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# LEVERAGING STUDENTS' FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE IN LEGAL EDUCATION: COLLABORATIVE APPROACH OF LAW TEACHING IN NEPAL

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## ABSTRACT

Law teaching can benefit from a collaborative approach where faculty integrate legal concepts with students' foundational knowledge, enhancing comprehension and preparing them for professional practice. This study investigates how Tribhuvan University applies such integration, aiming to enrich legal education in Nepal. We employed a modified grounded theory approach to gather data from 10 faculty members from the law teaching constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University, using interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. Results of the study reveal that faculty use diverse methods, such as contextualizing legal concepts based on students' foundational knowledge and introducing interdisciplinary perspectives, to make complex doctrines more comprehensive. However, challenges include navigating sensitive topics, managing large classes, and addressing time constraints. Faculty members reported that leveraging students' foundational knowledge enhances learning outcomes and fosters ethical awareness but requires considerable institutional support and adaptation. The study suggests that law schools support this collaborative teaching model by offering professional development, encouraging interdisciplinary teaching methods, and aligning resources to meet faculty needs. These measures could modernize legal education and improve student readiness for legal practice in Nepal.

**Keywords:** law, faculty members, foundational knowledge, law teaching, collaborative approach

## INTRODUCTION

Contemporary law students are a diverse group with vastly different foundational knowledge compared to faculty members teaching them (Churchill *et al.*, 2024; Gardner, 2021). On the contrary, a legal doctrine is often taught without considering its context by the faculty members, systematically devaluing students' foundational knowledge due to the lack of a collaborative approach to law teaching.

The reconsideration of foundations in education aims to address questions, reconfiguring existing disciplines, re-categorizing sociology, philosophy, and psychology, and integrating them more coherently (Barrett & Hordern, 2021). Progress in elaborating what would be considered professional knowledge, such as in the teaching of law, is also made possible by this process of concentrating on what is understood by students with their foundational knowledge.

Law students' learning can be improved through help understanding how law faculty members create connections between teaching subjects and students' foundational knowledge that can improve educational and professional outcomes for law students. These efforts involve infusing new institutional resources or re-directing existing ones to enhance students' chances of academic success. Overall, the collaborative approach aims to enhance students' learning opportunities (Li, 2023).

Law students begin their studies with a diverse range of accumulated knowledge and experience. Students bring their personal and cultural experiences, as well as their academic learning from schools and colleges, to the law classroom (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000). Such knowledge is critical because it informs how students engage with and understand new subject matter. Indeed, Shulman (2004) stated that "the heads of students are full, are rich, are variegated. And that teaching involves connecting not with their ignorance, but with their foundational knowledge". To enhance students' subject matter understanding, teachers should first understand their foundational knowledge and beliefs, and then work to build upon these foundations, rather than assuming that students are a blank slate for new knowledge.

Law schools often struggle with students understanding complex legal doctrine and knowledge. To establish connections between subject matter and students' foundational knowledge, faculty members must possess a comprehensive understanding of their students' lives, experiences,

and knowledge (Pallas & Neumann, 2019). Teaching this way necessitates a comprehensive understanding of students' personal experiences (Rose, 1989). The struggle of law schools to achieve deep familiarity with students is due to significant differences between faculty members and students. This has caused difficulty for faculty members to understand students' thinking and their foundational knowledge, preventing them from supporting their learning effectively.

The teaching of this foundational knowledge in contemporary law teaching institutions appears to be under-considered despite its importance (Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond & Shulman, 2007). Teaching such as this is possible in law schools, but it seems limited due to the difficulty in connecting the subject matter with students' foundational knowledge.

There is substantial research on teaching improvement and faculty professional development in law schools (Barron 2011, Beckman & Temblay, 2012; Franklin, 2016). There is little literature on how faculty members can use students' foundational knowledge in law school to improve their understanding of the subject matter.

The study, focusing on doctrinal teaching, indicates that clinical faculty, academic success teachers, and law school personnel often use pre-existing knowledge to teach (Lustbader, 1996; Sturm & Guinier, 2003, 2007; Mlyniec, 2012; McClain, 2018). The group of law faculty who specialize in teaching this type of education can serve as valuable resources for institutions looking to leverage their existing institutional knowledge for professional development programs, allowing faculty to instruct students based on their fundamental knowledge.

