



2016

## Teaching Domestic Violence through Guest Speaker Panels

Dan Tsataros  
*Indiana University Northwest*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/jiass>

---

### Recommended Citation

Tsataros, Dan (2016) "Teaching Domestic Violence through Guest Speaker Panels," *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences*: Vol. 19 : Iss. 1 , Article 14.

Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/jiass/vol19/iss1/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Butler University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ Butler University. For more information, please contact [digitalscholarship@butler.edu](mailto:digitalscholarship@butler.edu).

*Teaching Domestic Violence through Guest Speaker Panels* \*

DAN TSATAROS  
*Indiana University Northwest*

**ABSTRACT**

This study examines the relationship between the use of guest speaker panels, student learning, and retention in undergraduate courses at a regional Midwestern university. The study included a sample of 95 undergraduates who participated in the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014, with one experimental and two control groups. The guest speaker panels included former victims of domestic violence, criminal justice professionals who work with domestic violence court cases, and professionals from social service fields who work with domestic violence court cases. The research concludes that guest speaker panels are effective in imparting knowledge and altering perceptions.

**KEY WORDS** Guest Speaker Panels; Domestic Violence Pedagogy; Undergraduate Courts; Undergraduate Criminal Law

Domestic violence is a significant problem affecting victims and their families across the United States. According to the Tjaden and Thoennes (2000), "It is estimated that one in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime." Similarly, the Commonwealth Fund (1993) reports that "a woman is battered every nine seconds in the United States." As such, domestic violence is an issue that requires consideration in the academic world. Students may not understand the relationship between the crime, the social response, and the dynamics of the cycle of violence; however, domestic violence is a reality and students are certainly not immune to that type of abuse. As Bryant and Spencer (2003:370) revealed, "College students experience extremely high rates of dating violence that range between 20% and 50%," making this an important topic for undergraduate criminal justice students to learn about holistically.

Despite the fact that domestic violence is such a widespread issue, it continues to be underrepresented in criminal law and criminal court textbooks. In the textbook by Thomas

---

\* Correspondence concerning this paper should be addressed to Dan Tsataros, MBA, JD, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice, School of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University Northwest, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408.

J. Gardner entitled *Criminal Law* (2011), the topic of domestic violence is discussed in only 3 of 539 pages. Similarly, in the textbook *American's Courts and the Criminal Justice System* by David W. Neubauer and Henry F. Fradella (2013), the topic of domestic violence is again covered for only 3 pages, of 531 pages. A review of most popular undergraduate court-related textbooks will find similar underrepresentation of domestic violence issues. Because this absence of information exists, the conundrum remains how information can be presented in an innovative manner to promote content retention and to be meaningful. College professors face myriad obstacles when imparting knowledge in an academic setting, especially on regional college campuses. Thus, the following research question guided the present study: Does the use of panels consisting of criminal justice professionals, professionals from social service fields, and victims of domestic violence influence students' perceptions and understanding of domestic violence?

To examine this question, this paper first details an innovative approach to teaching domestic violence to undergraduate criminal justice majors, through the use of guest speaker panels. Furthermore, an examination of the results is undertaken to inform an under-researched area of criminal justice education: courts and criminal law courses. First, a literature review is presented to structure the pedagogical approach based on previous findings. General class structure is also discussed in detail, including the syllabus and the integration of guest speaker panels with traditional lectures. Next, the methodological and analytical approach is presented to assess the impact of this pedagogical experiment, followed by discussion of the results, as well as limitations. This paper concludes with information for other professors following a similar approach in their classrooms.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### *Pedagogical Approaches*

According to Braxton, Eimers, and Bayer (1996:604), a significant body of research supports the conclusion that a professor's knowledge is a conceptually significant predictor of student satisfaction. Professors are faced with the challenge of making information relevant and meaningful. Mooney (1998:158) adds that interesting content may be content that is perceived as useful to the student (i.e., relevant to life, to getting and keeping a job, and to a variety of careers). Murphy-Geiss (2008:378) credits effective teaching to three components: (1) a variety of pedagogies that address multiple learning styles, (2) intentional engagement of emotions, and (3) real or realistic situations. Professors must therefore aspire for material to be meaningful and to promote content retention. Chickering and Gamson (1987:3) make the poignant statement that what is taught, after all, is at least as important as how it is taught. This view is especially challenging as "teaching is being transformed to better accommodate the diverse needs of an expanding student population" (Spanier 2001:110).

