



FROM THE DESK OF THE WRITING SPECIALIST

Providing Virtual Legal Writing Support to Law Students Beyond the Classroom

Tracy G. Crump

*Writing Advisor for the Legal Writing Resource Center
UIC John Marshall Law School*

Published: April 2021

1. Introduction

At their core, one-on-one writing conferencing sessions are considered important meetings to assist students with improving their writing.¹ In “Peer Tutoring and the Law School Writing Center,” Kristen Murray explains two positive benefits staffed writing centers have on legal writing programs: affording “an opportunity for an increase in the amount of individualized instruction that legal writing programs can offer . . . [and serving] as a non-judging audience, outside the traditional hierarchy in which writing in law school takes place.”² In these settings, students can improve writing skills and receive helpful feedback on their writing strengths and challenges. Bowman and Brodoff stressed the importance of a law students’ ability to transfer skills and understanding from the situation of

¹ Casey Jones, *The Relationship Between Writing Centers and Improvement in Writing Ability*, 122 EDUC. 3, 3 (2001) (“Since the early 1970s the Writing Center has become a ubiquitous feature of American universities, colleges, and high schools.”).

² Kristen Murray, *Peer Tutoring and the Law School Writing Center: Theory and Practice*, 17 LEGAL WRITING 161 (2011).

the classroom to that of practice.³ The skills learned during law school are cultivated to pass courses, but, ultimately, these skills must be honed to use in practice and in life.⁴

Today, legal research and writing (LRW) professionals must respond to the pedagogical needs of an increasingly diverse student population.⁵ These professionals thus must keep abreast of innovative teaching practices in order to assist law students in adopting the mechanics and practices of legal writing.⁶ One of these practices is utilizing previously established channels in combination with technological advancements to provide innovative and accessible services to serve students with diverse needs, preferences, styles, and life experiences, whether in person or remotely.⁷

Current LRW support models incorporate face-to-face curriculum designs.⁸ However, the legal profession is increasingly relying on advancements in technology such as using computers and other multimedia in the classroom and the courtroom. For example, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly 150 law schools across the country offered emergency remote teaching (ERT) during the Spring 2020 semester.⁹ Thus virtual coaching strategies need to incorporate considerations that address the needs for diverse learners.¹⁰

³Mary Nicol Bowman & Lisa Brodoff, *Cracking Student Silos- Linking Legal Writing and Clinical Learning through Transference*, 25 CLINICAL L. REV. 269, 269–324 (2019); Laurel Currie Oates, *I Know I Taught Them How to Do That*, 7 LEGAL WRITING 1 (2001). A related definition is “the ability to generalize from lessons and skills gathered in one place and circumstances and transfer such lessons and skills to a different set of circumstances.” Carolyn Grose, *Beyond Skills Training, Revisited: The Clinical Education Spiral*, 19 CLINICAL L. REV. 489, 494 (2013); see also Tonya Kowalski, *True North: Navigating for the Transfer of Learning in Legal Education*, 34 SEATTLE U. L. REV. 51, 60–61 (2010) (summarizing several relevant definitions from educational and psychological research on transference).

⁴Shaun Archer et al., *Reaching Backward and Stretching Forward: Teaching for Transfer in Law School Clinics*, 64 J. LEGAL EDUC. 258, 258–59 (2014) (citing Nancy Penington et al., *Transfer of Training Between Cognitive Subskills: Is Knowledge Use Specific?* 28 COGNITIVE PSYCH. 175, 176 (1995)).

⁵Ya’u Haruna Usman, *Differences between Pedagogical and Andragogical Methods of Teaching and the Preference of Andragogy for the Teaching of Adults*, 6 INT’L J. AFR. & ASIAN STUDS. 1, 1–5 (2015).

⁶ERIC B. EASTON, SOURCEBOOK ON LEGAL WRITING PROGRAMS (2d ed. 2006).