Bransford, Brown & Cocking (2000) stated that teaching that effectively integrates subject-matter ideas with students' foundational knowledge leads to improved learning opportunities. To establish connections between subject matter and students' foundational knowledge, faculty must possess a comprehensive understanding of their subjects and students, as well as a willingness to explore student thinking during their learning process (Pallas & Neumann, 2019). Therefore, Neumann (2014) noted that culture "infuses what teachers bring and subject matter, as well as the context of learning and students' knowledge."

Researchers have attempted to categorize and document various types of foundational knowledge, including pre-existing subject matter and academic knowledge, as well as other categories of knowledge. Pallas & Neumann (2019) have identified three distinct categories of foundational knowledge: academic, cultural, and personal knowledge. Three types of knowledge can help students understand subject matter in a classroom setting. Teachers can use these types of knowledge to connect students' foundational knowledge to new subjects. Cultural origins can influence academic knowledge, cultural beliefs can shape personal experiences, and each type of knowledge can illuminate foundational knowledge without necessarily excluding others.

Foundational knowledge in students' communities and families, physical spaces, and societal contexts is influenced by cultural experiences, family dynamics, and physical space variations (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Moll & González, 2004; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Lee 2007). Literature suggests that people's daily experiences accumulate valuable knowledge, and schools and policymakers should promote pedagogical approaches that recognize and utilize these stores of knowledge in the educational context. González, Moll & Amanti (2005) viewed these knowledge sources as primarily cultural and cognitive resources, rather than academic. Likewise, Rose (1989) emphasized the importance of understanding students' backgrounds and motivations to assist them in success.

Key theories in school education emerged, with limited research examining their applicability to higher education teaching. The literature on this includes studies by Pallas and Neumann (2019) on convergent teaching, Castillo-Montoya (2021) on faculty use of foundational knowledge in teaching college students, and Delima (2020) on how first-generation college students utilize their foundational knowledge.

The literature review reveals that educational research, which includes law teaching institutions, demonstrates that integrating subject-matter ideas with students' foundational knowledge enhances learning opportunities. The pedagogical practices of law teachers often overlook the importance of such knowledge in the writings and related literature. This study suggests that teaching methods could integrate the students' foundational knowledge with the subject matter of the law teacher.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study revolves around two key research questions. The first research question seeks to understand how law faculty members at Tribhuvan University incorporate students' foundational knowledge into their teaching practices. Similarly, the second research question examines the perceived benefits and challenges of using students' foundational knowledge in law teaching from the faculty's perspective.

## METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study used a modified grounded theory approach to qualitative research, a method that builds theory through the analysis of empirical data related to individuals' lives and experiences. Grounded theory typically follows an inductive process that develops insights and theoretical constructs directly from collected data rather than relying on preconceived hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This study focused on 10 law faculty members from the law-teaching constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University. To gather data, the study utilized interviews, field observations, and document analysis. This method was chosen to construct a theoretical framework specific to the law teaching context at Tribhuvan University, based on the real experiences and perspectives of faculty members (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

The data collection process began with two interviews for each respondent: an initial in-depth interview and a shorter follow-up interview conducted after class observation sessions. The interview data was contextualized by observing two of each respondent's classes to examine their teaching approach. The classroom observations helped to closely examine the interactions, pedagogical styles, and learning dynamics, adding depth to the interview insights. Document analysis helped to gain a broader understanding of the course context and better interpret each classroom session within the study's framework, ultimately enhancing the robustness of the study's results by examining the personal and professional records of the respondents, and review of syllabi of each course.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of integrating students' foundational knowledge into law teaching, demonstrating that a more interactive and collaborative approach can significantly improve student learning outcomes and readiness for legal practice. By adapting teaching

methods to connect with students' diverse backgrounds, faculty members foster not only comprehension and critical thinking but also ethical reasoning, preparing students to meet real-world legal challenges.

The results reveal that making legal concepts relatable to students' experiences enhances engagement and encourages a collaborative classroom environment, aligning with research advocating for interactive, contextualized learning in legal education. However, faculty face barriers, such as time constraints, large class sizes, and limited institutional support, which complicate the consistent application of this approach. Addressing these challenges is essential for advancing student-centred, effective teaching in law.

Ultimately, the study underscores that a collaborative, student-focused teaching approach enhances students' professional identity, ethical reflection, and engagement, benefiting their overall preparedness for legal practice. Institutional support for professional development and faculty collaboration will be key to sustaining these improvements and enriching the educational experience for law students in Nepal.