Similarly, Young and McCormick (1991:6) mention the importance of being aware of the group of students being taught, such as recent high school graduates, returning adult education students, and other types of nontraditional learners, a view that

still seemingly holds true today. Additionally, educational research suggests that the weaknesses of lecturing may outweigh its strengths (Robinson 2000:65). Learning is not a spectator sport. Students do not learn much just by sitting in classes, listening to teachers, memorizing prepackaged assignments, and spitting out answers (Chickering and Gamson 1987:4). As Robinson notes, “Active learning strategies may overcome the weakness of the traditional lecture approach” (2000:65). The supplementation of a guest speaker can be helpful to all students as well as adaptable to all learning styles. When a guest speaker attends, it can be especially useful for the innovative learner who has to feel, watch, and make a connection. Additionally, each learning strategy is highlighted in expert-delivered lectures and the perspectives those experts share, catering to the needs of the analytic learner who adapts well to traditional lecture and gains knowledge from experts by listening to and thinking about information (Payne, Sumter, and Sun 2003:342). The guest speaker approach presented in this paper was structured from this pedagogical literature.

### *Guest Speaker Panels*

Challenges arise when a professor has exhausted all of his or her own personal skills, knowledge, and abilities to supplement the class from his or her expertise and real-world experiences. Enhancing professorial material with guest speakers or panels of experts is one possible approach to improving the student experience, including their learning and retention of specific knowledge. Nourse (1995:26) offers that “inclusion of a guest speaker may retain student interest as well as augment lecture material presented by the instructor. If students are presented lecture material regarding a specific topic, they usually listen. However, if someone from another department on campus gives them the same material, students really listen.” McCleary and Weaver (2009:402) note “several advantages to having speakers from industry come to their classes, one of which was that students are exposed to industry professionals who have been successful in their jobs and can relate the problems and pleasures of the industry from firsthand experience as well as discuss their career paths.” Payne et al. (2003:336) state that “using guest speakers can fulfill at least three objectives: a guest speaker’s presentation can bring the field into the classroom; guest speakers can open students’ minds to varying viewpoints; and research shows that guest lectures may alter students’ attitudes and perception in favorable ways, at least in the short term.” An effective learning experience requires that the topic of the speaker’s presentation be tied into the learning objectives for the course (McCleary and Weaver 2009:406).

Payne et al. (2003:336) note, “There are four types of guest speakers of value in criminal justice courses: those who have an experience with the justice system to share with the students, faculty guest speakers, graduate student guest speakers, and author guest speakers.” When students are provided with a guest speaker, it is essential that the guest speaker be appropriate and meaningful. McCleary and Weaver (2009:406) “provide evidence that it is imperative that a guest speaker do more than entertain: the entertainment should be a means of imparting information appropriate for the course content.” Rockell (2009:85) says, “the effectiveness of this technique as an active

learning strategy is enhanced greatly if the speaker is aware of the instructor's intentions for their presentation, a variety of guests are carefully scheduled, and the students are actively listening and engaged in the lectures with focused assignments in mind." Furthermore, guest speakers can help to elaborate what has already been discussed in the general classroom setting. "Speakers can be asked to clarify, with concrete examples, situation, certain legal, abstract, or theoretical concepts with which the students may be struggling." notes Rockell (2009:79).

Murphy-Geiss (2008:378) wanted students to truly engage with the subject of domestic violence. She found it essential to integrate a number of carefully selected teaching elements in addition to traditional readings, films, guest speakers, and courtroom observations of domestic violence cases. Former victims can also be used as guest speakers to share their experiences. Professors must be cognizant of their class and of students' circumstances, however. When victim guest speakers are used, some instructors choose to announce that students who are sensitive to the type of victimization being discussed need not attend that particular session. Students should be informed about the schedule of speakers and told that if any are uncomfortable with the projected presentation, they, will be excused from the class (Rockell 2009:86). This is done so that students who have been victims of certain offenses do not have to mentally relive their prior victimization experience in a classroom (Payne et al. 2003:337). Guest speakers have an obligation to supplement the learning experience, not frighten or traumatize those who may possibly already be victims.