⁷Sue Saltmarsh & Wendy Sutherland-Smith, *S(t)imulating Learning: Pedagogy, Subjectivity and Teacher Education in Online Environments*, 8 LONDON REV. EDUC. 15, 18 (2010).

⁸Bowman & Brodoff, *supra* note 3.

⁹Karen Sloan, *Here are the Law Schools Moving Classes Online Amid Coronavirus*, Law.com (Mar. 10, 2020), <https://www.law.com/2020/03/10/here-are-the-law-schools-moving-classes-online-amid-coronavirus/?srlreturn=20200510105018>.

¹⁰Lillian Corbin & Lisa Bugden, *Online Teaching: The Importance of Pedagogy, Place and Presence in Legal Education*, 28 LEGAL EDUC. REV. 1, 1–21 (2018); Kate Galloway, *A Rationale and Framework for Digital Literacies in Legal Education*, 27 LEGAL EDUC. REV. 117, 141 (2017).

Virtual coaching sessions are one-on-one writing sessions between law students and LRW professionals designed to assist law students in better understanding legal research and writing techniques conducted using videoconferencing. The sessions involve much more than adopting the same teaching strategies used in face-to-face meetings. As such, LRW professionals developing these sessions need to consider relevant content, learning management systems and instructional platforms, learning theories, instructional design, and measurable outcomes.

Offering virtual coaching sessions has key implications for praxis among those assisting students beyond the classroom.¹¹ As explained below, LRW professionals will need to draw upon a range of doctrinal and methodological approaches to effectively assist today's law students during coaching sessions beyond the classroom.¹² However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding strategies and interventions for virtually assisting students with mastering LRW beyond the classroom.

Historically, most U.S. law schools offer majority of their legal research and writing tutoring support in face-to-face sessions. However, many legal institutions have begun to address the need for remote instructional support by adopting virtual instructional delivery initiatives. These LRW professionals incorporate several components of successful virtual coaching curricula, such as: (1) assessing student learning styles; (2) developing an individualized instructional design that is engaging and responsive to student needs; and (3) communicating an outline for understanding the purpose and the elements of the legal editing process during virtual LRW coaching sessions.

In both face-to-face and virtual settings, LRW professionals need to effectively present information to students with different learning styles.¹³ Legal professionals must also be able to refine, transmit, and use their knowledge to assist clients, judges, and the public.¹⁴ In addition, to effectively support today's law students beyond the classroom, LRW professionals adopting virtual coaching sessions thus must have a working knowledge of the three domains of digital learning: cognitive, affective (feelings and emotion), and psychomotor (physical).¹⁵

¹¹ Shaun Archer et al., *Reaching Backward and Stretching Forward: Teaching for Transfer in Law School Clinics*, 64 J. LEGAL EDUC. 258, 258-59 (2014).

¹² Anne Enquist & Jessie Grearson, *A History of Writing Advisors at Law Schools: Looking at Our Past, Looking at Our Future*, 5 LEGAL WRITING 55, 55-92 (1999).

¹³ Beverley Steventon et al., *Moving the Law School into the Twenty-First Century – Embedding Technology into Teaching and Learning*, 38 J. FURTHER & HIGHER EDUC. 107, 109 (2014).

¹⁴ Nicola A. Boothe-Perry, *The Truth of the Matter - Why the Social Contract Dictates Legal Scholars' Sincerity, Candor, & Thoroughness*, 101 MARQ. L. REV. 1063, 1063-73 (2018); AALS, *Statement of Good Practices by Law Professors in the Discharge of their Ethical and Professional Responsibilities* (amended 2017) (April 12, 2021, 3:21 p.m.), <https://www.aals.org/about/handbook/good-practices/ethics/>.

¹⁵ David R Krathwohl, *A Revision of Blooms Taxonomy: An Overview*, 41 THEORY INTO PRAC. 212 (2002).