### **Teaching Method and Strategies**

This study revealed that law faculty members employ various strategies to integrate students' foundational knowledge into their teaching practices, ultimately enriching students' understanding of legal concepts. A consistent theme among respondents was the use of students' foundational knowledge as a foundation for class discussions. All faculty members emphasized that these discussions foster deeper, more nuanced conversations, leading to increased student engagement and participation. This aligns with existing literature, which highlights the importance of activating foundational knowledge to enhance student learning outcomes (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking 2000).

The incorporation of interdisciplinary perspectives was identified as another significant method to deepen students' legal understanding. Faculty members drew on disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and philosophy to contextualize legal principles, demonstrating the interconnectedness of law with other fields. For instance, understanding psychological theories related to behavior significantly aids students' comprehension of criminal law. Studies advocate for a holistic view of legal education, suggesting that exposure to diverse academic perspectives enhances students' critical

thinking and application skills, supporting this interdisciplinary approach (Smits, 2014; Liu, 2024).

Moreover, faculty frequently referenced foundational legal coursework when introducing new concepts, thereby reinforcing students' understanding and illustrating the connections among various legal principles. Constructivist theories of learning, positing that knowledge builds upon previously acquired information (Piaget, 1973), align with this approach.

Respondents also encouraged students to consider differing or opposing viewpoints, prompting them to utilize their foundational knowledge to explore alternative perspectives on legal issues. This method not only broadens students' understanding but also cultivates critical thinking skills, which are essential for effective legal practice. This finding echoes previous research that emphasizes the role of critical thinking in legal education, where students learn to analyze and evaluate arguments from multiple angles (Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond & Shulman, 2007).

Respondents describe a collaborative approach to teaching that dynamically interacts students' foundational knowledge of legal concepts. While the degree of engagement varied among faculty, the overarching principle remained constant: leveraging students' backgrounds and experiences to enhance their comprehension and application of legal concepts. This aligns with the notion of student-centered learning, where students' diverse backgrounds are regarded as valuable assets rather than obstacles to learning (Weimer, 2013).

### **Impact on Student Learning**

The integration of students' foundational knowledge into legal education has significantly transformed student learning outcomes, fostering a deeper comprehension of complex legal principles and contributing to their professional development. Respondents consistently reported that when faculty connected legal concepts to students' foundational knowledge, it facilitated a clearer and more intuitive understanding of intricate legal doctrines. This method made abstract legal principles more tangible and accessible, enhancing students' ability to grasp and retain complex material. Such findings are consistent with prior studies, which emphasize the importance of contextualizing legal education to improve student comprehension and retention (Christensen, 2006; Maharg, 2016; Brennan, 2021).



All faculty members observed that leveraging students' foundational knowledge led to increased engagement and participation in class discussions. By making discussions relevant to students' experiences, respondents created a dynamic classroom environment where students were encouraged to share personal insights related to the legal concepts being studied. This collaborative approach to teaching not only stimulated interest but also fostered inclusivity, allowing diverse perspectives to be valued and explored. This reflects findings from previous studies that advocate for collaborative learning as a means of enhancing student engagement and promoting a richer learning experience (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2014).

Furthermore, integrating foundational knowledge was found to play a crucial role in the development of critical thinking skills. Respondents noted that by prompting students to relate legal principles to their own experiences, they encouraged critical analysis of how these principles apply in various contexts. This connection-making process enhanced students' abilities to evaluate legal issues from multiple angles, echoing research that links experiential learning with improved critical thinking capabilities in legal education (Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond & Shulman, 2007). By utilizing their personal and cultural backgrounds, students were able to cultivate a more nuanced understanding of legal concepts, essential for effective legal analysis and reasoning.

Additionally, this integration supported the development of ethical reasoning. Students who engaged with legal concepts through the lens of their own experiences and values demonstrated a heightened awareness of the ethical dimensions of legal issues. This approach allowed them to examine the intersection of legal principles with societal values and moral considerations, which aligns with the findings of other scholars who emphasize the necessity of fostering ethical reasoning in legal education (Duncan, Field, Strevens, 2020; Cody, 2020; Robertson & Kruuse, 2016). As a result, respondents noted that students developed a stronger sense of ethical responsibility and a deeper understanding of the law's role in addressing social justice and ethical dilemmas.