### *Student Learning*

Student learning is the primary reason why educators are eschewing textbooks as the sole teaching instrument and embracing less traditional forms of communication, including guest speakers, panels, service learning, and other innovative pedagogical approaches. It must be acknowledged that the student of today brings to the classroom very different skills and capacities than did those in the past. Moreover, they learn quite differently and must continue to do so if they are to derive satisfaction and success in their future professional lives (Rockell 2009:89). "Some students note ... how ... speakers' personal stories made many of the concepts and issues of the course 'come to life'; others describe how the presentations enabled them to stop 'blaming the victim'; and comments from survivors in the class typically highlight the importance of such speakers as role models" (Gardner 1993:98). Put succinctly, they learn from the experience.

In a study conducted by Mooney (1998:163), it was found that even though student learning was not directly affected, the direction of means suggests that students who listened to faculty guest speakers were more likely to take another sociology class. Mooney found that guest speakers can encourage learning and positively affect the academic future of students. Murphy-Geiss (2008:379–381) states:

Once seen more fully, including emotionally engaging and realistic situations, the cold facts of domestic violence come alive in a way that is not only memorable but often life

changing as well, affecting not only their personal and family lives but sometimes also guiding career and volunteer service choices. They go on to say, “the goal is to make the ‘facts’ come to life ... in such a way that they feel something deeply: sadness, anger frustration, shock, and so on.

## **SAMPLE, DATA, AND METHODS**

An experiment was commenced in the fall semester of 2013 and in the spring 2014 semester at a regional, state-supported university in the Midwest. The rest of this article details the approach taken and the sample, data, methods, and results of the impact of guest speaker panels on student learning of domestic violence.

At the beginning of the fall 2013 semester, undergraduate students in a substantive criminal law class (experimental group, E<sub>1</sub>) and a criminal courts class (first control group, C<sub>1</sub>) were invited to participate in the research study. Likewise, at the start of the spring 2014 semester, undergraduate students in another substantive criminal law class (second control group, C<sub>2</sub>) were invited to participate in the research study. The criminal law class centered on understanding the role of criminal law in American society, demonstrating an ability to analyze legal case problems, identifying various crimes, and demonstrating an understanding of the various defenses to criminal offenses. The criminal courts class was focused on basic functions of the court systems within the United States, key personnel involved within a court system, procedures governing arrest and trial, rules of evidence, general court procedures, and court rulings. These three classes formed the three group samples to test the impact of the panels on student learning of domestic violence.

Prior to the semester, a survey instrument was designed to be taken by all three groups to measure their knowledge (as measured by 10 multiple-choice questions structured by information to be conveyed by the panels) and perceptions (as measured by eight Likert-type questions) of domestic violence. Demographic information, such as race and grade level, was also collected through three questions. On the first day of each class, students were informed of the study and the pretest was administered to the consenting students. Once the test had been administered, the study was not mentioned again, nor were any of the questions discussed, placed on quizzes, or specifically covered by the instructor.

Guest speakers of the panel consisted of a variety of individuals and served as the intervention in this experiment in the fall 2013 substantive law class. Criminal justice professionals consisted of domestic violence prosecutors, defense attorneys, police officers, and detectives. Professionals from social service fields, including court advocates, counselors, hotline advocates, and representatives of domestic violence agencies were also included on the panels. Finally, surviving victims of domestic violence were included as panel members to educate students about domestic violence from a wide perspective of experience. Panels were assembled in those three specific groups and were brought in on three occasions over a two-week span. Individuals on the panels were encouraged to introduce themselves and to bring forth their own personal experiences related to domestic violence. Following all panels, students were allowed and

encouraged to ask questions. Panelists were neither shown the pretest nor asked to specifically address any of its contents in their panel discussions. Panels lasted for the entire class time of 75 minutes.

