

## Art, Senses and Technology as Positive Mechanisms for Teaching Labor Law

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### Abstract

*The essential background for the proposal of this paper was the experience of teaching Labor Law through an Ecuadorian painting within a class that involved a visit to the National Museum of Ecuador in Quito. However, due to the interruption of in-person classes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the experience was continued by using a Digital Board with the chosen painting, a selected aroma to lead us to the scene of the artwork and a song to relate to the painting and its content. In this way, the artwork was contemplated by each of the students of a Faculty of Law of an Ecuadorian National University, but in a relaxed and reflective environment, which helped to maintain focus and explore different ways of observation. “Cosecha (Harvest)” by Eduardo Kingman was chosen because it reflected the realities of rural poverty and inequality in Ecuador, as well as the suffering caused by the arduous labor involved in agriculture. The analysis conducted demonstrates that the integration of different sensory stimuli, such as visually observing artwork, the aroma of a soil-covered potato, and music, enhances the learning experience in Labor Law. Furthermore, it shows that these additional elements can help capture attention, improve information retention, and provide a more meaningful context for teaching. The study concludes that the connection between art and law contributes to a deeper and more contextualized understanding of labor principles and that the complete sensory experience encourages immersion and reflection.*

**Keywords:** *Teaching & Learning, Innovative Teaching Methods, Teaching Pedagogies, Law and Visual Arts, Cross-Disciplinary Learning.*

### Introduction

In general, emblematic paintings with social content, such as “Los obreros” (The laborers) by Mexican artist Diego Rivera —at the Detroit Institute of Arts—, “Les Constructeurs” (The Builders) by French artist Fernand Léger —at the Fernand Léger National Museum in France—, “Las hilanderas” (The Spinners) by Spanish painter Diego Velázquez, at the Museo del Prado of Madrid in Spain—, “Saque de papas/Cosecha”(Harvest) by Ecuadorian artist Eduardo Kingman—at the National Museum of Ecuador in Quito— among many others, are used to illustrate specific topics within both individual and collective labor law. Thereby, in the law learning context, pictorial work is argued to serve as an instrument of scholarship, legal practice and artistic engagement (Parsa & Snodgrass, 2022).

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Thus, in relation to pictorial art, several essential aspects are overlooked: 1) its stimulating function, as it opens doors to knowledge by impacting and promoting imagination, curiosity, and inquiry, generates sensations and feelings related to a specific value or issue. In most cases, it does not go unnoticed, constituting a strong attraction that captures the attention of the viewer (Kee, 2021); 2) its ability to facilitate the understanding of more abstract contents by concretizing ideas into images, encouraging the capacity for analysis, critique, and debate (Frost, 2023); 3) its capacity to achieve acute synthesis, conveyed through a fleeting glance but lingering in our imagination, leads to hermeneutics that, at times, unveil new meanings, demanding that we construct tools to address what cannot be captured by the categories already incorporated (Sharma & Kumar, 2023).

Currently, there is a widespread consensus around the idea that visual images are powerful stimuli for the human mind (Pepperell, 2019). Paintings convey a sense that cannot be expressed through language alone and do not generalize; they simply summarize and symbolize through images (Lee & Lee, 2021). They also help in understanding law through a democratic language and in perceiving both the legal and social reality from different perspectives other than one's own, generating empathy in those who observe them (Colatrella, 2020).

The essential background for the proposal of this paper is the experience of teaching Labor Law through Ecuadorian paintings, within a class that involves a visit to the National Museum of Ecuador in Quito. In this way, the artworks are contemplated in a relaxed, silent, and reflective environment, which helps to maintain focus and explore different ways of observation.