Moreover, by linking legal concepts to students' foundational knowledge, faculty made the learning experience more relevant to real-world situations. Students were able to discern how theoretical legal principles applied to practical scenarios, enhancing their motivation to learn and better preparing them for the demands of legal practice. This practical



relevance is crucial, as previous research highlights the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in legal education (Turner, Bone & Ashton, 2016). The ability to relate abstract doctrines to everyday legal issues equipped students with the insights necessary to navigate the complexities of legal practice effectively.

### **Classroom Exercises**

A pivotal element of this study was the implementation of teaching plan and classroom exercises developed by respondents to effectively integrate students' foundational knowledge into the learning process. These exercises not only improved students' comprehension of legal concepts but also rendered the material more engaging and contextually relevant.

Seven respondents specifically mentioned that they designed their classroom exercises to humanize legal issues by linking abstract legal principles to real-world scenarios and personal experiences. This method allowed students to recognize the human impact of legal rules and doctrines, thereby fostering empathy and a deeper appreciation for the law's societal role. Such findings resonate with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of contextualized learning in legal education, where students benefit from seeing the practical implications of legal principles (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000).

Moreover, at least five respondents indicated that the creation and utilization of the teaching plan and classroom exercises were central to their teaching strategies. These plan and exercises were not merely an adjunct to the curriculum; rather, they were an integral part of the respondents' pedagogical approach. By prioritizing the integration of students' foundational knowledge through these practical exercises, respondents aligned their teaching methods with the overarching goal of enhancing student comprehension and engagement. This approach parallels research that advocates for active learning techniques in legal education, suggesting that interactive and experiential learning environments significantly improve student engagement and understanding (Bonwell & Eison, 1991).

Respondents reported that these exercises facilitated collaborative learning, encouraging students to engage with their peers and share insights based on their own backgrounds. Studies supporting the benefits of collaborative learning in fostering critical thinking skills (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 2014) support this collaborative atmosphere, which not only

enriched discussions but also reinforced the idea that diverse perspectives enhance legal analysis.

Additionally, the integration of students' foundational knowledge through classroom exercises helped bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical application, preparing students more effectively for real-world legal challenges. By grounding legal principles in relatable contexts, students were able to grasp how these principles apply in everyday situations, reinforcing their motivation to learn. This practical relevance echoes findings from prior studies indicating that students who can relate theoretical knowledge to real-world applications are more likely to remain engaged and achieve better learning outcomes (Duncan, Field, Strevens, 2020; Cody, 2020).

### **Barriers to Effective Teaching**

Despite the positive outcomes associated with integrating students' foundational knowledge into legal education, all respondents identified several significant barriers that hinder this approach. These challenges reflect a tension between the aspiration to engage deeply with students' backgrounds and the practical constraints inherent in law teaching.

Four respondents expressed a primary concern that engaging with students' foundational knowledge often necessitates addressing personal, cultural, or controversial issues stemming from their prior experiences. Such sensitive discussions may cause classroom conflict. Respondents noted the difficulty of navigating these discussions, fearing emotional reactions or contentious exchanges might arise. This aligns with existing literature, which highlights the challenges educators face when introducing sensitive topics in a classroom setting, as they may provoke perceptions of bias or unprofessionalism (Ortega-Sánchez, 2022).

Furthermore, eight respondents highlighted the limited instructional time available as a significant obstacle to fully exploring and integrating students' foundational knowledge without sacrificing coverage of essential legal doctrines. The pressure to cover a wide range of content often leaves little room for in-depth exploration of topics relevant to students' experiences. This finding resonates with prior research indicating that the fast-paced nature of legal curricula can inhibit opportunities for deeper engagement with the material, thereby affecting student learning outcomes (Duncan, Field & Strevens, 2020; Cody, 2020; Robertson & Kruuse, 2016).

Additionally, three respondents cited logistical challenges related to large class sizes, which can dilute the effectiveness of methods designed to leverage students' foundational knowledge. In larger groups, it becomes increasingly difficult to address the diverse experiences and perspectives of students. This mirrors findings from previous studies that argue smaller class sizes can foster more personalized learning environments, enabling instructors to engage with students on a more individual basis (Wang & Calvano, 2022).

The transition from a traditional breadth-first teaching approach to a more in-depth exploration of specific topics related to students' experiences presents another challenge. Five respondents emphasized the necessity of striking a balance between addressing foundational knowledge and ensuring comprehensive coverage of the required legal material. This balancing act is particularly difficult in crowded syllabi, echoing concerns raised in earlier research about the constraints of conventional legal education structures that prioritize breadth over depth (Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond & Shulman, 2007).