In the fall, 32 of 35 students (91%) in the substantive criminal law class ( $E_1$ ) consented to participation, and 27 of 44 students (61%) in the criminal courts class consented to participation. Comparison of student rosters for the classes allowed the professor to realize that students overlapped in the classes. As such, students enrolled in both classes were allowed to be part of the experimental group only, which is why the participation percentage in the first control group ( $C_1$ ) was lower. Likewise, in the spring semester, 36 of 36 students (100%) in the substantive criminal law class consented to participation.

Several tests, presented in the following section, were utilized to assess the impact of the panels on student learning. First, analysis of variance was used to evaluate the pretest and posttest scores between the three groups. This test was important to ascertain whether the three groups started with the same knowledge and perception of domestic violence prior to the panels and prior to any class material being transmitted from the instructor. It also permitted the analysis of comparable between-group posttest results, including effect size and post hoc tests for specificity. In this design, students should start out with similar knowledge and perceptions, but the experimental group should have significantly higher knowledge at the end of the semester with panels, as the only difference between the two groups is that perceptions are not included in this analysis and the instructor presented no other domestic violence-focused information. This approach also allows for analysis of the instrument used within three separate groups. Furthermore, within-group differences were assessed using paired sample t-tests of knowledge before and knowledge after the panel. The goal here was to determine if significant change in knowledge occurred in the experimental group but also provided context of the change in knowledge in the other courses with no intervention or changes. This approach served the further purpose of analyzing the instrument used.

## RESULTS

The pretest results are shown in Table 1. As shown in Table 1, the experimental group had the lowest mean pretest score of the three groups ( $x = .27$ ). The first control group pretest mean was slightly higher ( $x = .31$ ), and the second control group from the following semester recorded the highest mean pretest score ( $x = .35$ ). In the aggregate, students fared poorly on their knowledge of 10 questions relating to domestic violence at the time of the pretest. This result provides some initial indication of the reliability of the instrument created.

Ideally, the three groups would show no significant difference on the mean pretest score for all students to be starting at the same knowledge level statistically. As Table 2 shows, however, the analysis of variance test for the pretest reveals that there was a significant difference between the experimental group ( $E_1$ ) and the second control group ( $C_2$ ), the latter of which scored higher (MD = .08,  $F = 3.901$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .07$ ,  $P = .69$ ). Though significant, the effect size of this difference was small and the power was less than optimal. Post hoc tests, using the Scheffe statistic, revealed no significant difference

between the experimental group (E<sub>1</sub>) and the within-semester control group (C<sub>1</sub>), with no significant difference between the two control groups. Thus, the experimental group had the lowest mean overall and the instrument was fairly equivocal across the three groups, with only the control group from the following semester differing significantly.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Three Groups on Pre- and Posttest Instrument**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>s<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>SD</b>
Experimental	Pre	.27	.10	.60	.50	.02	.015	.123
Experimental	Post	.80	.30	1.0	.70	.05	.067	.258
Control 1	Pre	.31	.00	.60	.60	.02	.016	.126
Control 1	Post	.39	.10	1.0	.90	.03	.042	.204
Control 2	Pre	.35	.00	.60	.60	.02	.018	.136
Control 2	Post	.38	.10	.70	.60	.03	.024	.154

Table 1 also shows the posttest results, with the experimental group having the highest mean score ( $x = .80$ ) and mean difference between the two time periods ( $MD = .53$ ). The first control group improved slightly from the pretest to the posttest ( $x = .39$ ,  $MD = .08$ ), as did the second control group ( $x = .38$ ,  $MD = .03$ ). The analysis of variance test for the posttest (Table 2) showed that the three groups were not equal ( $F = 42.934$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = .48$ ,  $P = 1.0$ ). As the variances between the three groups were not equal on the posttest distributions, the Tamhane's T2 statistic was used for the post hoc analysis. This test revealed that although there was no significant difference between the control groups on the mean posttest score ( $p > .05$ ), the score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of either of the control groups ( $p < .001$ ). The effect size for this test was large (.48) and the power was sufficient (1.0). The experimental group performed significantly better on the posttest than did either of the control groups, whose performances were statistically equivalent. Especially important were the significant differences between the two substantive law classes from two different semesters (E<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>), which were identical in every way except for the guest speaker panels.