## Literature review

The landscapes, environments, objects, people, and situations depicted in paintings transport us to the experiences of their protagonists and the scenes they portray, among other things (Sayyad et al., 2017). This is why, through their images, it is possible to concretely present the introduction, development, or synthesis of legal content in an interdisciplinary manner (Besgen, 2015; Kalpokiene & Kalpokas, 2022). This approach contrasts with traditional legal education focused on formalistic positivism, with some indifference to multidisciplinary contributions. In this way, the law is democratized through other disciplines, including pictorial art, serving as a vehicle to reach many others.

García (2018) shares a vision of law that primarily integrates the legal phenomenon within a sociohistorical cultural perspective. The author discusses a cultural conception of law within the realm of legal philosophy, where the contributions of sociology of law are valuable and indispensable. He also argues that law is constituted when certain evaluations of social facts result in normative integration. Furthermore, he posits that law, as a historical and social product, is, above all, a cultural phenomenon, and as such, it is an evolving phenomenon that normatively integrates facts according to historical-cultural values.

This implies that the norm ceases to be a mere logical judgment detached from social dynamics. In other words, law presents itself as a cultural matter linked to the historical, immaterial, and, if you will, spiritual formation of society. Franca (2018) points out that the legal phenomenon is multidimensional precisely because it is ontologically constituted by a vast and complex cultural dimension. In addition, Loren (2018) concludes that the cultural conception of law must undoubtedly include art, endorsing the idea of global culture. In this sense, the expanded thematic scope of painting prevents culture from being confined to a specific territory, a set of customs, or an isolated people (Loren, 2018).

Specifically, the very purpose of labor law can only be understood in reference to certain historical, social, and cultural contexts. Therefore, it cannot be limited solely to its legal content. This is evident to the extent that labor conflict cannot be qualitatively separated from social conflict since labor tensions are always an expression of social tensions and vice versa (Molinder et al., 2022).

From this perspective, painting facilitates the interdisciplinary teaching of Labor Law, expanding it beyond the strictly legal and normative aspects, contributing to value-based education.

## **Research Methodology**

For this experience, class planning started during the months prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, with research focused on pictorial works, at the National Museum of Ecuador, by artists whose vision reflected social situations related to Labor Law. The primary method for selecting the paintings was their potential to stimulate reflection and critical thinking (Broome et al., 2018). Through them, a reconstruction of the historical context was carried out, as their authors were influenced by the concerns, aspirations, ideas, and feelings of the society in which they lived. In the selection process, the symbolism of the image, the social commitment of the artists, and how they attempted to reflect or transform reality through their artistic perspective were also taken into account (Bowen et al., 2014).

All of this, considering that detaching the pictorial works from their context diminishes their critical potential. In this sense, the anthropological observation, through a retotalizing view of the social field by the artists, assists in understanding other individuals not from a neutral standpoint, but from their own representations, allowing one to engage with their own perspectives (Bowen & Kisida, 2023). This perspective is more closely related to the fair resolution of problems than the impartial knowledge of legal operators centered on a legal-centric hermeneutic, which is characteristic of the lawyer training models that prevail in Law Faculties (Mammen, 2021; Shalini, 2021).

The feedback received through a survey conducted at the end of the course from university students of a Faculty of Law of an Ecuadorian National University who participated in the visit to the National Museum of Ecuador indicated that the class was found to be interesting, enriching, and didactic. They reported that it allowed them to understand the connection between different disciplines and see theory reflected in reality.

One of the advantages of the visit was the development of the class with the physical presence of the image and its materiality: the medium, the technique, the size, the place where it was exhibited, as it allowed for the construction of its meanings (Bowen & Kisida, 2023; Lee & Lee, 2021). In that experience, considering it was the last class of the semester and that the program's contents had already been studied in relation to the national and international historical and social context, no prior reading guide was provided regarding the selected paintings to encourage: spontaneity and freshness in the initial observation of the work; and the feelings and sensations caused by the image, such as astonishment, emotion, curiosity, empathy, among many others.