In the 21st Century, law students have competing responsibilities that may force them to divide their time between school, work, and other personal obligations and may therefore need to access LRW coaching remotely. In response, higher education institutions have adopted videoconferencing platforms such as Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, WebEx, GoToMeeting, and Panapto to deliver innovative and accessible tools and services that serve students in different locations with diverse needs, preferences, styles, and life experiences.

In virtual coaching sessions, as in face-to-face meetings, LRW professionals must be able to articulate the purpose of each component of legal writing in a format understandable to the law student.¹⁶ These professionals must also impress upon the student the importance of reviewing one's own process for learning.¹⁷

Coaching law students using videoconferencing also requires LRW professionals to maintain presence by helping students understand high-level notions, synthesizing subject matter, and understanding how each student best learns in the current environment.¹⁸

To successfully help virtual coaching session students, LRW professionals must be able to identify various learning styles and provide services and resources that are responsive to student needs. Understanding student learning styles and identifying individual student needs are thus crucial to designing appropriate instructional curricula.

2. Assessing Learning Styles for Virtual LRW Coaching Sessions.

Past research has focused on the significance of effective instructional design and curriculum.¹⁹ Angelo and Cross (1993) presented 50 Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs) designed to assist teachers and learners in better understanding their unique teaching-learning process as it occurs.²⁰ These techniques include analyzing focused autobiographical sketches, students describing successful learning experiences, students explaining three to five goals they have for their assignment or course, and students comparing themselves with descriptions of various learning profiles to identify the style(s) that best match their characteristics

¹⁶ Michael L. Closten & Robert M. Jarvis, *The National Conference of Law Reviews Model Code of Ethics: Final Text and Comments*, 75 MARQ. L. REV. 509, 526 (1992).

¹⁷ Anthony S. Niedwiecki, *Lawyers and Learning: A Metacognitive Approach to Legal Education*, 13 WIDENER L. REV. 33, 41 (2006).

¹⁸ Martha Cleveland-Innes & Prisca Campbell, *Emotional Presence, Learning, and the Online Learning Environment*, 13 INT'L REV. RSCH. OPEN & DISTANCE LEARNING 269 (2012).

¹⁹ Oates, *supra* note 3, at 1; *see also* Kowalski, *supra* note 3, at 60-61.

²⁰ THOMAS A. ANGELO & K. PATRICIA CROSS, *CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES: A HANDBOOK FOR COLLEGE TEACHERS* (2d ed. 1993).

and preferences. Since 1981, Branch and Dousay (2015) have surveyed instructional design models aimed at identifying best practices in online learning, planning, design, and development.²¹ In *Learning Online: What Research Tells Us about Whether, When and How* (2014), Means, Bakia, and Murphy highlight the complexity of the online design and decision-making process by identifying nine dimensions of online learning design.²² A major implication of this body of research is that the diversity of LRW students must be considered when developing support service strategies that are flexible, inclusive, and student-centered.²³ LRW professionals need to help students identify their own learning styles by assessing the students' strengths and preferences.²⁴ There are a number of learning styles that LRW professionals need to identify in their assessments: visual, aural, verbal, physical, and logical, as well as if the learner thrives in a more social or solitary environment.²⁵

Visual learners. These learners prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding when attempting to comprehend legal writing methods. Visual learners may thus benefit from making outlines, using flashcards, creating graphs and charts, accessing handouts that concisely explain concepts and material, or mapping out information visually using symbols or pictures.

Aural learners. This type of learner responds to the use of sound or music to grasp legal concepts. Methods to assist these learners may incorporate vignettes or short videos that succinctly explain information, using dictation software and hardware to record and review material, and reading material aloud, as well as discussing concepts with the LRW professional.

Verbal learners. Other students may prefer using words, both in speech and writing, to understand legal conceptions. Verbal learners may thus benefit from using acronyms or mnemonic devices, as well as mirroring or parroting concepts.

²¹ ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY (AECT), ROBERT M. BRANCH & TONIA A. DOUSAY, SURVEY OF INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN MODELS (2015).

²² BARBARA MEANS ET AL., LEARNING ONLINE: WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT WHETHER, WHEN AND HOW (New York: Routledge 2014).