The final tests performed were the within-group paired sample t-tests (Table 3). The experimental group had a significantly higher mean on the posttest ( $T_2 = .80$ ) than on the pretest ( $T_1 = .27$ ), in which they scored the lowest of the three groups ( $MD = .53$ ,  $t = 10.43$ ,  $p < .001$ , 31 df, 95% CI: .43 – .65). There was also a significant difference in the mean performance between the pre- and posttest for the first control group ( $MD = .07$ ,  $t = 2.06$ ,  $p < .05$ , 26 df, 95% CI: -.00001 – .15), but this difference was barely significant, with the 95% confidence interval extremely close to containing a zero, or no difference. Finally, the



second control group, which had the highest pretest mean ( $T_1 = .35$ ) also had the lowest posttest score ( $T_2 = .38$ ), which was not statistically significant. This test is important, as it shows not only that the experimental group was significantly different from the other two groups at the posttest but also that neither of the control groups showed significant gains in their domestic violence knowledge between the pre- and posttests.

**Table 2. Analysis of Variance Results for Pre- and Posttests**

Test	Levene's <i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	df <sub>b,w</sub>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>P</i>	Post Hoc Test and Results
Pretest	.708	3.901	2,100	.02	.072	.69	Scheffe
Experimental							E = C <sub>1</sub> , E < C <sub>2</sub> *
Control 1							C <sub>1</sub> = E, C <sub>1</sub> = C <sub>2</sub>
Control 2							C <sub>2</sub> > E*, C <sub>2</sub> = C <sub>1</sub>
Posttest	.001	42.934	2,92	.00	.48	1.0	Tamhane's 2
Experimental							E > C <sub>1</sub> ***, E > C <sub>2</sub> ***
Control 1							C <sub>1</sub> < E***, C <sub>1</sub> = C <sub>2</sub>
Control 2							C <sub>2</sub> < E***, C <sub>2</sub> = C <sub>1</sub>

Note: \*  $p < .05$     \*\*  $p < .01$     \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Overall, these tests provide evidence, using an experimental design with two control groups for specificity, that students exposed to the domestic violence guest speaker panels showed significant gains in their knowledge when compared to students who were not exposed to the panels.

**Table 3. Within-Group Paired Sample *t*-Tests, Pre- and Posttest Results**

Group ID		Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	df
		Mean	SD	SEM	95% CI of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Experimental	Posttest – Pretest	.544	.295	.052	.43	.65	10.43***	31
Control 1	Posttest – Pretest	.074	.187	.036	– .00001	.15	2.06*	26
Control 2	Posttest – Pretest	.026	.129	.022	–.019	.07	1.18	34

## **LIMITATIONS**

There are several limitations to discuss in this experiment, both general and specific. Experimental designs are susceptible to several internal and external threats to validity. The short time span of the study limits the effect of history and maturation in more long-term experiments. Threat to testing was minimized by the use of the pretest on the first day of classes without specific direction as to when the test would be taken again. Students in this program are used to the pretest/posttest methods in undergraduate courses to assess learning, which minimizes this threat. Furthermore, priming was not an issue, as none of the questions were asked again and the pretest was not mentioned after it was taken. The same method was used in all three classes in giving the pretest and posttest.

Diffusion was the most pertinent threat during this study. Many of the students took classes together, and it is a real possibility that they shared information about the panels with students in the control group, especially in the fall semester. This is evidenced by the fall control group increasing its mean score from .31 to .39, which was significant ( $p < .05$ ). This could be considered a small diffusion effect; however, the second control group also increased its score, from .35 to .38. Though not significant, it is important to note that the topic of domestic violence was equally discussed in both classes by the professor during class lecture, and both class textbooks covered the topic for two pages with similar information. Students in the criminal justice program had the option to take both classes during the semester included in the study, thus requiring their removal from the control sample if they were in the experimental group. Because they could hear the panel of guest speakers in one class and apply that knowledge to the second, it would not have been a reliable assessment of their knowledge. Finally, with the student enrollment as it was, there was no way of preventing students in the experimental group from sharing the information they acquired from the guest speaker panels with students from the control group.

