

Thinking Beyond the Traditional Classroom and Student
University of Iowa College of Law
December 6, 2019

8:00 – 8:30 Registration and Continental Breakfast

8:30 – 8:50 Welcome

9:00 – 10:00 Andrew J. Turner, University of Wisconsin Law School

Take the Focus Off Writing: Helping International Students Succeed by Deconstructing the Legal Writing Process

International students are often intimidated by the prospect of producing written work in a classroom with native-English speaking students (or with other international students with stronger English skills). As professors, we often emphasize the importance of English proficiency and writing mechanics in producing superior legal writing. However, the most important skills in producing great legal writing do not depend on superior command of the English language. Helping international students identify more productive ways of focusing their attention and energy can reduce unnecessary stress, rebuild confidence, establish a more effective approach to the curriculum, and enhance core skill development. In this presentation, I'll give tips for effectively deconstructing the legal writing process to refocus students' attention more productively.

10:15 – 11:15 Suzanne Rowe, James L. and Ilene R. Hershner
Professor, Director of Legal Research and Writing
Program, University of Oregon School of Law

Advocacy and Diversity: Preparing to Compete

An upper-level advocacy course can prepare students to compete in moot court competitions while also preparing them to practice in a diverse office environment. By selecting as course materials both competition problems and pending cases that address diversity issues, the professor can weave together essential skills of persuasive writing and oral advocacy with growth in cultural competence. The professor can further enhance students' appreciation of diversity and inclusion by including law review articles on themes like conscious identity performance.

11:30 – 12:30 Dawn Anderson, Chris Liebig, Lorie Reins-Schweer, and Caroline Sheerin, Professors of Legal Analysis, Writing, and Research, University of Iowa College of Law

Group-Led Discussion: The Non-Traditional Classroom

12:30 – 1:30 Lunch (provided)

1:30 – 2:30 Michelle Falkoff, Director, Communication and Legal Reasoning and Clinical Professor of Law, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law

Reconceiving the Second Semester

The Communication and Legal Reasoning program at Northwestern recently piloted a new first semester curriculum, which we designed with the needs of students, CLR faculty, and the other first-year teaching faculty in mind. Our goals were multifold: we first sought to make the course more responsive to student needs, such as easing student stress, increasing the amount of revision, providing a variety of feedback opportunities, and creating assignments that were closer to those the students would write in practice. We also wanted to respond to faculty concerns about workload and parity between sections, as well as providing some deadline uniformity that would help other first-year faculty members plan their midterm exam schedules. We are now starting to take a similar approach to evaluating the second semester, though it presents additional and unique challenges. In this session, we will discuss the changes we made to the fall and how those impacted our thoughts about revisions to the spring, and we will talk about our proposed pilot.

2:45 – 3:45

Danielle Shelton, Professor of Law, Drake University
Law School

Melissa Weresh, Dwight D. Opperman Distinguished
Professor of Law, Drake University Law School

Activating Student Engagement with Team-Based Learning

We have employed a flipped classroom model and team-based learning in our first year legal writing course. We believe that these pedagogies enhance student engagement, facilitate deep learning, and help students develop professional identity characteristics. With respect to the latter, we will emphasize some of the soft skills that employers increasingly identify as necessary for new law graduates. In our presentation we would like to take attendees through a team-based learning, readiness assurance process. We would also like to reflect on recent studies including, in particular, *Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers Foundations for Practice: The Whole Lawyer and the Character Quotient*.

4:00 – 5:00

Joshua Aaron Jones, Visiting Assistant Professor, Legal
Communication and Analysis, Indiana University
Robert H. McKinney School of Law

Document Accessibility: Beyond Visual Impairments

Most writers limit their concept of document accessibility to accommodations for persons with visual impairments. Yet, few writers know how to manipulate word processors or Adobe Acrobat to create accessible documents with a goal of universal design for learning. “Accessibility” should encompass all types of learners, not just those with visual impairments. I will help fellow professors understand why we must consider UDL, how to efficiently draft documents with built-in word processor tools, and how to teach students to draft for near-universal accessibility so that they can serve a broad pool of clients. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop or tablet for a hands-on walk-through of important Microsoft Word features, including recently added proofing tools of which most are unaware.