²³ Barbara Lockee et al., *Old Concerns with New Distance Education Research*, 24 *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 60, 60–68 (2001).

²⁴ Davison M. Mupinga et al., *The Learning Styles, Expectations, and Needs of Online Students*, 54 *COLL. TEACHING* 185, 186 (2006).

²⁵ FRANK COFFIELD ET AL., LEARNING STYLES AND PEDAGOGY IN POST-16 LEARNING: A SYSTEMATIC AND CRITICAL REVIEW (2004); Saul A. McLeod, *Kolb - Learning Styles*, SIMPLY PSYCHOLOGY (Oct. 24, 2017), <https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html>; DAVID A. KOLB, THE LEARNING STYLE INVENTORY: TECHNICAL MANUAL (1976); David A. Kolb, Learning Styles and Disciplinary Differences, in *THE MODERN AMERICAN COLLEGE* 232–55 (A.W. Chickering ed. 1981); DAVID A. KOLB, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: EXPERIENCE AS THE SOURCE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (Vol. 1 1984); David A. Kolb & R. Fry, *Toward an Applied Theory of Experiential Learning*, in *STUDIES OF GROUP PROCESS* 33–57 (C. Cooper ed. 1975); DAVID A. KOLB ET AL., ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY: READINGS ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN ORGANIZATIONS (1984).

Physical learners. These kinesthetic learners may prefer using their bodies, hands, and sense of touch to synthesize legal concepts. Kinesthetic learners may thus benefit from tactile experiences and desire to engage in line-by-line examination of their work to work through challenges.

Logical learners. Logical, or mathematical, learners may benefit from using logic, reasoning, and systems to make sense of legal writing techniques. Methods such as pattern recognition exercises, understanding how to identify connections, and adopting classification strategies are useful in helping this type of learner to understand and employ legal writing practices.

Social and solitary learners. In other instances, students may be social (interpersonal) learners. Consequently, these learners may prefer to learn in groups or with other people. Social learners may benefit from verbal, and non-verbal, learning environments that allow them to articulate concerns, ask questions, and compare ideas in one-on-one or group settings. Conversely, students may be solitary (intrapersonal) learners. In these instances, students may prefer to work alone and use self-study. Solitary learners may benefit from understanding self-reflection strategies that allow them to assess strengths and weaknesses and receive guidance on practices to improve. They may also benefit from understanding the role their study environment plays on their productivity (i.e., they may prefer (and best perform) studying in quiet, remote locations).

In each circumstance, LRW professionals will need to help students identify their own learning styles by inquiring about their learning and study preferences.²⁶ Based on these conversations, the LRW professional could offer suggestions as to how students can adapt their course preparation and study techniques to assist them in mastering legal research and writing techniques.²⁷ These techniques might include preparing visual aids, charts, and graphs; and reading aloud or using electronic accessibility software to articulate their work aurally. After this assessment, the LRW professional will need to utilize previously established channels²⁸ and technological advancements in instructional communication, to assist students with meeting their personal LRW goals.

²⁶ Maria Puzziferro & Kaye Shelton, *Challenging Our Assumptions About Online Learning: A Vision for the Next Generation of Online Higher Education*, 6 *Distance Learning* 9, 15 (Vol. 4 2009).

²⁷ WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW* (2007).

²⁸ LRW professionals will need to focus on assisting students with understanding issues such as the strength of the argument and its logical structure, strengths and challenges of the document under review, thesis and idea development, relevant evidence and support provided, and grammar, syntax, and flow of the discussion. There are several helpful texts many institutions rely on: J LYN ENTRIKIN & MARY B TREVOR, *LEGAL WRITING SOURCEBOOK* (3d ed. 2020); IAN GALLACHER, *A FORM AND STYLE MANUAL FOR LAWYERS* (2005); DIANA HACKER & NANCY SOMMERS, *A WRITER'S REFERENCE* (9th ed. 2018); COLEEN M. BARGER, *ALWD GUIDE TO LEGAL CITATION* (6th ed. 2017); DEBORAH E. BOUCHOUX, *ASPEN HAND-*