A few other limitations for this particular study are important to note. The instrument was not tested in focus groups, limiting its validity. Questions for the pretest and posttest were created and not taken from previous literature. To overcome this limitation, the exact test was given at pretest and posttest to all three groups with no changes in wording or appearance. There is also the issue of students gaining this knowledge from other sources (e.g., classes, professors, news), but it is highly unlikely that only the experimental group would gain this knowledge at such a large difference from the two control groups.

## **DISCUSSION**

As the process of this particular study began, it became evident that it used a fairly uncommon pedagogical approach. Information on similar studies and practice was very difficult to locate. Although there were parallels in other educational studies, it was virtually impossible to find any similar information within the field of criminal justice. It is important to note that as research was being conducted for this study, there was not a prevalence of this type of practice in academia. Throughout the process, it was determined that students related more readily to individuals who had

firsthand experience in the field. Students asked more pertinent questions during panel discussion than in daily instructor-student lecture as they thought about various ways that theory goes into practice, and they were able to question professionals regarding experience. From a professional standpoint as the instructor, it afforded the opportunity to stay connected with current information of the field, theory in practice, and serving the needs of the community by bringing light to the problem. Including practitioners in instruction is innovative, and the results of this study could support the benefit of this practice in future courses.

Inherent problems with this setup include but are not limited to the scheduling of professionals with valid experience, the possibility of said presenters remaining with the subject matter, and the presenters' ability to engage the students within the discussion setting. Further difficulty to consider is the validity of the assessment over time. An imperative factor to consider is panels to remain consistent if student knowledge is being affected positively. By altering said panels, there is no guarantee that students will be equally/positively affected as the material is being presented. Evidence from this study shows that students had a higher aptitude for the subject matter when it was presented by the panelists than did their classmates who were exposed to only lecture and textbook material. Ultimately, those engaged in panel presentations gained a new and different perspective on the issue of domestic violence. Subsequent to panel discussions, many students endeavored in volunteer experiences with agencies represented on the panel. This research served the basic purpose of demonstrating the benefit of the inclusion of panels in the collegiate classroom.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

This particular study demonstrates the use of panels of guest speakers in an undergraduate criminal justice class at a public university. Objectives for the panel discussions were to supplement class lectures with real-life examples of the material studied. Results from the pretest and posttest provide evidence that students exposed to these panels did in fact significantly extend and clarify their learning in comparison to those who were not exposed to the panels. There is clearly a place for further research on the use of guest speaker panels in the criminal justice curriculum to enhance the learning of specific subject matter that is practically ignored in many popular textbooks.

In the region where this research was undertaken, domestic violence is highly prevalent yet often not formally processed through the justice system, and rarely do arrests or subsequent convictions occur. This is likely to be found in other college communities, setting a unique contextual environment for the teaching and learning of domestic violence. Thus, students at the present university have conveyed high levels of experience with domestic violence in their upbringing and in past and present relationships, meaning the subject matter is pertinent to their lives. Having diverse speakers from all points of view provides clarity about why it is important to understand the dynamics of domestic violence: pursue formal charges for victims, understand why arrests are not made or cases are dropped, understand the full range of services available to domestic violence victims, and encourage students to transmit this knowledge and information from the panels to those in need of help. In other words, the panels provide a

holistic system perspective to their individual experience for those with prior victimization, and they teach those without prior experience to be more sensitive to the topic and all its social implications.

As such, findings from previous research and those reported in the current study suggest that using panels of guest speakers can be an innovative pedagogical approach that is effective in imparting knowledge and altering perceptions. Guest speaker panels could be utilized more broadly. For example, they could be applied in a courts class, where members of the courtroom work group are studied to identify their role in the American courts system and understand their interactions. In this fashion, a prosecutor could supplement a lecture based on personal experiences in that role, while also bringing to life the examples in textbooks used by students. Likewise, public defenders and private defense attorneys can serve as authorities when discussing material about defense attorneys. Furthermore, it is apparent that a court cannot function without a judge. Allowing an actual judge to disclose his or her experiences to students would personify the material that students would encounter in academic text. Having all of these speakers on one panel brings an actual courtroom work group to life for the students in ways that individual guest speakers could not.

