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The value of using multi-methods in law courses in higher education

Daniel Opoku Acquah ^a, Ama Opoku Acquah ^b
and Emmanuel Opoku Acquah ^c

^aFaculty of Law, University of Turku, Turku, Finland; ^bCenter for Climate Change, Energy and Environmental Law, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland; ^cFaculty of Education and Welfare Studies, Abo Akademi University, Vaasa, Finland

ABSTRACT

This article examines the added value of using multi-methods in an intermediate law course for final-year undergraduate and master's degree students at a medium-sized university in South West Finland. The study involved 23 law students from various countries who were about to complete their bachelor's studies or pursue their master's degrees. The content analysis and constant comparative approach results indicated that employing multiple teaching methods in the course significantly enhanced the students' learning. The treaty simulation, based on the ongoing negotiations at two international organisations – the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) – had the most significant impact on the students. Participants felt accountable for their learning, gained self-confidence, developed a sense of fulfilment, and learned about the complexities of negotiating international treaties and building consensus. They felt more prepared for similar roles in their future careers. The course highlights the benefits of active learning and the role of simulations in developing professional competence and communication skills. It suggests that faculty should incorporate multi-methods and simulations, when possible, to teach law.

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KEYWORDS Simulation; multi-methods; negotiation skills; legal education

Introduction

Legal education has been evolving globally despite the diversity among different regions. Since the 1970s, numerous reports have been published in various

CONTACT Daniel Opoku Acquah  danacq@utu.fi  Faculty of Law, University of Turku, Caloniankuja 3, Turku 20500, Finland

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countries, including the United States,¹ England,² Australia,³ Scotland,⁴ Canada⁵ and Hong Kong.⁶ These reports have addressed desirable approaches to curriculum design and legal education, recommending a shift in traditional legal education methods to emphasise the acquisition of skills and values rather than content-based teaching.⁷ They have also called for the curriculum to be “internationalised” to prepare students for an increasingly “globalised” legal practice. Consistent with this viewpoint, several scholars have proposed the expansion of the legal education curriculum.⁸

The traditional dogmatic practice of requiring law students to learn theory and memorise numerous rules and a few cases, believing that this will make them good lawyers, is deeply rooted in many legal systems.⁹ However, scholars argue that memorising cases and textbooks is ineffective for students’ learning

¹See among others, American Bar Association, “Principles for Legal Education and Licensure in the 21st Century” (American Bar Association Commission on the Future of Legal Education 2020); William Sullivan and others, “Educating Lawyers: Preparation of the Profession of Law” (2007) (the “Carnegie Report”); Roy Stuckey and others, *Best Practices for Legal Education: A Vision and A Road Map* (Clinical Legal Education Association (CLEA) 2007); American Bar Association, Section on Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, *Legal Education and Professional Development – An Educational Continuum, Report of the Task Force on Law Schools and the Profession: Narrowing the Gap* (American Bar Association 1992) (“MacCrate Report”); Paul D Carrington, *Training for the Public Professions of the Law* in Herbert Packer and Thomas Ehrlich, *New Directions in Legal Education* (McGraw-Hill 1972) Appendix A: *Carrington Report* (1971).

²Committee on Legal Education, *Report of the Committee on Legal Education* (Cmnd 4595, 1971) (“Ormrod Report”); General Council of the Bar and the Law Society, “Report of the Committee on the Future of the Legal Profession, a Time for Change” (1988) (“Marre Report”); Royal Commission on Legal Service, *Final Report* (Cmnd 7648, 1979) (“Benson Report”); The Lord Chancellor’s Advisory Committee on Legal Education and Conduct (ACLEC), *First Report on Legal Education and Training* (ACLEC 1996) (“ACLEC Report”).

³Dennis Pearce, Enid Campbell and Don Harding, *Australian Law Schools: A Discipline Assessment for the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission* (Australian Government Publishing Service 1987) (“Pearce Report”); Australian Law Reform Commission, *Managing Justice: A Review of the Federal Civil Justice System* (Report ALRC 89, Commonwealth of Australia 2000); Richard Johnstone and Sumittra Vignaendra, *Learning Outcomes and Curriculum Development in Law: A Report Commissioned by the Australian Universities Teaching Committee (AUTC)* (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003).

⁴See Kift (n 7), at page 8, citing *Scottish Legal Education in the Twenty-first Century: A report to the Joint Standing Committee on Legal Education in Scotland* (2000)

⁵Consultative Group on Research and Education in Law, *Law and Learning: Report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada* (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada 1983); Canadian Bar Association Systems of Civil Justice Task Force, *Final Report* (Canadian Bar Association 1996); See Kift (n 7), at page 8, citing Committee Responding to Recommendation 49 of the Systems of Civil Justice Task Force Report *Attitudes-Skills-Knowledge: Proposals for Legal Education to Assist in Implementing a Multi-option Civil Justice System in the 21st Century* (Discussion Paper, 1999).

⁶The Steering Committee on the Review of Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong, *Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong: Preliminary Review* (The Steering Committee on the Review of Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong 2001).

⁷Sally Kift, “21st Century Climate for Change: Curriculum Design for Quality Learning Engagement in Law” (2008) 18 *Legal Education Review* 1.

⁸Jessica Guth and Tamara Hervey, “Threats to Internationalised Legal Education in the Twenty-First Century UK” (2018) 52 *The Law Teacher* 350; Jan Klabbbers, “Legal Education in the Balance: Accommodating Flexibility” (2006) 56 *Journal of Legal Education* 196; Jonny Hall and Kevin Kerrigan, “Clinic and the Wider Law Curriculum” (2011) 15 *Int’l J Clinical Legal Educ* 25; James Eagar, “The Right Tool for the Job: The Effective Use of Pedagogical Methods in Legal Education” (1996)32 *Gonzaga Law Review* 389; Robin A Boyle, “Employing Active-Learning Techniques and Metacognition in Law School: Shifting Energy from Professor to Student” (2003) 81 *University of Detroit Mercy Law Review* 1.

⁹Klabbbers (n 8).

or using legal reasoning skills.¹⁰ In a globalised world, future lawyers will require the ability to familiarise themselves rapidly with a wide range of issues and even legal systems.

This article examines the impact of a course on intellectual property (IP) law taught to university students in Finland. The course combined doctrinal teaching (utilising multiple methods) with experiential learning (simulation). By integrating simulation and doctrinal instruction, it aimed to stimulate students' active learning and enable them to develop professional competence and communication skills.

Evolving pedagogy in legal education

The importance of law in many societies and the historical role of legal education have made law schools central to discussions about the legal profession, its functions and the nature of law itself.¹¹ Traditionally, law was associated with training for legal professions. It was not until the early to mid-twentieth century that it established itself as an independent academic discipline.¹²

Stein has divided the history of legal education in England and the United States from the late thirteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century into three parts.¹³ The first period, which focused on the English system, was characterised by what could be generalised as the apprentice method. In England, the training of barristers involved judges of the Common Bench identifying and selecting "apt and eager" students from each county to learn about the business of the courts.¹⁴ These students were placed at Westminster, the seat of the courts, and were required to attend court sessions and discuss the cases heard. This later became known as the Inns of Court. The pedagogy at the Inns of Court evolved to include lectures and moots.¹⁵ While solicitors and attorneys did not have a similar preparatory school, they followed the apprentice method.¹⁶

The early years of legal education in the United States largely depended on the English system, with most lawyers being educated at the Inns in England,

¹⁰Paula Lustbader, "From Dreams to Reality: The Emerging Role of Law School Academic Support" (1997) 31 *USF L Rev* 839; Vernellia R Randall, "Increasing Retention and Improving Performance: Practical Advice on Using Cooperative Learning in Law Schools" (1999) 16 *Thomas M Cooley Law Review* 201, 213.

¹¹Robert Stevens, *Law School: Legal Education in America from the 1850s to 1980s* (The Lawbook Exchange Ltd 2001) xiii.