3. Developing an Individualized Instructional Design for Virtual LRW Coaching Sessions.

Resources offered by LRW professionals must meet each student where they are as each law student has varying support needs.²⁹ Merritt et al. (2018) note previous research highlighting the benefits in student learning when they receive formative feedback and the need for legal education to improve through effective feedback.³⁰ LRW virtual coaching sessions afford legal students an opportunity to receive formative feedback while identifying their individual needs. LRW professionals can effectively employ “backwards design” to structure coaching sessions by identifying desired session results (learning objectives), determining acceptable evidence (assessments), and planning learning experiences and instruction on a case-by-case basis (content and learning activities).³¹ One method for clearly identifying student needs and developing an individualized instructional design is to

BOOK FOR LEGAL WRITERS: A PRACTICAL REFERENCE (4th ed. 2017); AMY E. SLOAN, BASIC LEGAL RESEARCH: TOOLS & STRATEGIES (7th ed. 2018); AMY E. SLOAN ET AL., BASIC LEGAL RESEARCH WORKBOOK (5th ed. 2018); ANNE STILMAN, GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO SPELLING, STYLE, USAGE, AND PUNCTUATION (2d ed. 2010); MARK E. WOJCIK, INTRODUCTION TO LEGAL ENGLISH (3d ed. 2009); LAUREL CURRIE OATES, JUST RESEARCH: PREPARING FOR PRACTICE (5th ed. 2017); ANNE ENQUIST ET AL., JUST WRITING: GRAMMAR, PUNCTUATION, AND STYLE FOR THE LEGAL WRITER (5th ed. 2015); RICHARD K. NEUMANN, JR. ET AL., LEGAL REASONING AND LEGAL WRITING (8th ed. 2017); RICHARD K. NEUMANN, JR. ET AL., LEGAL WRITING (4th ed. 2019); LINDA EDWARDS, LEGAL WRITING: PROCESS, ANALYSIS, AND ORGANIZATION (7th ed. 2018); RICHARD C. WYDICK & AMY E. SLOAN, PLAIN ENGLISH FOR LAWYERS (6th ed. 2019); WILLIAM H. PUTMAN, POCKET GUIDE TO LEGAL WRITING (2006); THE BLUEBOOK: A UNIFORM SYSTEM OF CITATION (Columbia L. Rev. Ass’n et al. eds. 21st ed. 2020); THE CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE (17th ed. 2017); WILLIAM STRUNK JR. & RICHARD DE A’MORELLI, THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE (4th ed. 2018); LAUREL CURRIE OATES ET AL., THE LEGAL WRITING HANDBOOK – ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, AND WRITING (7th ed. 2018); DEBORAH A. SCHMEDEMANN ET AL., THE PROCESS OF LEGAL RESEARCH: PRACTICES AND RESOURCES (9th ed. 2016); BRYAN A. GARNER, THE REDBOOK: A MANUAL ON LEGAL STYLE (4th ed. 2018); HELENE S. SHAPO ET AL., WRITING AND ANALYSIS IN THE LAW (7th ed. 2018).

²⁹ Bowman & Brodoff, *supra* note 3, at 269–324 (noting some students may do well demonstrating legal research and writing skills in the classroom-setting using professor-provided fact patterns but may also struggle with using the same skills when asked to analyze a real-world issue).

³⁰Deborah Jones Merritt et al., *Formative Assessments: A Law School Case Study*, 94 U. DET. MERCY L. REV. 387 (2017).