The aesthetic component of a work of art, in this case, a painting, is closely related to emotions, which impact the experience, permeate it, and play a central role in its culmination. The aesthetic experience holds epistemic relevance because it is attentional, enhances perceptual discernment, and allows for reflection (Viale & Campeotto, 2021). Thus, the aesthetic experience of classes at the National Museum of Ecuador was cognitive, had epistemic relevance, and was emotionally stimulating.

The pre-active phase included the tasks we performed to set up the experience: 1) select the painting using the same criteria as those used for the class at the National Museum; 2)

capture a detailed image of the painting, ideally at the museum where it was displayed or select it from the internet; 3) identify iconic locations or objects of similar dimensions to the artwork; 4) choose sounds or music related to the painting and its content; 5) select harmonious aromas that correspond to the artwork.

On the selected painting: “Harvest” by Eduardo Kingman

In this paper, we reflect on the experience carried out based on a painting by Eduardo Kingman, “Cosecha (Harvest)” (1939), exhibited at the National Museum of Ecuador, an emblematic work of Ecuadorian art (see Figure No. 1). About its content, this painting could be seen as a powerful representation of the exploitation and marginalization of indigenous agricultural laborers in Ecuador. Furthermore, it depicts the hardships, manual labor, and physical toil often associated with agricultural work.



Fig No. 1: Cosecha (Harvest) by Eduardo Kingman (1939).

Source: Llugsha (2022).

This piece of art was chosen because it reflects the realities of rural poverty and inequality in Ecuador, as well as the suffering caused by the arduous labor involved in agriculture. As could be seen in Figure 1, the painting portrays a group of indigenous laborers working tirelessly in the fields, their faces etched with exhaustion and despair. The contrast between the colors of the crops and the somber expressions of the workers highlights the harsh realities of their lives. Labor law often aims to protect the rights and safety of workers, and the painting may highlight the challenging conditions faced by these indigenous laborers.

The selected aroma to lead us to the scene of “Cosecha (Harvest)” was black potato with dirt. Potatoes are a food that is associated with people in poverty. In this regard, for instance, Vincent van Gogh reflects people in his work “The Potato Eaters” (1885) that even with limited financial resources, could access potatoes to prepare their food or they themselves harvested them in the fields where they worked. They gather at night in the intimacy of their precarious homes to eat the product of the land that they obtained with their own hands (see Figure No. 2). In “Cosecha (Harvest)”, the artist Eduardo Kingman represents, without compromise, the life of the indigenous peasants of Ecuador and, at the same time, expresses his moral and social feelings.



Fig No. 2: The Potato Eaters by Vincent Van Gogh (1885)<sup>5</sup>.

Finally, the chosen song to relate to the painting and its content was “Todo a pulmón” (that can be translated as “With full effort”) by Argentine musician and singer-songwriter Alejandro Lerner<sup>6</sup>. The choice was based on the relationship of its meaning to the content, its interpretation in Spanish, and the sentiment of strength, courage, and melancholy it conveys.

The lyrics express the difficulty of the speaker in navigating a journey without a clear destination, uncertain whether it’s a one-way or round trip. Furthermore, they reflect struggle and depict the journey as tough, with a mocking reality that seems to laugh at the speaker’s efforts. Overall, the tone is one of uncertainty, challenge, and a sense of being weighed down by the journey. However, the lyrics also reflect a philosophy of embracing life wholeheartedly, approaching experiences with dedication and commitment.

In this slow yet powerful rendition, the sense of melancholy but, at the same time, strength and courage of someone fighting for their ideals, elicited by the voice and performance of the Argentine singer, combined with the sentiment of resistance reflected in the song’s lyrics, in our view, evokes concepts associated with the harsh reality of workers and labor struggles in Ecuador.

## Results and Discussion

From the museum to the classroom

The students’ visit to the museum facilitated the implementation of the class through a planned tour. Thus, the museum became an extension of the classroom. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the establishment of Mandatory Preventive and Social Isolation measures, resulting in the interruption of in-person classes, which shifted to virtual classes through synchronous sessions in the subject of Labor Law. This unique situation provided us with the opportunity to attempt to replicate an experience similar to the museum visit but outside of its physical environment.