¹²Ruta K Stropus, "Mend It, Bend It, and Extend It: The Fate of Traditional Law School Methodology in the 21st Century" (1996) 27 *Loy U Chi LJ* 449; Ronán Feehily, "Problem-Based Learning and International Commercial Dispute Resolution in the Indian Ocean" (2018) 52 *The Law Teacher* 17, 18.

¹³Ralph Michael Stein, "The Path of Legal Education from Edward I to Langdell: A History of Insular Reaction" (1981) 57 *Chi-Kent L Rev* 429.

¹⁴*ibid.*

¹⁵*ibid* 431.

¹⁶*ibid* 433.

being apprenticed, or attending the court.¹⁷ However, clerking (or apprenticeship) remained the principal method of legal education until the post-Revolution era, when two innovations appeared in the American legal education scene: the teaching of law at universities and the evolution of private law schools.¹⁸ Teaching at the universities concentrated on theory rather than the practice of law.

This was followed in 1870 by the introduction of what some see as the greatest influence on American legal education to date – Christopher Columbus Langdell’s case method of study.¹⁹ To create and maintain a rigorous system of training for lawyers, Langdell adopted a narrow view of legal education. His method primarily involved analysing appellate judicial decisions to develop analytical skills, while giving less attention to practical skills training or the empirical and humanistic study of law.²⁰ Thus, in the United States, legal education has faced criticism for focusing too much on theoretical learning and not enough on practical skills.²¹ The charge is that law schools are producing graduates who think like lawyers but lack the necessary preparation to practise law.²² Law schools have, therefore, been called upon to emphasise the development of practical skills.²³

This criticism aligns with a conflicting pressure that has influenced legal education over time – namely, whether legal education should be viewed primarily as vocational or as a rigorous scientific method.²⁴ Academics are divided on the issue. Some believe that law school curricula should meet the needs of professional organisations and recognise the practical application of law in the real world.²⁵ Others contend that law is an academic discipline in its own right, independent of vocational considerations, and argue that it is not the responsibility of law schools to prepare students for practice.²⁶ As Feehily notes, both arguments are being vociferously stated and defended, to the point that they risk limiting the development of alternative positions.²⁷ However, a combination of academic rigour with an understanding of law

¹⁷ibid 438.

¹⁸ibid 441.

¹⁹Charles R McManis, “The History of First Century American Legal Education: A Revisionist Perspective” (1981) 59 Wash ULQ 597, 598.

²⁰ibid.

²¹David IC Thomson, “Defining Experiential Legal Education” (2015) 1 Journal of Experiential Learning, Article 3.

²²David Segal, “What They Don’t Teach Law Students: Lawyering” *New York Times* (20 November 2011) <www.nytimes.com/2011/11/20/business/after-law-school-associates-learn-to-be-lawyers.html> (accessed 25 May 2025).

²³Rebecca Byrnes and Peter Lawrence, “Bringing Diplomacy into the Classroom: Stimulating Student Engagement through a Simulated Treaty Negotiation” (2016) 26 Legal Education Review 19.

²⁴Stein (n 13) 444.

²⁵Feehily (n 12) 18.

²⁶ibid; Hanoch Dagan, “Law as an Academic Discipline” in Helge Dedek and Shauna Van Praagh (eds), *Stateless Law: Evolving Boundaries of a Discipline* (Routledge 2015).

²⁷Feehily (n 12).

in its practical context is essential if we want students to engage with the subject.²⁸

In the last several decades, however, things are slowly changing. In the United States, Canada and Australia, where the law is predominantly studied at the graduate level, experiential learning has become part of many law school curricula.²⁹ Clinical pedagogy has also flourished, enabling some law schools to have doctrinal teaching and practical legal education as part of their curriculum.³⁰ Yet the two aspects of the curriculum have often not interacted.³¹ Thus, it has been argued that having purely doctrinal lecture courses with the addition of clinical experience does not, in itself, make for an integrated learning environment that mimics the diversity of skills and experiences needed for competent legal practice in the twenty-first century.³² Attention has therefore been drawn to alternative learning methods such as learning in context,³³ active learning techniques³⁴ or experiential learning, such as simulation.³⁵

Why use multi-methods to teach the law?

One of the criticisms raised against the traditional methods of teaching law (the textbook method, lecture method and Socratic method) has been that these methods assume that all students have the same needs and can learn the same way from any interaction with the instructor.³⁶ This approach to teaching the law is based on the conventional belief that students who are motivated, attentive in class, complete their assignments, and study can meet the basic requirements of law courses.³⁷ Yet research has proven that this is not the case. Students learn differently. They vary in intelligence levels,

²⁸ibid.

²⁹Ben Waters, "A Part to Play: The Value of Role-Play Simulation in Undergraduate Legal Education" (2016) 50 *The Law Teacher* 172.

³⁰Thomson (n 21) 3; Anne-Marie Cavazos, "The Journey toward Excellence in Clinical Legal Education: Developing, Utilizing and Evaluating Methodologies for Determining and Assessing the Effectiveness of Student Learning Outcomes" (2010) 40 *SW U L Rev* 1 (law clinics originally began in the United States but with time, spread to places like the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and Finland, to name a few).

³¹Thomson (n 21) 3.

³²ibid.

³³Cynthia Ho, Angela Upchurch and Susan Gilles, "An Active-Learning Approach to Teaching Tough Topics: Personal Jurisdiction as an Example" (2016) 65 *Journal of Legal Education* 772. Also see Brook K Baker, "Beyond MacCrate: The Role of Context, Experience, Theory and Reflection in Ecological Learning" (1994) 36 *Arizona Law Review* 287; Deborah Maranville, "Passion, Context, and Lawyering Skills: Choosing Among Simulated and Real Clinical Experiences" (2000) 7 *Clinical Law Review* 123.

³⁴Ho, Upchurch and Gilles (n 33). Also see Boyle (n 8) (discussing the advantages of using active-learning strategies in law schools); Gerald F Hess, "Principle 3: Good Practice Encourages Active Learning" (1999) 49 *Journal of Legal Education* 401.

³⁵Thomson (n 21) 3.

³⁶Robin A Boyle and Rita Dunn, "Teaching Law Students through Individual Learning Styles" (1998) 62 *Albany Law Review* 213, 218–19; Alice K Dueker, "Diversity and Learning: Imagining a Pedagogy of Difference" (1991) 19 *NYU Review of Law & Social Change* 101; Paul F Teich, "Research on American Law Teaching: Is There a Case against the Case System?" (1986) 36 *Journal of Legal Education* 167.

³⁷Boyle and Dunn (n 36) 214.

aptitudes, experiences, interests and learning styles. This can affect their achievement levels in class.³⁸

The Socratic method has, for example, been deemed useful for a handful of students whose learning strength is auditory, which³⁹ makes it somewhat exclusionary.⁴⁰ As Boyle notes, the majority of students are likely underperforming because they do not learn best through traditional methods.⁴¹ Researchers who experimented with alternative strategies for teaching college students in the United States found significantly higher achievement when the strategies used aligned with individual learning styles rather than being incongruent.⁴² Thus, Randall has advocated that:

Law professors must put more of our effort into creating the conditions within which students can construct their own meaning and develop their own skills . . . Because students not only have different skill levels, but also different cognitive structures, we cannot continue a “one-size-fits-all” approach to teaching.⁴³

The message is clear: not all students learn the same way. Because of this, law school instructors should not rely on a single teaching method. Instead, they should employ a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate diverse learning styles, thereby reaching a wider range of students.⁴⁴ The analysed course was created to fulfil this need. The following questions framed the research:

- (1) How do multi-methods in teaching contribute to enhancing effective learning opportunities for law students?
- (2) How do students connect specific elements of the instructional model to their learning styles and the development of professional competence?

Background to Finnish legal education

In Finland, legal education at universities has been structured according to the Bologna process since 2004.⁴⁵ It includes a bachelor’s and a master’s degree, both necessary for becoming a legal professional in Finland. These degrees are designed for Finnish or Swedish-speaking students planning to practise law in Finland.⁴⁶ There is no additional “vocational training” stage between law

³⁸ibid.