³¹ David Lee Carlson & Pamela A. Marshall, *Learning the Science of Research, Learning the Art of Teaching: Planning Backwards in a College Genetics Course*, 13 BIOSCIENCE EDUC. 1, 1-9 (2009); Yvonne Dutton & Seema Mohapatra, *COVID-19 and Law Teaching: Guidance on Developing an Asynchronous Online Course for Law Students*, ST. LOUIS U. L.J. (forthcoming)

adopt high-impact instructional designs, such as active learning practices³² that support deep learning by promoting student engagement.³³

The LRW professional will need to contextualize the learning experience to enable law students to understand the ultimate goal at the beginning of the coaching session. Students should be able to visualize, in detail, how each element of the project assists them in meeting their goals for the project. LRW professionals can also cultivate a problem-based learning experience by providing learning environments that enable students to develop skills immediately applicable to the task and useful in practice, such as distilling relevant elements in real legal case/scenarios that students might encounter. This environment will facilitate students becoming active producers of knowledge rather than passive consumers.³⁴

To facilitate successful virtual coaching sessions, LRW professionals may help students set goals for each session. The professionals may also incorporate structured lessons using sequenced learning activities and make learning objectives apparent through modeling. Another technique is to present worked examples and discuss them in detail. The examples should be designed to enable students to actively participate in understanding legal research and writing techniques. In addition, the professionals can provide students with multiple opportunities to encounter, engage with, and elaborate on new knowledge and skills. Another approach would be to question students on why they have used specific methods, techniques, or rationales and allow them to explain their choices. Offering students feedback on their performance relative to their learning objectives can be helpful too, as well as encouraging them to reflect on their own learning process. A final technique would be to incorporate adjustments for content, process, and product based on each student's needs. High-impact practices such as these are important aspects of the virtual coaching session because they enable the LRW professional to demonstrate presence from a distance.

2021), available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3604331> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3604331>; Kenneth R. Swift, *The Seven Principles for Good Practice in [Asynchronous Online] Legal Education*, 44 MITCHELL HAMLINE L. REV. 105 (2018).

³² Active learning techniques cause students to engage with the material rather than passively take in information. The responsibility for learning is placed upon the student, often working in collaboration with peers, tutors, or instructors. Examples of active learning activities include brainstorming, role-playing, discussing, case studies, teaching, journaling, group projects, focused listening, formulating questions, notetaking, annotating, and roleplaying, think-pair-share, peer teaching, debates, Just-in-Time Teaching, and short demonstrations followed by class discussion.

³³ Michael Hunter Schwartz, *Teaching Law by Design: How Learning Theory and Instructional Design Can Inform and Reform Law Teaching*, 38 SAN DIEGO L. REV. 347, 351 (2001); ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES, GEORGE D. KUH & K. O'DONNELL, *ENSURING QUALITY AND TAKING HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES TO SCALE* (2013).

³⁴ Peggy A. Ertmer & Timothy J. Newby, *Behaviorism, Cognitivism, Constructivism: Comparing Critical Features from an Instructional Design Perspective*, 26 PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT Q. 43, 58 (2013).

Moreover, LRW professionals could promote an instructional design that provides students with the opportunity to learn by doing, such as by asking them to explain why they have used specific techniques or rationales. For those students who benefit from social learning, LRW professionals could offer a social learning environment in which students engage in discussion that supports them furthering their knowledge acquisition, as well as networking with the LRW professional, peers, colleagues, and professionals in the field.

Additionally, LRW professionals can present a self-directed component that allows students to empower themselves, take ownership of the task, and to feel like they are setting their own direction. This exercise could involve scaffolding (developing blocks of interrelated content) or developing research and writing outlines designed to meet the students' ultimate goals.³⁵ For example, LRW professionals could adopt conceptual, specific strategic, or procedural scaffolds. Conceptual scaffolds would teach students to organize their ideas, legal concepts, and legal strategies and connect them to relevant information, specific strategic scaffolds could assist students in developing more nuanced questions, and procedural scaffolds could help clarify specific tasks such as oral arguments.

Adopting these practices will enable LRW professionals to meet each student where they are. While these assessment practices are fundamental to helping law students develop LRW skills, equally essential is assisting them in understanding the legal editing process.