Moreover, respondents noted that institutional support for integrating students' foundational knowledge is frequently insufficient. Three respondents reported a lack of resources, such as training or professional development opportunities, to effectively incorporate these elements into their teaching. This absence of institutional backing aligns with literature emphasizing the need for systemic support in legal education to facilitate innovative teaching practices (Schäpfke, Mayoral Díaz-Asensio & Hvidt, 2018).

### **Teaching Objectives**

The results of this study indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding the value and impact of a collaborative approach to law teaching. Both students and faculty perceive this pedagogical method as beneficial, with the data revealing several key objectives.

Four respondents articulated a common theme: teaching methods that integrated students' foundational knowledge led to enhanced learning opportunities. By connecting new legal concepts to students' existing knowledge, these methods render the material more accessible and engaging. This alignment not only facilitates the grasp of complex legal doctrines but also significantly improves students' overall understanding and retention. This observation is consistent with existing literature that underscores the

effectiveness of connecting new information with foundational knowledge to promote deeper learning (Ausubel, 1968; Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000).

Another notable outcome of this collaborative approach is its role in developing students' sense of professional identity. Students reflect on their values and perspectives as future legal practitioners by connecting legal concepts to their personal and cultural backgrounds. This reflective process helps them understand how their individual experiences and beliefs intersect with their professional roles. As they engage with legal issues through their unique lenses, students cultivate a more nuanced comprehension of their professional responsibilities and ethical obligations. This result echoes prior studies that emphasize the importance of identity formation in legal education, highlighting how personal reflection can enhance students' understanding of their roles within the legal profession (Sullivan, Colby, Wegner, Bond & Shulman, 2007).

Seven respondents noted that teaching methods drawing on students' foundational knowledge are crucial for preparing them to become effective practitioners. By relating theoretical concepts to practical scenarios and real-world applications, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the law in practice. This approach effectively bridges the gap between academic learning and professional practice, equipping students with the skills and insights necessary for their legal careers. This aligns with the perspective of scholars who advocate for experiential learning in legal education, asserting that such approaches are vital for fostering practical skills (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Three respondents highlighted the significant role of this teaching method in fostering ethical and moral reasoning among students. By encouraging connections between legal concepts and personal values or societal issues, faculty members facilitate discussions about the moral implications of legal decisions. This engagement not only enhances students' sense of ethical responsibility but also prepares them to navigate the ethical challenges they may face in their professional lives. Prior studies, advocating for curricula that incorporate discussions on morality and ethics in legal decision-making, support this finding (Wilkins, 2001).

Furthermore, faculty members reported that the collaborative approach enhances their effectiveness as educators. By tailoring their teaching strategies to align with students' existing knowledge and

experiences, two respondents noted they were able to create more engaging classrooms that address students' needs and provide targeted support. This adaptive teaching practice contributes to a more impactful educational experience, reinforcing findings from previous research that highlight the importance of responsive teaching in promoting student engagement and learning (Arnold, 2011).

### **Subject Matter Relevance**

The relevance of subject matter to students' foundational knowledge emerged as a critical factor that influences how faculty members approach their teaching in legal education. This study revealed that aligning course content with students' foundational knowledge significantly enhances the effectiveness of instructional methods.

The alignment of subject matter with students' foundational knowledge greatly influences the ease and effectiveness of teaching, according to nine respondents. Students perceived subjects like constitutional law, which resonated with their backgrounds, as more accessible and relevant. Closely tied to contemporary issues like constitutionalism, federalism, and social justice debates, this subject area allowed faculty to draw on students' experiences, facilitating more engaging and meaningful classroom discussions. This observation supports the findings of prior research that emphasizes the importance of relevance in learning, which can enhance student motivation and comprehension (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005; Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000).

Conversely, subjects perceived as more abstract or specialized, such as intellectual property rights, environmental law, contract law, and torts, posed greater challenges for faculty. These areas often lacked direct connections to students' everyday experiences, complicating the integration of foundational knowledge into teaching practices. One faculty member noted the difficulty of bridging this gap, underscoring the need for innovative strategies to engage students with such material. This aligns with existing literature that stresses the necessity of contextualizing abstract legal principles to enhance student engagement (Blumberg, 2009, 2017, 2019).