³⁹Boyle (n 8) 3.

⁴⁰Teich (n 36) 168; Lani Guinier and others, “Becoming Gentlemen: Women’s Experiences at One Ivy League Law School” (1994) 143 *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 1, 2–3.

⁴¹Boyle (n 8) 1.

⁴²Boyle and Dunn (n 36) 215.

⁴³Randall (n 10) 213.

⁴⁴Boyle and Dunn (n 36); Eagar (n 8).

⁴⁵European Higher Education Area (2015) Bologna process <www.ehea.info/> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁴⁶Tuomas Tiittala, “Keeping Up with the Changing Legal Environment: A Report on the Internationalisation of Legal Education in Finland” in Christophe Jamin and William van Caenegem (eds), *The Internationalisation of Legal Education* (Ius Comparatum – Global Studies in Comparative Law 19, Springer 2016) 105.

school, undertaking the Bar exam and practising as a lawyer. Until now, five universities mainly provide legal education in Finland, and each law faculty has the autonomy to arrange and carry out the legal education it offers.⁴⁷ The bachelor's degree programme in all law faculties includes introductory courses such as contract law, property law, commercial law, administrative law, constitutional law and environmental law. Additionally, there are a few elective studies, practical skills courses, communication and language studies and independent research.⁴⁸ With a few variations, the master's degree offered by the universities comprises compulsory subjects, elective studies, language studies and independent research.⁴⁹

Until recently, all five universities offered specialised international master's degree programmes in law.⁵⁰ These programmes are designed for both international students (including foreign-educated lawyers and graduates of related disciplines) and Finnish students who have completed their undergraduate law studies in Finland or abroad and wish to specialise in various aspects of international law. The programme lasts for two academic years, and upon completion of the 120 credits, students are awarded a master's degree in international and comparative law.

Research context and goals of the course

In the autumns of 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021, the first author taught a course at the University of Turku in Finland. The course simulated international IP treaty negotiations and was open to both Finnish and international students, including master's degree students and Erasmus exchange students. It was an elective course with mandatory attendance, taught in English. The class comprised students from 12 countries, each representing various legal traditions and perspectives and speaking many diverse languages. The objectives of the course were to help students (1) understand the evolution, trends, and problems in international intellectual property treaty negotiations; (2) think critically about the law and the role of the law; (3) understand the

⁴⁷ibid. In 2022, Abo Akademi University, a Swedish university, was granted the right to run a law programme from the candidate to doctoral degree. Until that time, four universities mainly provided legal education in Finland.

⁴⁸ibid 107. For instance, at the University of Helsinki, there are two optional studies courses in Finnish that include practice skills. See Valinnaiset syventävien maisteriopinnot ja käytännön taidot: Ympäristöoikeuden oikeudenkäyntikurssi <<https://studies.helsinki.fi/kurssit/toteutus/hy-opt-cur-2425-0a7cc62e-56f9-4646-82e1-5f25e0d36b7d>> accessed 25 May 2025; Käytännön taidot: Oikeudenkäyntikurssi <<https://studies.helsinki.fi/courses/course-unit/otm-ae83ea53-6436-49e3-8c1a-e0466e225843>> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁴⁹Tiitalla (n 46) 106.

⁵⁰The University of Turku discontinued its international master's programme in Law and Information Society in 2021. However, most of the courses previously offered under this programme, as well as new English language courses, are now available through the joint master's programme offered as part of the European Campus of City-Universities (EC2U) Alliance.

complexities of treaty negotiations; (4) practise and apply negotiation skills; and (5) learn to draft a treaty.

The six-week course covered a wide range of topics in international IP law, including the evolution of international IP treaties, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements, with a specific focus on the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Free Trade Agreements, traditional knowledge, geographical indications and negotiation skills. The course was designed to teach doctrine, theory and practice as part of a coordinated instructional framework that is constructively aligned.⁵¹ It was expected that students would emerge from the course with an understanding of the international IP system, the issues at stake in treaty negotiations, and the capacity to make informed and balanced judgements based on the knowledge and experience gained.

The international IP system is a complex and multifaceted structure with numerous stakeholders and interests. Typically, countries belong to two primary multilateral IP institutions – WIPO and WTO – as well as several other intergovernmental entities active in this domain⁵². Additionally, numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also engaged at this level.⁵³ Multiple countries, including the four largest economies,⁵⁴ explicitly acknowledge the central role of IP in their economies and economic futures. Consequently, competition increasingly centres on innovation and IP, heightening the stakes in this arena.⁵⁵ Negotiating and finalising new multilateral IP agreements is becoming more challenging. This is partly driven by significant changes resulting from the shift in the world's economic centre of gravity over the past 27 years. Consequently, the interests and positions of parties involved in international negotiations are evolving, making it progressively difficult for member states of WIPO and the WTO to reach a consensus on proposed normative measures.⁵⁶

⁵¹See for instance, Karl S Coplan, "Teaching Substantive Environmental Law and Practice Skills through Interest Group Role-Playing" (2016) 18 Vt J Envtl L 194.

⁵²An example of the latter is the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which handles cultural heritage and education matters. The World Health Organization (WHO) deals with pharmaceutical and medical research, as well as access to medicines. Additionally, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Nagoya Protocol handle matters related to the use of biological and genetic resources, as well as the protection of related traditional knowledge.

⁵³The organisations include those representing "right holders", such as pharmaceutical companies and entertainment conglomerates. Some also represent indigenous communities interested in protecting their cultural and medical heritage. Other NGOs represent users of intellectual property primarily or entirely generated by others. These may include consumer groups, Internet-based enterprises like search engines or cloud services, and organisations advocating access to culture, science and medicine.

⁵⁴These are the USA, China, Japan and Germany. See <www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/the-top-10-economies-in-the-world> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁵⁵WIPO, "Making International IP Law: An Interview with Francis Gurry" (*WIPO Magazine* 5/2014).

⁵⁶*ibid* (emphasis added).

The WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge, and Folklore (WIPO IGC) serves as a significant example. Established in 2000, this committee was tasked with negotiating international agreements aimed at protecting genetic resources, traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. It took over two decades for member states to approve a landmark treaty concerning IP, genetic resources and traditional knowledge, which was finalised on 24 May 2024.⁵⁷ While this agreement cannot be utilised in future simulations,⁵⁸ it added a level of authenticity to the course. Using real-life situations as a basis for simulations enhances the learning experience and inspires students, providing them with a sense of purpose as they propose amendments to the treaty and negotiate concessions.

Course components and implementation

On the first day of the course, the teacher guides the students through the course structure and its content in Moodle (a digital platform for teaching and learning), outlining the roles of both students and the teacher. Students are informed of what is expected of them to pass the course, which is important because setting clear expectations has been found to increase students' motivation.⁵⁹ The teacher engages students in a variety of learning opportunities and assignments, such as interactive lectures (eg think-pair-share and whole-class discussions), a student exhibition, a video (negotiating in today's world), learning diaries, a field trip to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tutorials, a simulation (the climax and core of the course) and a post-simulation group report. Students are required to critically reflect on all course components and articulate their thoughts and experiences by writing learning diaries and final group reports.

The students receive clear and detailed guidelines on how to write their learning diaries, the post-simulation report, and how to conduct the exhibition and simulation exercises. These guidelines, including links to the reading materials, useful webpages, and course resources, are all uploaded on Moodle for students to access at any time. [Figure 1](#) provides a detailed

⁵⁷See WIPO Press Release: "WIPO Member States Adopt Historic New Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge" (24 May 2024) <www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/articles/2024/article_0007.html> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁵⁸The first author, who serves as the course instructor, is currently on research leave. Upon the course's resumption, the instructor will continue utilising the WTO Doha Mandate for negotiating a multilateral register for wines and spirits and explore the possibility of extending the "higher level of protection" beyond these categories. The latter represents the second treaty negotiated for the simulation (refer to n 61 below for further details). Additionally, the instructor might substitute the WIPO IGC on Traditional Knowledge with negotiations aimed at extending the WTO waiver for Covid-19 to encompass diagnostics and therapeutics. See <www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/minist_e/mc13_e/briefing_notes_e/trips_e.htm> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁵⁹Max Eggert, *The Motivation Pocketbook* (Alresford Press Limited 1999).

