

**Thoughts on Legal Education as Professional Formation**  
**Jerome M. Organ**  
**Bakken Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Holloran Center**  
**for Ethical Leadership in the Professions**  
**University of St. Thomas School of Law (Minnesota)**

Law school undoubtedly is a formation experience – a process of socialization as students evolve from students to lawyers.

What happens during the socialization process?

Shifts in thinking/motivation

Declines in well being

The law school experience is forming students – but not in a positive way.

Thinking like a lawyer – the “bread and butter” of a legal education – is a necessary competency for lawyers – but it is not sufficient.

Carnegie’s Three Apprenticeships -- Thinking like a lawyer and doing what lawyers do and being a lawyer

We should help students transition from student to lawyer with a focus on two FOUNDATIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES – Each student should demonstrate an understanding and integration of:

pro-active professional development toward excellence at all the competencies needed to serve others well in meaningful employment (self-directedness); and

an internalized deep responsibility to others whom the student/lawyer serves as a professional in widening circles as the student matures.

How can we do this?

Be more intentional and work collectively.

Provide opportunities for students to do things lawyers do and to reflect on being in role.

Help students develop greater self-awareness and self-understanding – building on their experiences and competencies and honoring their motivations and passions and values.

Help students appreciate that relational skills will be important for them.