In the virtual environment, we observed that the class, which replaced the museum visit, had its limitations and conditions but, at the same time, it was enriched. Suddenly, there was an opportunity to expand the menu to include pictorial works that are part of the National Museum of Ecuador’s heritage but are not on display for various reasons. Furthermore, we added images related to labor law that are not part of any museum’s collection since they were produced in the form of engravings, pamphlets, and flyers,

<sup>5</sup> Available at <https://www.vangoghmuseum.nl/en/collection/s0005V1962>.

<sup>6</sup> Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-XTVZf6pNo>.

among other formats, by artists associated with both labor and social organizations in the context of protest demonstrations or strikes.

Thus, in the remote teaching experience, we could observe a tangible contradiction. On the one hand, there was a noticeable loss in not being physically present inside the museum with the artwork right in front of us. On the other hand, there was a significant advancement in overcoming the inherent limitations of the museum itinerary, which to some extent conditions the construction of aesthetic ideas, artistic visions, and legitimizing processes (Appendino, 2017).

With all this background, upon returning to the physical classroom, we faced a question in our Labor Law course: Is it possible to create a museum-like experience within the classroom? This led us to the following question: How can this experience be created without it being just a loss or, in other words, a mere haphazard reproduction of the teaching experience achieved during the museum visit?

Upon returning to the physical classroom, a novel teaching opportunity was enabled to capitalize on the challenges we faced as educators during the pandemic and to take the reverse path: going from the museum to the classroom to incorporate pictorial art as a didactic resource, now enriched by its combination with technology and the senses.

#### Creation and Management of the Digital Board: The Aesthetic Experience through Technology

Technology opens unexpected worlds. For example, a digital board accessible to all students from any internet-connected device enables the integration of pictorial art within the physical classroom, offering stimuli that are unattainable in the context of a museum visit. The artwork enters the classroom as a didactic resource, and the digital board recreates the teaching experience.

The idea is articulated through an interactive encounter, involving the gathering, recording, and organization of images on a digital board, combining an experience that we understand as integrative and all-encompassing. Using the image of the pictorial artwork incorporated into the board or wall, various resources are deployed to: provide a frame for comparing the artwork with a location or object (square, monument, public space, etc.) to gain an understanding of its dimensions; capture the diverse textures of materials through detailed images; create associations with sounds or music from the era or context; and engage the sense of smell by referencing everyday aromas accessible to students, such as foods, spices, fabrics, fragrances, and more, found in any household they reside in.

All the tools are integrated into the digital platform. Through this technological tool, we open the door to knowledge of the discipline using paintings, no longer attempting to mimic the teaching experience achieved during a museum visit, which would constantly emphasize the loss and disjointed aspects. Instead, we capture references, stimuli, and other elements that are not found in the museum environment, utilizing the versatility of the digital board.

There are two distinct stages in implementing this idea: one of creation and the other of managing the tool within the classroom. Naturally, for the second stage, prior preparation is essential regarding the purposes, objectives, content, and strategy to be used in the class.

During the creation stage of the digital board, the teacher selects the artwork, captures a detailed photo or video, and establishes its relationship with scents and sounds. The suitable technologies to implement this are Genially or, as an alternative, Thinglink or Canva (Tomczyk et al., 2023). These applications are chosen because they are accessible, relatively easy to use, and provide the necessary tools to achieve the project's objectives through interactive content. Moreover, these applications can be learned via online

tutorials. Additionally, for students, accessing this technology is simple and free. These applications have become more widespread in educational contexts, especially during the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and can be used on any basic device (Castaño Muñoz et al., 2023).