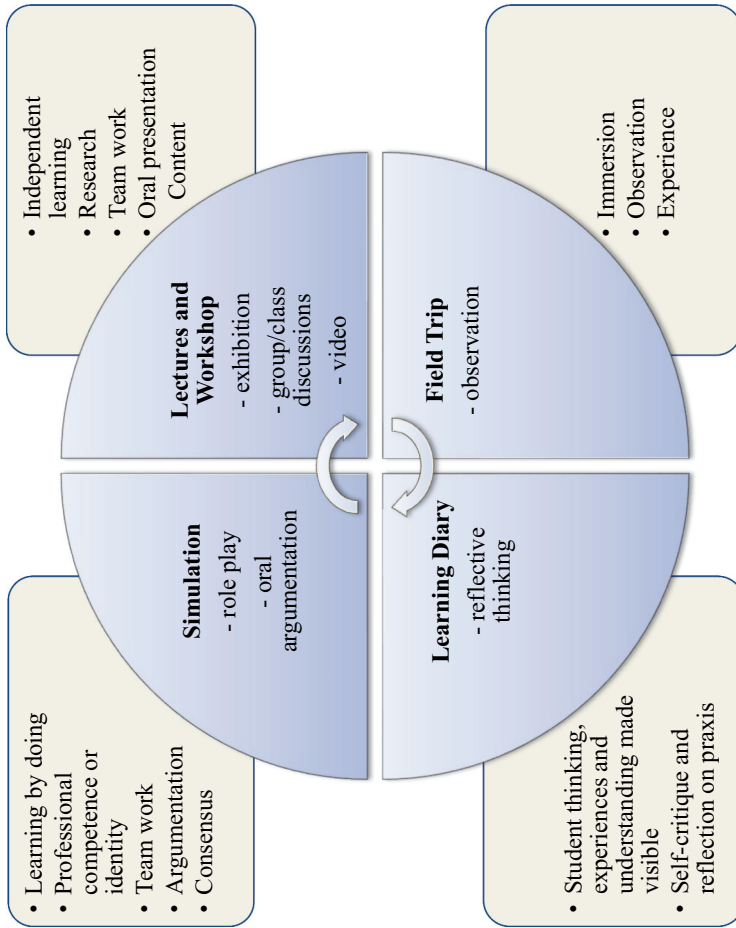


Figure 1. Teaching methods/components and pedagogical purpose. Core circle = teaching methods/components. Outer circle = pedagogical purpose.

description of the teaching methods used in the course and their pedagogical purpose.

The students are divided into four groups, with a maximum of five students per group. Each group is promptly assigned the subject matter and treaty for their exhibition and simulation. The subject matters are contested and complex. They include the then-ongoing (but now concluded) WIPO IGC⁶⁰ and the WTO Doha Mandate negotiation of a multilateral register for wines and spirits, as well as extending the “higher level of protection” beyond wines and spirits.⁶¹ When students are assigned to groups, it places them in a position corresponding to their region, interests or ideological inclinations. The representations reflect the north/south divide, the north/north divide or the south/south divide. The groups are either for or against traditional knowledge or geographical indications. The subject matter is broad enough to guide the students towards research but not specific enough to direct them, ensuring they remain encouraged to participate.⁶² This approach aligns with the overall learning outcomes of the course.

The teacher spends the first three weeks, approximately 16–18 hours, introducing students to the international IP system, negotiation strategies and skills. Following this, students are given a week to prepare for the group exhibition. The exhibition aims to encourage students to research the background of the countries or sides they represent, including factors such as the state of the economy, technological development, ideology, position and interests. In addition to the interactive lectures, the goal is to ensure that students understand the key facts and issues.

This is formatively assessed through student group presentations in the form of posters or PowerPoint. The first tutorial is scheduled during the preparation period for the exhibition, providing an opportunity for students to ask questions and discuss any concerns about the exhibition. In the two weeks following the exhibition, students are given time to further develop their work and prepare for the simulation. During this period, a visit to the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is organised, where students have the chance to listen to and ask questions of Finnish diplomats and in-house lawyers who represent the Finnish government at the European level or internationally.

After the field trip, the second tutorial occurs, allowing students to ask questions about the simulation and its guidelines. This is also a chance to assess how prepared the student groups are, how well they are collaborating

⁶⁰See the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore <www.wipo.int/tk/en/igc/> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁶¹See WTO: Negotiation of a multilateral register for wines and spirits and extending the “higher level of protection” beyond wines and spirits <www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/trips_e/gi_background_e.htm#wines_spirits> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁶²Joanne Clough and Gillian W Shorter, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Problem-Based Learning as a Method of Engaging Year One Law Students” (2015) 49 *The Law Teacher* 277, 282.

on the assignment, and to address any difficulties they may face. Additionally, it serves as an opportunity to help calm nerves, as students often feel anxious as the simulation date approaches, even after attending the exhibition.

In the text-based negotiation simulation, each group must have a proposed treaty text ready for use. Groups should rely on publicly available negotiation documents from either the WIPO IGC or the WTO TRIPS Special Council. However, students must familiarise themselves with the content of these documents and provide meaningful inputs, such as proposals for substantive additions, amendments or provisional amendments, while remaining within the core mandate for the actual negotiation. The simulation documents must be uploaded to the Moodle platform three days before the simulation date. This allows each party to become familiar with the other's proposals and positions and prepare strategies for the negotiation. In the simulation session, each group (party) will have 15 minutes to deliver a speech outlining their position on the negotiation subject, followed by the negotiation itself. The groups are assessed based on their performance in the exhibition (20%), the simulation (40%) and the final group report (40%).

Method

Participants

The classes included final-year bachelor's degree students, master's degree students and Erasmus exchange students who enrolled in the course in the autumns of 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 (a total of 57 students). Among these, 23 students (7 male and 16 female) volunteered to participate in the interviews after the course.

The interview participants represented various legal traditions and perspectives. They also represented 12 different nationalities, from: Finland (7), Mexico (2), Vietnam (1), USA (1), Spain (2), France (4), England (1), Somalia (1), Egypt (1), Sri Lanka (1), Russia (1) and Brazil (1). All participants consented to allow their interview responses to be used as data for the study. In return, they were assured of confidentiality and the concealment of their identities. The identities of the students are coded as IPS1 to IPS23, according to the order in which the interviews were transcribed. [Table 1](#) shows the breakdown of student participation in the interviews conducted over the four years of research.

As seen from the table above, student participation in the course increased over the years. However, the number of students who participated in the interviews in 2020 and 2021 was significantly lower, particularly due to remote learning and other social distancing regulations that accompanied the Covid-19-affected academic years. The three participants who offered to be interviewed in 2020 were interviewed via Zoom.

Table 1. The year course was taught and the number of participants.

Year	No. of participants
2018	7 out of 9 students
2019	6 out of 10 students
2020	3 out of 18 students
2021	7 out of 20 students

Data source

The source of data for the study was interviews with students who participated in this class. Students were voluntarily invited to share their honest opinions about their experiences in the course during the four years it was conducted. Each class group was informed beforehand that their research participation would not affect their final grades. To allow students to speak freely and not feel compelled to say what the teacher wants to hear or perceive any influence the interviews might have over their grades, the course was graded, and the results were made accessible to students online before the interviews. Eliminating grading pressure was essential for enabling as many honest accounts as possible. The interview questions (attached as an Appendix) were semi-structured and designed to evaluate the teaching method and the students' learning.