Classroom observations provided insight into the varying teaching strategies employed by faculty based on the subject matter's relevance. In courses with high relevance, students exhibited greater engagement and demonstrated a deeper understanding of the material. Six respondents

noted that they could leverage students' foundational knowledge more effectively, leading to richer discussions and enhanced comprehension. In contrast, two respondents reported that they needed to adopt more creative and intentional methods in subjects perceived as less relevant to effectively engage students and integrate foundational knowledge.

Faculty members teaching less relevant subjects displayed notable adaptability and innovation in their pedagogical approaches. They actively sought ways to make complex legal concepts more relatable, employing creative teaching methods and supplementary resources. For example, four respondents demonstrated a commitment to overcoming these challenges, reflecting a dedication to improving the learning experience and ensuring that all students could benefit from their education. This aligns with research suggesting that faculty flexibility and resourcefulness can positively impact student learning outcomes (Ramsden, 2003).

### **Lack of Institutional Support**

The findings of this study revealed a significant gap in institutional support for teaching methods that integrate students' foundational knowledge into legal education. Eight respondents specifically noted the lack of meaningful support from the university, particularly in terms of professional development programs aimed at enhancing these pedagogical practices.

Respondents primarily expressed concern about the lack of targeted professional development initiatives that could provide faculty with the necessary training, resources, and strategies to effectively integrate students' foundational knowledge into their teaching. This lack of institutional support posed challenges for faculty members in implementing innovative teaching methods, thereby limiting their ability to engage fully with students' foundational knowledge. Research has consistently shown that professional development is crucial for educators to remain effective in their roles, as it fosters the adoption of best practices and enhances teaching quality (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017).

The respondents indicated that the absence of structured professional development programs not only limited their opportunities to learn about and adopt effective teaching strategies but also hindered their ability to stay updated with advancements in pedagogy. Continuous professional development is vital in cultivating an educational environment that promotes growth and adaptability among faculty (Guskey, 2000).

Without these programs, respondents expressed challenges in evolving their teaching practices to better serve their students.

Despite these institutional shortcomings, six respondents reported finding alternative sources of support that proved beneficial in their teaching efforts. Many turned to family members with backgrounds in education or pedagogy for insights and guidance. Additionally, peer support—fostered through personal friendships and professional networks—emerged as another critical avenue for assistance. This aligns with previous research highlighting the importance of collaborative learning and peer networks in professional development (Sridharan, McKay & Boud, 2023; Guilmette, 2007).

Furthermore, two respondents utilized their professional experiences and training from their legal practice to enhance their teaching. This real-world understanding of legal issues allowed them to effectively bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, demonstrating the value of experiential learning in legal education (Radović, Firssova, Hummel & Vermeulen, 2020). Four respondents actively incorporated their insights from legal practice into their classroom, emphasizing the relevance of connecting theory with practice, which is essential for cultivating effective legal practitioners.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that adopting a collaborative approach in law teaching can profoundly enhance the educational experience for law students by effectively integrating their foundational knowledge into doctrinal teaching. As discussed in the introduction, the gap between faculty expertise and students' diverse backgrounds often challenges the effectiveness of legal education. Addressing this gap by aligning teaching methods with students' foundational knowledge could modernize law teaching practices at institutions like Tribhuvan University, creating a more engaging and relevant educational experience for students.

The study's results affirm that a collaborative teaching approach, which builds on students' foundational knowledge, provides critical benefits. This method not only enhances comprehension and engagement with challenging legal concepts but also contributes to the development of professional skills and ethical reasoning—outcomes crucial for preparing students for legal practice. Faculty members who actively connect course content with students' experiences create more meaningful learning



opportunities, facilitating students' mastery of doctrinal principles and preparing them to be reflective and responsible practitioners.

Addressing the research questions, the study reveals that while some faculty at Tribhuvan University already incorporate students' foundational knowledge into their teaching, substantial institutional support is essential to fully implement this approach. As discussed in the results, barriers such as limited resources, time constraints, and class size remain challenges. Therefore, fostering a collaborative teaching approach requires both professional development for faculty and institutional initiatives that promote and incentivize this pedagogical shift.

To advance this approach, law-teaching constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University could support faculty through various initiatives. Organizing conferences, offering course credits, and creating programs dedicated to collaborative teaching methods would encourage and reward faculty engagement with these strategies. Further, by prioritizing faculty with substantial legal practice experience, supporting all educators' development as teachers, and cultivating an environment of care for students, law schools can ensure a more effective, student-centered learning environment. This commitment to faculty development and pedagogical innovation would not only improve the learning experience but also strengthen legal scholarship and professional readiness among law graduates in Nepal.

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