The use of pictorial art as a teaching resource in this format, through interactivity, provides the opportunity to create visual and effective content. When combined with the substantial experience through scents, sounds, and music, it helps evoke different feelings and emotions compared to in-person painting contemplation, though of similar intensity. Students' engagement with the artwork becomes more sensory, aiming to transcend the purely physical aspect of the work and ideally transport them to the scene depicted in the painting.

For instance, starting from questions like, "What would be the aroma of the scene in Eduardo Kingman's 'Cosecha (Harvest)'?" or "What song would the workers in the painting sing?" or "What sounds are the protagonists in this painting hearing?". And, by examining the responses, relate aromas, sounds, or songs to the environment and content of the artwork.

Hence, this generates sensations and feelings similar to those produced by observing the painting in a museum. It means looking at the image in its dimensions, with its texture, hearing sounds and music, and experiencing a specific aroma that transports us to the artwork as if we were in the museum and even beyond, as if we traveled to the place depicted by the artist. Thus, the emotional impact of the aesthetic experience on students is enhanced. In essence, technology is integrated with the human experience through the senses: sight, hearing, and smell.

#### Aims, Objectives, and Content involved

A plan is an attempt or project to carry out something and anticipates a state of affairs that only takes shape in its practical realization (Hu et al., 2018; Muraraneza & Mtshali, 2021). This way of thinking about planning implies the acceptance that we are always working on a probability that, in practice, can deviate to a point that will be close to what was planned.

The proposal focuses on observing and interpreting pictorial art to establish valuable connections between the works and the content of the subject, using the power of art as a force to develop students' thinking dispositions. These are practices centered on interdisciplinary learning, integral to the spirit. The intention is to provoke in students, through the experience enabled by the digital board, feelings and emotions of a different nature than those caused by the physical presence of the painting in the museum, although equally significant. Technology should open windows in the classroom towards the dimension, texture, aroma, and sounds that lead us to the aesthetic experience that is lived when contemplating the works during the visit to the National Museum.

In the absence of previous footsteps, the inclusion of pictorial artwork in the classroom through a digital board adds a more intense dimension to what was mentioned regarding the potential differences between intentions, objectives, and what happens in execution. Therefore, more than ever, we must accept that the representation we create leans more towards exploration than a definitive conclusion.

It has been frequently emphasized that one of the challenges that can be encountered within a classroom to foster genuine learning of a topic is the lack of knowledge about the context in which the subject or issue is situated (Alkhateeb et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2022). In other words, incorporating contexts often broadens the understanding of the problem or topic and encompasses many of the reasons that aid in learning. Well, painting provides the opportunity to impart context to the content and, in doing so, allows for an understanding that mitigates the frequent burden of determinism or causal constraints

established in education. Therefore, one of the objectives of the class is to promote, through the digital board, access to relational knowledge.

Based on research conducted on legal education, it has been noted that there is a lack of pedagogical practices that foster reflective and critical skills in students (Hews et al., 2023). This observation is closely related to the fact that the legal field is often seen as an impenetrable wall, without connecting vessels that allow for its integration with other forms of knowledge. Even when this barrier is broken, the rigid structure of the class is maintained, which, in the words of Lista (2022), resembles a kind of recurring liturgical ritual.

The digital board provides educators with a tool that, when well-managed, can be crucial in promoting learning from different perspectives, expanding the horizon of expectations that often rely on students' capacity to store and retrieve information promptly (Ha & Kim, 2023). We believe that the introduction of pictorial works into the digital board extends this horizon by broadening what is thinkable and knowable, as it helps recognize meaningful relationships and brings back down to earth what had been isolated as a theory constructed in the air. Students enrich their understanding of Labor Law by incorporating insights from various disciplines, such as history, sociology, and economics, among others.

In addition, considering the dynamics of the digital board, it is also an appropriate goal to facilitate understanding through comparisons between different events, phenomena, individuals, and even objects. It demonstrates the conceptual enrichment achieved through analogies and representations, and how it is synthesized in a painting that, with the help of technology, can be manipulated to approach it from different perspectives.