The interview questions examined students' exposure to and understanding of international IP law and negotiations before and after the course, assessed whether their perception or knowledge of IP law and treaty negotiation had altered post-course, evaluated their perceptions regarding the experiences and skills acquired during the course, and finally sought their recommendations for improving course delivery.⁶³

The interviews were primarily conducted in a quiet room by the first author at a medium-sized university on the South West Finland campus, with a few held via Zoom in accordance with Covid-19 social distancing restrictions. The interviews were recorded as audio files, transcribed and coded. The number of transcribed pages per student ranged from 12 to 26, totalling approximately 373 pages. Interview durations varied between 24 and 62 minutes, depending on the students' willingness to talk, their responses to the questions, and the *auxiliary* questions that emerged during the interviews. Participants received the questions a week before the interview. Eight questions were asked, some allowing more than one answer per participant, accounting for the additional responses received for certain questions.

⁶³It may be worth pointing out that in 2018 and 2019, the teacher requested the faculty administration to collect feedback from students using its feedback system. The feedback from students was excellent.

The second author manually transcribed seven interviews, while the remaining files were transcribed using the highly effective UTU transcribe/litteroija software.⁶⁴ Due to limited language expression, some data could not be transcribed. However, approximately 95% of the data was transcribed and analysed. The transcribed data was later transferred and formatted into a document using Microsoft Word 2021 Professional Plus. The second and third authors initially convened to discuss the approach to analysing the interview transcripts. They decided to employ Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step thematic analysis (TA)⁶⁵ method to review, code and derive themes from the data gathered by the first author. These steps are: (I) Familiarising with the data; (II) Generating codes; (III) Generating themes; (IV) Reviewing themes; (V) Defining and naming themes; and (VI) Identifying exemplars.

Data analysis

The data was analysed using TA.⁶⁶ However, to appropriately address specific questions, content analysis (CA)⁶⁷ and constant comparative analysis (CCA)⁶⁸ were employed to analyse different items. TA proved to be the most suitable method for coding and developing themes from the interview data. Subsequently, CA and CCA were chosen for data analysis as they were best suited for addressing the respective research questions.

The three authors met four times during the data development process to review the progress of the thematic analysis. They discussed themes and created graphs based on the thematic responses for the study. During the first meeting, the second and third authors independently coded five pages of each interview data. They then discussed the codes to ensure inter-rater reliability, which was determined to be 85%. After this, the second author analysed the data independently, while the first and third authors audited sections of the data to ensure the credibility of the analysis.

⁶⁴Turun Yliopisto Transcribe/Litteroija: List – UTU Transcribe/Litteroija.

⁶⁵Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using thematic analysis in psychology" (2006) 3 *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 77, 87.

⁶⁶ibid.

⁶⁷Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (SAGE Publications Inc 2019). Krippendorff defines content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical action guide.

⁶⁸Barney G Glaser, "The Constant Comparative Analysis Method of Qualitative Analysis" (1965) 12 *Social Problems* 436. The constant comparative method is a method for analysing data to develop a grounded theory. You sort and organise excerpts of raw data into groups according to attributes, and organise those groups in a structured way to formulate a new theory. The process involves identifying a phenomenon, an object, an event or a setting of interest, identifying a few local concepts, principles and structural or process features of the experience or phenomenon of interest, making decisions regarding the initial collection of data-based on one's initial understanding of the phenomenon.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 were analysed using content analysis to quantify data. In this regard, questions 1 and 2 were jointly analysed, 3 and 4 were also combined, and question 8 was examined as a standalone question. Question 6 was analysed using constant comparative analysis. Authentic feedback from participants, both positive and negative, was solicited and reported in this study to amplify students' experiences and opinions about the course over the opinions of the authors.

Results

The results of the data analysis are presented based on the content analysis of questions 1&2, 3&4, and 8, followed by the qualitative analyses of question 6. The four themes that emerged from the results of these questions are discussed hereafter. Quotations from some participants may not be grammatically clear due to their limited English language competencies.

Prior understanding of IP law and international treaty negotiation

The data indicates that, although all participants had a background in legal studies, the majority of them had a limited understanding of IP law and its complexities, as well as limited knowledge of international treaty negotiations before attending the course. As shown in [Figure 2](#) below, only seven (representing 30.4% of students) had sufficient prior knowledge of IP law, whether at the national or international level. In contrast, 12 (52.2% of students) had limited prior knowledge, and four (17.4% of students) had no prior knowledge of IP law. When asked about their prior knowledge of IP law, some students, such as IPS4 said: "Well, it's not going to be long because I have never studied intellectual property law before. So it was all brand new and I really started from zero in this field". Some other students like IPS16 implied they had sufficient knowledge: "I would say I had fairly good general understanding".

The data regarding students' prior knowledge of international treaty negotiation and its complexities before attending the course shows that only six (26.1% of students) had sufficient prior knowledge. In contrast, 14 (60.9% of students) had limited understanding, while five (13% of students) had no prior knowledge at all. This indicates that most course participants lacked adequate knowledge about international treaty negotiation, providing a solid foundation for assessing the impact of the course on their learning. For example, when asked about her understanding of IP law and its complexities, IPS5 replied: "Certainly not much. Very first time, very interesting and I love it". Regarding the question on prior knowledge about international treaty negotiation and its complexities, another student responded: "... very basic

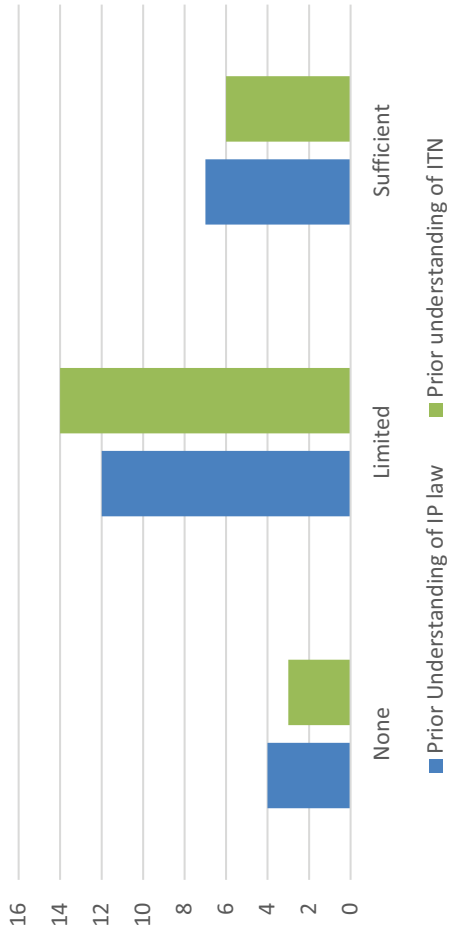


Figure 2. Students' prior understanding of IP law and international treaty negotiation.

understanding before coming to the course, and the same about its complexities". – IPS2.

Figure 2 illustrates student's responses to these first two interview questions.

Change in perception of IP law negotiations and Global North/South divide

Responses to the question about students' changed perceptions of IP law and the Global North/South divide indicate that the course significantly enhanced their understanding of international IP law and its negotiations. As shown in Figure 3, 20 (87% of students) reported that their understanding of international IP law and its negotiations had changed significantly. Meanwhile, three (13% of students) were neutral, stating that their perception had not changed much; however, no students indicated that their perception had not changed at all. Regarding their understanding of the North/South divide in IP law, 22 (95.7% of students) agreed that the course had helped shape their understanding. Only one (4.3% of students) felt that their perception had not changed much. No student reported that their perception had not changed. These results highlight the course's significant success, particularly in achieving its first and third objectives: to enable students to understand the evolution, trends and challenges in international intellectual property treaty negotiations, and to comprehend the complexities involved in these negotiations.

The data suggests that even the students who were least affected by the course still gained some knowledge from their learning, as none of the students reported that their perceptions remained unchanged. When asked about the reasons for the change in perceptions, some students explained:

IPS2: I just now realised how, you know, how difficult it is to reach an agreement; how important negotiating is. Along the same line, IPS6 said: I got insight about how to negotiate and also what I noticed is that we have like different negotiations so it was also like something interesting to see because not every negotiation is the same.

