

Stone Soup is Not Just for “ADR Courses”
Stone Soup Dispute Resolution Knowledge Project
hosted by the University of Missouri School of Law
Center for the Study of Dispute Resolution



Most faculty teach courses that don't focus primarily on ADR and they may assume that Stone Soup isn't for those "non-ADR" courses. That's not so. Stone Soup assignments and activities can be used in almost any course.

Here are a few illustrations of possible uses of Stone Soup assignments or activities in courses that people have asked about. The courses listed below are law school courses but the same principles can apply in other disciplines. These examples identify possible subjects for interviews and/or "focus group classes."

Employment discrimination and labor law courses provide excellent Stone Soup opportunities. Many discrimination cases go through processes with the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or state counterparts and it would be great to learn the perspectives of officials in those agencies. Many discrimination cases involve mediation and it would be good to get a plaintiff's lawyer, defense lawyer, mediator, and an employer's human resources official to discuss how they handle cases. Many discrimination complaints are handled entirely within the employer's organization and it would be good to ask human resources officials about how those processes work. On the other hand, some cases go to trial and you could ask about which cases do go to trial, how they differ from those that don't, what the court process is like, and what are typical court outcomes.

Labor law courses also present great Stone Soup opportunities. It would be good for students to learn about the realities of collective bargaining as well as mediation and arbitration of labor grievances. Obvious sources include labor union and management officials, mediators, arbitrators, and officials from government labor relations agencies.

Professional responsibility lends itself to a great Stone Soup focus group class. Faculty could have a panel of lawyers talk about ethical challenges that they faced and observed in other lawyers. Other speakers might include officials from state bar disciplinary agencies, and lawyers who prosecute and defend legal malpractice cases.

Civil procedure courses cover discovery and pretrial motions, which constitute so much of litigation these days. It would also be good to learn about drafting and serving pleadings, which often don't fulfill their ostensible purposes but unnecessarily increase adversarial tensions. Faculty might arrange for students to hear from plaintiff's and defense counsel as well as judges about procedural issues.

In criminal law courses, asking prosecutors and defense counsel to discuss the realities of plea bargaining as well as litigation practice similarly should be extremely instructive.

In many courses, it would be great to interview or invite individual parties who went through a dispute resolution process, though faculty should consider whether that might be too sensitive for them.