Hence, it is a tool that enables us to overcome the static conception of the law, where teaching activities are limited to explaining content that can be understood without much difficulty through text reading. This not only maintains the passivity of the students but also encourages rote memorization, preventing critical thinking. All these factors limit intellectual capacity and the autonomy of individuals in their educational journey.

On the contrary, art in general and painting in particular, as Arancibia (2020) points out in relation to cinema, facilitate the exploration of new possibilities where there seems to be only one, and also serve as the starting point for an intellectual emancipation within the classroom accompanied by interdisciplinary learning. As artistic practices, paintings play a fundamental role, as they become forms of visibility that influence the general distribution of ways of doing and being in the community, shaping an aesthetic democracy that incorporates new participants, means, and knowledge (Arancibia, 2020). Thus, they provide the opportunity to enter a more complex and dynamic universe.

Following this path, it is possible to introduce painting, as a visual manifestation that integrates legal aesthetics, into the course content as a non-formal source of law (Gastrón, 2019). As we have mentioned, art in general, and painting in particular, help to develop the senses, experience new emotions, and increase creativity.

Access to artistic expression shapes the so-called soft skills (Guerra-Báez, 2019), which can be equated to the concept of life skills developed by the World Health Organization (1997), that defines them as a set of socio-emotional skills necessary for interacting with others and for handling challenging everyday demands and situations. In other words, these skills enable individuals to make decisions, solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, recognize others' emotions, and build healthy physical and emotional relationships.

Among the categories of life skills, we find interpersonal skills such as empathy, and cognitive skills such as critical thinking. Social skills are part of soft skills. He et al. (2023) define interpersonal intelligence as the ability to understand other people: what motivates them, how they operate, and how to work cooperatively with them. Empathy, a



key social skill, involves understanding another person's feelings and perspective while respecting the differences in how each person feels about the same things or situations.

According to Guerra-Báez (2019) critical thinking can be defined as a cognitive skill. Critical thinking is the ability to think in a self-directed, self-disciplined, self-regulated, and self-corrected manner. Therefore, developing this skill involves the ability to verify information and think diversely, which means generating questions and taking positions regarding the information investigated.

Teaching labor law with a comprehensive approach, as we propose, requires a perspective that combines hard skills related to strictly legal academic knowledge with soft skills or life skills as described earlier. In this sense, painting contributes to interdisciplinary learning, stimulates critical thinking, and values different perspectives. In this way, a broad and complex view of knowledge must recognize these emotional and affective aspects, which allow students to construct what they have not yet experienced.

Labor law is a cultural product, a response to contemporary societal issues. Its various modes of structuring and application are related to the multiplicity of cultures, much like artistic experiences and paintings. Following this line of thought, the digital board is a versatile tool that can serve as a source for knowledge construction, a kind of bridge that teachers can use to make the sensory aspect a vehicle that helps students incorporate valuable information that, even though it's part of the content, remains largely devoid of meaning for those who haven't experienced the contexts in which certain legal theories or frameworks were developed.

Hence, the digital board facilitates the connection between pictorial art and the ideas, characteristics, and issues related to labor law, such as human labor, working conditions, social conditions, power imbalances in employment relationships, inequality, industrialization, collectivity, machinery, and technologies in production processes, and the prospective manner in which human labor will be incorporated into the production system in the future, among the most significant ones.

The listed contents are, as can be inferred from what we have been developing, challenging to make accessible within a classroom using only words (whether spoken or from written text). The incorporation of perception, triggered by visual stimuli along with auditory and olfactory cues that contribute to achieving similar or even better sensations and emotions than those provoked by the pictorial artworks exhibited at the National Museum in person, aims to break through this barrier and significantly recover the contexts, experiences, living realities, and, ultimately, the reasons that explain the existence of labor law.