Others also acknowledged how role-playing during practical sessions of the course affected their perspectives. For example, IPS1 reflected:

I think that my perspective has changed in the sense that I have had to defend and represent a group of countries that have an opinion different from that of my own country at the negotiating table ... In this way, I have been able to learn how intellectual property rights can affect the other side of the coin, and that seemed so interesting to me.

From these observations, it is evident that participating in actual negotiations led to active learning, leaving lasting impressions on the students.

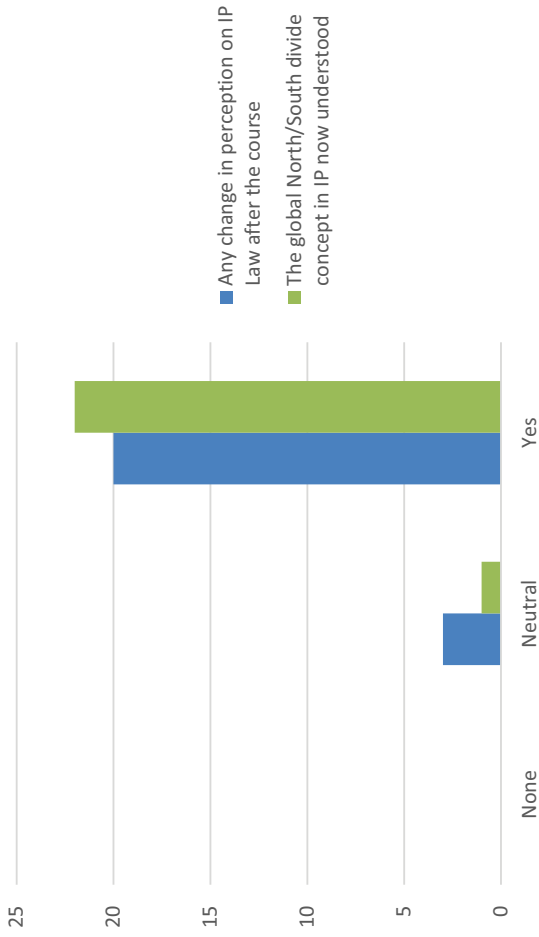


Figure 3. Change in perception on IP law and its negotiation after the course + change in understanding of Global North/South divide.

The transition from most students having limited knowledge of the course's core themes to nearly all students reporting an improved understanding demonstrates the effectiveness of the teaching methods employed. While there was a potential risk that students might feel confused or overwhelmed by the new teaching and learning methods introduced to them, the overall results suggest the opposite. Figure 3 illustrates the students' responses to interview questions 3 and 4.

Aspects of the course beneficial for the student's future career

Figure 4 illustrates the students' responses regarding aspects of the course that are beneficial for their future careers. As can be seen, this question generated various responses from students, including negotiation skills (14), international IP law skills (7),⁶⁹ teamwork (6), treaty drafting (4), public speaking (3), diplomatic relations (2) and debating (2). The category labelled "other" included isolated responses such as confidence, text analysis, the courage to study, tolerance, questioning the legal system, confidence in working in the English language, and intercultural communication. These responses indicate that the objectives of the course were achieved.

The feedback from students highlights the positive impact of practical teaching methods on their education, enhancing their theoretical knowledge. Each takeaway mentioned by the students reflects an essential skill necessary for their future legal practice.

One student (IPS18) said:

You learned law but ... you learn how is going in the real life but I think it's super necessary. I learned a lot and I think that's the best thing about this course ... that it questioned things it didn't just give you like facts it made you question it, made you try to learn.

Another student (IPS10) added:

Yeah just to reiterate my point that for someone pursuing a career in international law, the course in its entirety has proven very valuable for me, especially the simulation in itself was important because not a lot of time has been devoted to the practical side of things during my studies.

Figure 4 shows the aspects of the course that students found beneficial for their future careers and the number of students who recognised those aspects.

⁶⁹"International IP law skills" was a term coined by students in their responses to the question asked.



Figure 4. Aspects of the course beneficial for future career.

Components of the course and how they contributed to students' learning

Constant comparative analysis of the interview data shows that the core components of the course, including lectures, reading, the field trip, exhibition and simulation, significantly contributed to students' learning, albeit at different levels. Students' responses to this question were not only similar but also thought-provoking. Some students even provided a well-rounded review that could help improve future modules. Below, we present results regarding the course components and how they supported students' learning.

Lectures

Lectures are a traditional teaching method, and students' responses to them can vary based on factors such as teaching style and individual learning preferences. Feedback from participants indicates that students found the lectures to be informative, interactive and supportive of their learning. Some students noted that the lectures helped them develop a theoretical knowledge base for understanding the course topics, while others appreciated the interaction between the teacher and students, as well as among students during the group discussions. Below are some examples of students' comments that illustrate these conclusions. IPS1:

The lectures have served me in the most theoretical perspective of the course, especially to learn the meaning of some basic concepts of the course, to obtain examples such as the one mentioned in the previous question to exemplify some of the explanations we received in these readings, and to understand a general idea about the field ...

Similarly, IPS23 said: "I think the lectures were very beneficial for me and the topics were very good. Many examples were used and it helped at least my learning process a lot".

IPS20: :

... I really liked that thing about the lectures that also I, even though we had, like, three hours, I think I didn't, like, thought that they were, like, too long. I think the class was, like, really, like, interactive.

In a balanced opinion, one student stated his review in this manner: IPS10:

I thought that lecture was interesting and they provided a good window to the basic issues at hand. Maybe some more time could have maybe been devoted to the lectures because some of it was gone through pretty quickly.

Overall, the lectures received several commendations and a few suggestions. While many appreciated this method, one student confessed it was not his learning style. In his opinion, IPS16 remarked:

... I don't really remember what was discussed in most of the lectures. But I think that kind of revolved around me and revolved around those two concepts. And I mean, people learn differently. Some people learn by lecture. Some people learn by reading and so on and so on. So, the way I picked up the most was by reading those texts and reflecting on them. And I think that was very good.

IPS16's response resonates with Boyle and Dunn's advocacy for different teaching methods to support students' diverse learning styles.

Reading

The reading aspect of the course generated diverse opinions. While many students found it helpful, insightful, relevant, and a good complement to the lectures, others felt the texts were difficult and complex. From a positive perspective, IPS16 said:

I think that probably the part that really stuck to my mind as far as being a core part of the course, it was the two readings ... about geographic indicators and ... about traditional knowledge. And those two, as far as I can tell, were the pillars of the course, like the two main, most important things.

Similarly, IPS20 said: "I really liked it. And I also really liked, ... the fact that I could, ... literally study from the article". Another (IPS4) also added: "The readings came as like as a thing to complete the lectures". IPS15's report, however, provides a balanced opinion stating that "it was interesting because it was written many, many things (informative). The negative aspect was, it was a really long". IPS8 expressed a differing opinion which somewhat contradicts IPS15's complaint about the length of the text.

I would have actually liked to see more of that (reading) because I know it, no one said you can't do extra reading ... Some of the articles were quite challenging yeah because maybe but maybe there could have been more basic reading just really really basic stuff I don't know if there are that.

IPS8 was the only participant who expressed a desire for more reading materials.

The primary criticism of this method was that some texts were difficult to understand and contained complex terms. We deduce that part of the reason the text might have appeared difficult and complex to understand stems from the fact that for some of these students, who were exchange students, English was their second or even third language. Therefore, reading legal texts at this level can be challenging.

For instance, IPS18 stated:

I think it was the most difficult part for me because of the English like there are a lot of technical words. And if you read article in your mother tongue and you

spend maybe one hour two hours something like that but if you are reading in another language you need to come back a lot of times.

