered can be so much that there is no time for constructive



student interactions; end of term assessments may not include assessment of students working in groups, thereby reducing their interest.

With some creativity many of these challenges can be overcome, often by the lecturer.<sup>6</sup> For example, think of simple ways for you and your students to learn names with faces; have groups organized by turning to neighbors, accept students going off-track but show how this influences their marks; create space and time by organizing teaching content in main parts keeping other parts for students to study outside class; touch base with colleagues to find ways so that student involvement in interactive sessions becomes part of their end-of-term assessment.

## **End terms for university lecturers**

SLEEI tries to achieve that university lecturer of law courses increase their use of interactive teaching methods and apply these well. To this end, lecturers will need to:

- Understand and accept the importance of interactive teaching forms as a way to improve the quality/effectivity of their teaching, particularly for law students;
- Know or have access to interactive teaching methods that are applicable in their context and fitting their own capacities;
- Have the skills to develop, adapt and use these methods well;
- Develop confidence to use interactive teaching; and
- Generally be able to design and plan courses using the basics of course design; and thus
- Be able to make changes in course learning outcomes and student assessment procedures linked to the increased use of interactive teaching methods.

## **Training university lecturers in interactive teaching**

When training lecturers to increase their use of interactive teaching, the main and most convincing strategy is to practice this in the own training process. Teaching students in class rooms is not exactly the same as training a group of lecturers, but many of the main principles and methods apply in both cases. If you practice what you preach and the lecturers enjoy the process, this is a big motivation to try it in their own classes too.

Further suggestions for training lecturers in interactive teaching include:

- Show and discuss the above cartoon on the typical perception of adult education: Ask participants what the cartoon shows, what they see in it? Whether they think this is a good presentation of effective adult education? If not, why not? What does this imply for teaching students?
- When discussing many of the topics above: Ask for and review current practices of participants – how do they do it now? – share insights from this paper and then ask participants to reflect on if and how they can improve their current practice.
- Create room for lecturers to practice interactivity in the safe environment of the workshop setting through some form of “mini-education practice”. Discuss at the end of each

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<sup>6</sup> Interactive Teaching in Large Lectures: Challenges and solutions: from USF| Academy for Teaching & Learning Excellence.

practice what went well and what did not. Annex 8 has a form with questions for the observation of such practices.

- Conclude the work on interactive teaching by asking lecturers to do some form of follow-up planning: Are they interested to try new, interactive methods and tools? Which ones? Do they need further support in this?

For suggestions on being an effective trainer, consult Annex 9 summarizing key skills and roles of trainers.

## References

Biggs & Tang, 2011:

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## Further reading

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## **List of annexes and supporting materials**

(Available on SURFdrive/content/interactive teaching/materials)

1. List of interaction techniques for use as part of lectures
2. How to make an effective and attractive PowerPoint
3. Summary guidelines on use of and facilitating buzzing
4. How to develop and write effective case studies
5. Best ways to formulate engaging questions for interactive learning
6. Moot and mock courts and their use in legal education
7. Creating interactivity using web-based ICT: Software and examples
8. Observation form training or education practice
9. Summary trainer's skills