In relation to visual stimuli, the process of observing pictorial artworks allows students to become critical spectators, develop the ability to perceive and interpret images, and enrich themselves both culturally and spiritually. However, when we view the image on the digital board, it does not, by itself, create the same impact as a painting exhibited at the National Museum when observed in person.

Therefore, to complement the sense of sight, we appeal to the sense of smell by selecting symbolic aromas (olfactory metaphors) related to the meaning of a particular painting. We use the sense of smell because, as Løkken et al. (2023) argue, it evokes memories, emotions, and a moral construction of reality. Olfactory appreciation, whether positive or negative, is constructed not only from personal memories but also from specific teachings and training. We are socialized in what our culture considers smelling good or bad, and in our nasal preferences. In this way, we judge whether food is good or bad based on its smell, and we also make judgments about the environment, enjoying the scent of flowers, clean air, and the sea while avoiding negative emissions like car exhaust or pollution, among others.

As a result, the proposal involves viewing a painting on a technological device and, at the same time, smelling a specific aroma that evokes the depicted environment. The sensations and emotions triggered by these senses will be enhanced even further if, at the same time, we listen to sounds or music that evoke the era or context of the artwork.

Giacobbe (2019) explains, with great clarity, that music, like art or literature, is a cultural phenomenon represented by symbols that arises from interpretations of the world and aims to convey a series of sensations and feelings to the listener, eliciting a response from them. She points out that the most important part of this cultural product is its social context and its protagonists. As she mentions, it is the social history, narrated through the song and not through a literary or historical written text.

There are popular songs and some by authors that can express a feeling that stimulates those who listen to them, as they reflect the situation of segments of the population who feel oppressed, discredited, or marginalized by the government or the socio-cultural context in which they are immersed (Giacobbe, 2019). Finally, Giacobbe suggests that these are the songs we choose to accompany the paintings that depict a similar context to what their lyrics describe (2019).

After examining the purposes and contents, especially how they intertwine with each other, we need to consider what objectives would be relevant for the class. Essentially, what is at stake is that the student can understand the complex historical, social, political, economic, and cultural framework in which Labor Law is embedded, both in its origins and its historical course, and that they can perceive those relationships. The involved technology can serve as a tool for students to access a direct experience of events even in a field that may be unfamiliar to them.

On the didactic strategy

The teaching proposal requires us to pay special attention to the strategy to be implemented. That is, to carry out an analysis of the context in which the teaching process will take place, envision possible sequences of work, reflect on different ways to combine actions, and establish the timing and forms. Ultimately, it involves how we will approach the set goals. In this section, we intend to outline some guiding principles related to the didactic strategy that should be involved in a class using the digital board.

Initially, the active participation of students enables an artistic perspective on the works, which includes appreciating how figures and objects are organized, the use of color, dimensions, the handling of light, and so on, to place the work within one of the various artistic currents of painting and with other cultural expressions such as music. Then, starting from the object, establish connections with the era, the world of ideas, ideological and political contexts from the broadest contexts to the most specific ones.

However, there are limits to autonomous exploration by students. Vartiainen and Tedre (2023) point out that images are as attractive as they are difficult to handle in teaching due to their ambiguity, polysemy, and openness to almost unlimited uses and interpretations. At this point, the digital board can also lead to an experience that is less valuable for the objectives we have set. The role of teachers is essential for the applied technologies to result in better explanations and more extensive, deep, and meaningful cognitive processes (Stojanović et al., 2023).

Following what was discussed in the previous paragraph, we believe that, first, it is appropriate to ask students to contemplate a painting through the application while they smell a specific aroma and listen to sounds or music related to it. Then, ask them what they see, what they feel, what they think is happening, and have them provide reasons for their observations. Next, have them come up with questions about the painting. The “See, Think, Wonder” art thinking routine is applied (Gunawardena & Wilson, 2021; Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2022), stimulating students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations, fostering curiosity and preparing the ground for inquiry.