According to the data, reading was the least preferred aspect of the course. While most comments indicate that the readings were relevant and beneficial for students' learning, their difficult nature – especially for those whose first language is not English – made them less enjoyable. IPS19 mentioned that the readings encouraged self-learning regardless. She also suggested that the level of difficulty was subjective stating:

It is actually a way to like make you really read the text because the problem is that if you don't do something about that it would be clear if you don't ... the reading materials I thought, I think that uh they were quite um good like they made me learn things ... in a class nobody ... everybody is not ... at the same uh ... yes knowledge and maybe for me difficult but for another person it could be like exactly what he or she needs so uh for me, they were good.

Field trip

The field trip marked the first hands-on experience of the course. Due to some setbacks, it was held only for two year groups. Eight students from these groups participated in the interviews. The feedback from the respondents about the field trip was very positive, indicating that it was indeed beneficial for the students. Many participants were able to connect the presentations at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs with what they had learned in the course, with some students noting that they gained practical insights into actual negotiations. Below are examples of the students' impressions of the field trip: IPS12: "the trip to Helsinki is quite interesting. And actually, I think is the most interesting part from the course". IPS10: "... was definitely worth the trip to Helsinki, as all the presentations very interesting. It seemed that the government of Finland had no clear opinion on ... on the matters of traditional knowledge, and related rights". This statement demonstrates how the course shaped critical thinking and understanding, going beyond simple classroom discussions to a deeper grasp of government policies and positions regarding international negotiations. However, the observations were reported differently. IPS6 had this to say:

this also reminds me of emm ... the negotiation that we had, the simulation and yeah ... its actually really hard to negotiate ... with so many countries ... then I thought I thought about WIPO ... also like there are so many countries included ... but on the other side, like if only like relating, for example, to IP or to GI and TK, for example, there was not so much that we learned new.

The last three remarks indicate successful learning through observation and students' ability to connect their observations to the ongoing lessons in class, which was the primary objective of the field trip, as illustrated in [Figure 1](#)

above. It enhanced students' learning by building upon the theoretical aspects of the course.

Exhibition

The exhibition offered students an opportunity to conduct independent research, present their ideas, receive feedback, refine their arguments, and prepare more effectively for negotiations during the simulation. Data collected from interviews indicates that the exhibition was a highly effective and essential component of the students' learning experience. Below are some remarks from participants. IPS1:

The exhibition was a key piece in the understanding of the course for me, at least personally, because I was a little lost due to the volume of information received in the first days, and thanks to the preparation and subsequent presentation of the exhibition I could clarify many explanations about the course and understand a lot better the position that I had to defend in the simulation.

Similar to the previous student, IPS13 mentioned how the exhibition enhanced their understanding of key components of the course:

The exhibition I think after the lecture was the most important part in trying to familiarise myself with intellectual property and most importantly geographical indications because I didn't really know much about geographical indication in advance ...

IPS16 also acknowledged that having an exhibition before the simulation helped students' preparation and success. He said:

I think that if the simulation was the first real interaction, without having an exhibition first, I think there would be a risk of coming in there dangerously unprepared ...

This statement illustrates how each component of the course and its order was thoughtfully selected to enhance relevance to students' learning.

Some students, however, expressed a desire for clearer guidelines regarding this method. IPS17 stated:

The exhibition was nice, although in the beginning I was kind of confused as to what we had to do ... As a group, we all had different understandings of what we had to do.

These comments suggest that while the exhibition was informative, it also aided in understanding key components of the course and served as good preparation for the simulation. Since the objective of this method was to provide students with the opportunity to present their ideas, learn about opposing viewpoints, and prepare for the final simulation, the students'

feedback indicated a successful outcome. The teacher viewed the comments from IPS17 as a valuable opportunity to further clarify the expectations for students in the exhibition, utilising the instructions and tutorials to provide additional guidance.

Simulation

The simulation was the highlight of the course, allowing students to negotiate two ongoing treaties at WIPO and the WTO. For many, this was a new and enriching experience. Some students reported that participating in the simulation boosted their confidence in practising law and provided a strong sense of fulfilment. They had the opportunity to step into the roles of diplomats, drafting and reviewing treaties, making amendments, and effectively negotiating the best deals for the sides they represented. The impressions gathered from the students about the simulation indicate that it had an impact on their learning. Many felt proud of themselves as they completed the course having achieved what they barely thought they could. For example, IPS8 said:

I think it brought out one of the best sides of this course . . . that you're forced to learn actively . . . it was a great experience because I hadn't actually ever done that before which is astounding considering that I've actually received an MA in the UK . . . I thought it was very holistic learning which should be encouraged more in legal studies.

This student appraisal of the simulation conveys a great deal of insight. It highlights how infrequently simulations are utilised in law courses across various contexts. Notably, this student is from the UK. As they acknowledge, it sheds light on the nature of legal education. A student with an MA has never encountered simulation before, and as they express, it should be implemented more frequently in university classrooms as it fosters holistic learning. For this reason, the authors found it encouraging to share the results in the hope of promoting the use of multi-methods.

IPS1's report articulates this view better:

The simulation helped me in the most practical view of the course. Because even if I study law, which it's supposed to have a quite important practical component, I almost never have the opportunity of participating in such a practical way. Thanks to the simulation and the video we saw to prepare it, I have been able to lose my nerves a bit to speak and debate in another language, because the atmosphere was very relaxed, and it was not how I imagined it at the beginning of the course, when I was a little scared to have to participate in an international negotiation simulation.

Other students shared similar feelings and highlighted unexpected benefits of the course, such as good team dynamics and stronger relationships. IPS21 had this to say:

the simulation was less demanding in like research but more demanding in group work ... I think that it pushed me to be closer also to my teammates because I had to see them all the time and that was like pretty nice ... it was pretty fun and hard to prepare for the simulation but it wasn't impossible. It wasn't like too hard ... because I was so tired yeah but I felt very accomplished.

These unexpected benefits were particularly important for student wellbeing during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Importantly, this approach allowed students to build strong relationships with their classmates and learn to collaborate effectively despite their differences – a skill that is increasingly essential in university classrooms today, as it fosters the development of intercultural competence. Additionally, some students appreciated this teaching and learning method because it eliminated the need for examinations. Thus, while building their confidence, this method further reinforced that students learn differently. For example, IPS14 indicated that,

definitely the simulation was a really good experience and it was really refreshing to have that rather than exam, because maybe if you're studying in such negotiation and then you have to write an exam about that that would feel quite strange, but having real life practice, I think, firstly gives confidence in doing similar things in the future.

Every participant had something good to say about the simulation although a few students also had some reservations and recommendations. PS12, for instance, said:

its really have (helped) me also have a skill, when negotiating with someone ... But I think if we combine an exhibition and simulation in arms, it can have student prepared carefully about what they want to talk about the draft.

On this, IPS13 had a different perspective stating,

I think if we had to do all the work for the simulation, it would have been too much. And so it was better and much easier to continue towards the simulation, having done the exhibition. IPS13 further added,

... maybe would have liked to have a bit more comprehensive guidance because of the results I think were quite different from different groups. I don't know if that's a good or a bad thing but they were a bit different.

These contrasting remarks also illustrate how students reacted to different teaching methods. Notably, these critiques targeted not the process itself, but rather how those students perceived its execution. It also highlights the complexity of using a multi-method, which is in fact a strength inherent in the method.