This pedagogical approach is not limited to the courts classes within the criminal justice curriculum but can also be utilized in career classes and in classes dealing with diversity and multiculturalism, corrections, and policing. It should be noted that educators in all areas of higher education could consider implementing this pedagogical approach for the benefit of their students. In addition, bringing community into the classroom benefits the agencies and service providers by allowing them to speak about their work and experience, demystifying some common misconceptions about topics such as domestic violence. Experience and exposure that students would gain through this process, in addition to the results of the effectiveness of this study, may motivate more instructors to organize such panels and further evaluate their impact on learning a variety of topics to add to the scant literature in this area of criminal justice pedagogy.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although the results here are positive and add to the literature, more empirical research is needed on the use of panels to enhance learning in undergraduate criminal justice courses and programs, especially over periods longer than a single semester. The research undertaken here, although limited to one university, shows great promise and should be built upon, though that may be easier said than done in many programs. This type of research takes time, from conception to IRB approval, structuring the study to mitigate threats to validity, creating and scheduling the panels, conducting the surveys, and analyzing the results. In other words, it is far more involved than just having guest speakers or panels, but the empirical results are crucial in assessing the effect of these panels. Furthermore, this type of approach requires connection to a local network of service providers, lawyers, and law enforcement professionals, which may take time to develop and activate. Results from this one experimental study in one regional university will hopefully serve as a motivator for others to use

this approach, study it in depth, and share it with the wider criminal justice community to build on and enhance this pedagogical tool.

## REFERENCES

- Braxton, J., M. Eimers, and A. Bayer. 1996. "The Implications of Teaching Norms for the Improvement of Undergraduate Education." *The Journal of Higher Education* 67(6):603–22.
- Bryant, A. B., and G. A. Spencer. 2003. "University Students' Attitudes about Attributing Blame in Domestic Violence." *Journal of Family Violence* 18(6):369–76.
- Chickering, A. W., and Z. F. Gamson. 1987. "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education." *American Association for Higher Education Bulletin*, March, pp. 3–7.
- Commonwealth Fund. 1993. *First Comprehensive National Health Survey of American Women*. Retrieved from (<http://www.domesticabuseproject.com/get-educated/statistics/>).
- Gardner, S. 1993. "Teaching about Domestic Violence: Strategies for Empowerment." *National Women's Studies Association Journal* 5(1):94–102.
- Gardner, T. J. 2011. *Criminal Law*. Boston: Wadsworth.
- McCleary, K. W., and P. A. Weaver. 2009. "The Effective Use of Guest Speakers in the Hospitality and Tourism Curriculum." *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism* 8(4):401–14.
- Mooney, L. A. 1998. "Pitching the Profession: Faculty Guest Speakers in the Classroom." *Teaching Sociology* 26(3):157–65.
- Murphy-Geiss, G. 2008. "Bringing the Facts to Life: Facilitating Student Engagement with the Issue of Domestic Violence." *Teaching Sociology* 36:378–88.
- Neubauer, D. W., and H. F. Fradella. 2013. *America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System*. Boston: Cengage Learning.
- Nourse, M. 1995. "Tapping Campus Talent for the Collegiate Business Communication Course: A Guide to Guest Speakers." *Business Communication Quarterly* 58(2):25–27.
- Payne, B. K., M. Sumter, and I. Sun. 2003. "Bringing the Field into the Criminal Justice Classroom: Field Trips, Ride-alongs, and Guest Speakers." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 14(2):327–44.
- Robinson, M. B. 2000. "Using Active Learning in Criminal Justice: Twenty-Five Examples." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 11(1):65–78.
- Rockell, B. A. 2009. "Challenging What They All Know: Integrating the Real/Reel World into Criminal Justice Pedagogy." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 20(1):75–92.
- Spanier, G. B. 2001. "The Transformation of Teaching." *Beyond Teaching to Mentoring* 85(Spring):109–15.
- Tjaden, Patricia, and Nancy Thoennes. 2000. *Extent, Nature and Consequences of Intimate Partner Violence: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*. National Institute of Justice and Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention Report. NCJ 181867. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.

Young, D. B., and G. M. McCormick. 1991 "The Application of Cognitive Learning Theory to Criminal Justice Education." *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 2(1):5-14.