Once the suggested open-ended questions are made, a dialogical exposition is carried out through more focused instructions to create valuable connections with the content, generating argumentative dialogue (Cardinaux, 2018) between the pictorial work, the aroma, the song, and the academic texts, which were assigned for reading in advance.

The aim is to immerse oneself in a routine of thought for exploration, so that observations and interpretations arise from curiosity. As thoughts are externalized, the teacher will act as a guide to direct dispersion towards focus (Cardinaux, 2018). Thus, it is expected that the contents worked on in the bibliography will achieve greater significance when inserted into a framework: the pictorial work, with the added sensory enrichment enabled by the digital board. The fact that students can delve into the textures, details, and approaches existing in painting generates an irreversible experience: the content is in their hands. It is not just a set of words that the teacher will transmit and the student is going to absorb.

We believe that it is not possible to privilege a single strategy as if there were only one way, but rather, it is more pertinent to use a combined strategy. The teacher makes decisions based on the repertoire that the digital board allows and acts to promote that sensory exploration towards the cognitive breadth that we want to favor, but at the same time, must quickly address any digressions that take us away from the content being discussed.

Just as it is essential for the purposes and objectives that students can derive concepts and introduce themselves to interdisciplinary relationships on their own, based on the interaction with the board, emphasizing the role that discovery plays in learning, it is also necessary for the teacher to assume, from direct teaching, their role as a provider of pedagogical help so that that sensory exploration is truly enriching. In this way, the experience with the board will have more chances of becoming a conceptualization.

The art of painting enables the long-awaited opening towards a contradictory reality, which is necessarily much less harmonious than the one presented in legal texts. In the union of both dimensions, the teacher continues to play an essential role, but one that ceases to be the typical role of a lecture or a bureaucratic dialogue aimed at reproducing the worldview that postulates the existence of a harmonious legal order (Lista, 2022).

Thus, with all these elements, upon concluding the exploration of the board, it was recommended to gaze at the painting for a few minutes while inhaling the aroma of an unwashed, halved black potato with soil.

## **Conclusions**

The analysis conducted in this paper demonstrates that the integration of different sensory stimuli, such as visually observing artwork, the aroma of a soil-covered potato, and music, enhances the learning experience in Labor Law. These additional elements can help capture attention, improve information retention, and provide a more meaningful context for teaching.

Furthermore, the utilization of a labor-themed artwork, such as “Cosecha (Harvest)” by Eduardo Kigman, facilitates an emotional connection with the concepts studied in Labor Law. The visual representation of workers’ experiences in the painting can foster empathy and a deeper understanding of labor-related topics.

The artwork serves as a visual starting point for discussing and contextualizing legal principles related to labor. Observing work situations depicted in a painting facilitates a practical understanding of abstract concepts in Labor Law. It is also noteworthy that the use of a digital board allows interactivity and active student participation. In this way, they can express interpretations, pose questions, and creatively explore work scenarios. This tool fosters critical thinking and individual expression.

Moreover, artwork provides an opportunity to delve into metaphors and symbolism related to labor. Students can analyze how specific visual elements represent broader labor concepts, enriching their understanding symbolically. As evidenced, the combination of visual, auditory, and olfactory elements creates a holistic approach to learning in Labor Law. This methodology addresses the diverse ways in which students process information and contributes to a more comprehensive learning experience.

Finally, we consider that the connection between art and law contributes to a deeper and more contextualized understanding of labor principles and that the complete sensory experience encourages immersion and reflection. In fact, students can delve into the subject and contemplate the ethical and legal complexities of the depicted work situations. Thus, this integrated approach offers an innovative method for teaching Labor Law, providing students with an enriching and memorable educational experience.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

#### Ethics statement

The study was conducted according to the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo with the reference number UNACH27-7-2023. Participants were fully informed about the objectives of the study and were assured that all data would be treated confidentially. Consequently, all participants provided verbal consent.

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