Discussion

This study examined the components of a model designed for an IP law course and how they influenced students' development of professional and communication competence, negotiation skills and understanding of issues in international IP law. The outcomes of the content analysis and the constant comparative analysis of the data suggest that the multi-methods approach has positive implications for legal education in Finland and beyond. The interview data reveals that the study's participants found the approach holistic, practical and more supportive of their learning. By expanding the teaching methods, every student found a technique that suits how they learn. This is evident in how students from four different year groups pointed to diverse aspects of the course as the most supportive of their learning. This teaching approach aligns with the claim by Alfie Kohn that if educators can create the conditions under which students can become engaged with academic tasks, the acquisition of intellectual skills will probably follow.⁷⁰ The observation also resonates with Boyle and Dunn's appeal that law professors, regardless of class size, should incorporate methods and materials that complement their students' learning styles and that many students underperform due to the imposition of a single teaching approach unfitting for all.⁷¹

Our data suggests that there was a significant difference between the participants' understanding and perception of IP law and treaty negotiation before and after their studies. This is noteworthy, as more than half of the participants had limited prior knowledge of IP, and a few had no prior knowledge at all. The figures were even larger regarding treaty negotiation. Many participants attributed their learning largely to the various components and their progression from theory to experiential learning. This highlights the essence of the transformative teaching strategies employed in the course. Although the students who joined the course might have already expected a different style of teaching because of the "simulating" and "negotiation" in the course name, the results suggest that the course met the expectations of most students by not only improving their professional competence and communication skills but also providing them with useful everyday negotiation skills. This result aligns with the findings of Howieson and Rogers when they studied 67 law students on the utility of role-play as a tool for instilling confidence and assisting them in preparing for professional practice in Australia.⁷²

⁷⁰ Alfie Kohn, *Punished by Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise and Other Bribes* (Houghton Mifflin Company 1993).

⁷¹ Boyle and Dunn (n 36) 216.

⁷² Jill Howieson and Shane Rogers, "Using the Role-play at the Lectern: Developing 'Work-ready' and Confident Professionals" (2018) 52 *The Law Teacher* 190. Students reported greater knowledge, understanding, confidence and skill in conducting themselves professionally.

Generally, the students were responsive to all teaching methods. However, the exhibition and simulation emerged as the most preferred teaching methods. This suggests that despite the differences in how students learn, they tend to be motivated to work hard to prove themselves before their colleagues during such class exercises, ultimately leading to deep learning and alleviating anxieties. Research has shown that students respond favourably to simulation and, in some circumstances, prefer simulation-based projects over traditional classroom methods.⁷³ The exhibition received the most positive reviews, with some participants linking their success in the simulation to the foundation the exhibition provided. Nonetheless, the simulation was the most effective aspect of the course as students attributed their gains in knowledge and skills primarily to the simulation. They felt accountable for their learning and success, developing a sense of fulfilment. They also recognised the complexity and challenges of negotiating international treaties and building consensus, and felt more prepared for similar roles in their future careers.

What seems to be an interesting contrast from the study is the feedback on the lectures and readings. While the readings were overall the least preferred aspect according to the participants, the lectures received good ratings. However, a few participants singled out the lectures and reading as the methods that supported their learning the most. This indicates how some students still prefer the traditional method of teaching. This outcome is consistent with research in the education field, where teacher candidates participating in a survey highlighted lectures and small group activities as the aspects of their training that had the most impact on them.⁷⁴ As evidenced by the participants' remarks, the dynamic approach to teaching resulted in students leaving the course not only with knowledge but also with essential legal skills such as questioning the law, treaty drafting, negotiation and consensus building.

The data also suggests that the course participants learned soft skills. The data shows that, besides gaining domain-specific knowledge and content, most students acquired essential interpersonal and non-cognitive skills, including teamwork, time management, problem-solving and communication. Participants spoke proudly about their transformed attitudes, such as becoming more courageous and tolerant of others' opinions, backgrounds and cultures. The importance of cultivating soft skills within education has been emphasised by a recommendation from the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) in 1991 and, more recently, by the QAA Subject

⁷³Waters (n 29) 177 (citing P Maharg and E Li, "A Unique, Simulation-based Approach to Providing Students with Practical Legal Experience", paper for the Georgia State Law: International Conference on the Future of Legal Education, 20 February 2008).

⁷⁴Emmanuel O Acquah and Nancy L Commins, "Methods That Matter in Addressing Cultural Diversity with Teacher Candidates" (2017) 22 *Teaching in Higher Education* 501.

Benchmark Statement for Law 2023.⁷⁵ These documents urge educational institutions in the United Kingdom to adopt more sophisticated strategies for fostering essential competencies and to embrace and promote key skills such as (i) managing and developing self; (ii) working with and relating to others; (iii) communicating; (iv) managing tasks and solving problems; (v) applying numeracy; (vi) applying technology; (vii) applying design; and (viii) creativity.⁷⁶ This recommendation supports the findings of Pereira and Costa in their study about the significance of soft skills in university curricula.⁷⁷

The findings must be interpreted in light of several limitations. English was the second or third language for some students, which potentially inhibited their ability to analyse the legal texts or fully express themselves during the practical aspects of the course. This also led to the loss of meaning in approximately 5% of the interviews that consequently could not be transcribed. However, this limitation also saw some students making the most of their teamwork and challenging themselves to publicly debate in English, a feat they initially thought they could not achieve. By working in a team to negotiate, the students gained a clearer understanding and did not get stuck by their language barrier limitation.

Secondly, Covid-19 affected the academic years 2020 and 2021, leading to the cancellation of a field trip and a decrease in student participation in the interviews in the subsequent years. Lastly, the authors acknowledge that the students' learning diaries were not analysed as part of the data since the reflections were intended for students' learning, fostering critical thinking rather than serving as data for the research. The sample size of the interviews was adequate for the study. The technique employed by the course was successful under the circumstances but may be unsuitable in other contexts. Faculty should, therefore, assess and apply the most appropriate mode of multi-method pedagogy based on the environment.

Conclusion

In line with much of the scholarship in this area of educational research, the findings of this study reveal that there is value in using multi-method or active learning techniques in teaching law in higher education – especially if we want to meet the needs of students rather than those of some of their possible future employers. A single method of teaching, whether traditional or non-traditional, is unlikely to prove effective for all students because of the

⁷⁵See the QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Law (March 2023) <www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/sbs/sbs-law-23.pdf?sfvrsn=c271a881_6> accessed 25 May 2025.

⁷⁶David Laughton and Luiz Montanheiro, "Core Skills in Higher Education: The Student Perspective" (1996) 38 *Education and Training* 17, 19.

⁷⁷Orlando Petiz Pereira and Carlos Alberto AT Costa, "The Importance of Soft Skills in the University Academic Curriculum: The Perceptions of the Students in the New Society of Knowledge" (2017) 7(6) *International Journal of Business and Social Research* 1, 3.

diversity of learning styles. The model outlined in this article provides a powerful example of how legal educators can move beyond the traditional approach to employ techniques that cater to the needs of diverse students, particularly in courses with international students with different legal backgrounds.

Students were receptive to the active teaching methods. However, the practical aspects – the exhibition and simulation – emerged as the most preferred teaching approaches. This is evident from the participants' responses regarding their sense of accountability for their learning, increased self-confidence, sense of fulfilment and development of negotiation skills. Practical legal education is particularly pertinent in countries like Finland and others that lack an additional “vocational training” stage between law school, taking the Bar exam and practising as a lawyer. Thus, this research proposes to consider balanced methods in teaching law at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels to enhance the chances of more students succeeding in their work lives. However, it does not intend to prescribe a fixed set of strategies for legal education. There is no single method for effective teaching. Instead, for maximum effectiveness, these strategies must be adapted to the instructional context, students' backgrounds and available resources for instructors.

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ORCID

Daniel Opoku Acquah  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2665-382X>

Ama Opoku Acquah  <http://orcid.org/0009-0002-5444-8428>

Emmanuel Opoku Acquah  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3720-443X>

Appendix. Interview

- (1) Before coming on the course, what was your understanding of IP law – be it national or international?
- (2) Before coming on the course, what was your understanding of international treaty negotiation and its complexities?

- (3) Has your perception or understanding of international IP law and its negotiation changed after the course? If yes why? If not why?
 - (4) Has this course helped shape your understanding of the North/South divide in IP?
 - (5) How has the course helped you think differently about IP law and the role of IP law in societal development?
 - (6) Could you talk about each of the following aspects of the course and how they contributed to your understanding:
 - lectures
 - reading
 - field trip
 - exhibition
 - simulation
- (1) Could you talk about what you learned about drafting treaty text, consensus building, conflict management, and striking a balance?
 - (2) What aspects of the course do you think would be beneficial for your future career?