4. Communicating an Outline for Understanding the Legal Editing Process.

In addition to helping students master legal writing techniques, virtual LRW coaching sessions should also communicate the importance of understanding the purpose and the elements of the legal editing process. Creating a space allowing students to understand the process is central to assisting students in developing this skill for later use in practice.³⁶

³⁵ Stephen D. Sorden, *A Cognitive Approach to Instructional Design for Multimedia Learning*, 8 INT'L J. EMERGING TRANSDICIPLINE 263, 266 (2005); Jo Mackiewicz & Isabell Thompson, *Motivational Scaffolding, Politeness, and Writing Center Tutoring*, 33 WRITING CTR. J. 38, 38-73 (2013); L. Raymond & Z. Quinn, *What a Writer Wants: Assessing Fulfillment of Student Goals in Writing Center Tutoring Sessions*, 32 WRITING CTR. J. 64, 64-77 (2012).

³⁶ See, e.g., Margaret Martin Barry, *Reflective Lawyering*, in LEARNING FROM PRACTICE: A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEXT FOR LEGAL EXTERNS 145,147 (2d ed., Leah Wortham et al. eds., 2007) ("Reflection is not just desirable or useful. Reflection is essential to learning from experience.").

In the legal profession, thoroughness must be cultivated because life, freedom, or property rights may depend on nuanced details.³⁷ LRW professionals thus need to communicate to students the value of editing their work. When doing so, the LRW professionals can articulate a six-step editing outline.³⁸ This process is akin to previously established methods of gaining foundational legal knowledge, processing it, and employing the knowledge in practice.³⁹

1. The student must read the text to understand what the text is about as well as the desired writing goal.
2. The student must review the document thoroughly to correct typographical, punctuation, usage, grammar, and style errors.
3. The LRW professional should encourage the student to analyze the overall structure of the document to make sure the information is in the right order, ideas are consistent and transition clearly, concepts are clearly explained, no unanswered questions remain, and there is no missing information.
4. The LRW professional should impress upon the student the importance of ensuring names, titles, dates, locations, math, summaries of cases, or other information, is presented accurately as reflected in all sources.
5. The LRW professional needs to illustrate the importance of revising the text to remove redundancies, trim wordiness, trim for length (if necessary), and ensure none of the other editing has introduced gaps in the story or other errors.
6. The student must review the formatting of the document, including topic sentences, headings, and sub-headings, and figure captions, to ensure they align with the student's (and the ultimate audience's) requirements.

Adopting these strategies during virtual coaching sessions will enable the LRW professional to help students understand how to develop sound editing

³⁷ Mark Tushnet, *Lego/Scholarship: Its Causes and Cure*, 90 YALE L.J. 1205, 1221-22(1981) (noting that legal scholars need substantial amounts of time to develop an understanding of social theory that might usefully be employed in extra-doctrinal legal scholarship).

³⁸ See, e.g., Leah M. Christensen, *The Power of Skills: An Empirical Study of Lawyering Skills Grades as the Strongest Predictor of Law School Success (Or in Other Words, It's Time for Legal Education to Get Serious About Integrating Skills Training Throughout the Law School Curriculum If We Care About How Our Students Learn)*, 83 ST. JOHN'S L. REV. 795, 819 (2009); see also Jason S. Palmer, *"The Millennial Are Coming!": Improving Self-Efficacy in Law Students Through Universal Design in Learning*, 63 CLEV. ST. L. REV. 675 (2015) (providing a useful discussion of how law schools could more effectively teach students to be self-regulated learners).

³⁹ See generally Jennifer Cooper, *Smarter Law Learning: Using Cognitive Science to Maximize Law Learning*, 44 CAP. U. L. REV. 551 (2016).

practices. This level of specificity in the virtual coaching session works to not only help students hone their legal skills, but also assists in helping them see how these foundational skills may transfer to practice.

5. Conclusion

Within the evolving landscape of remote legal instruction, LRW professionals are responding to the pedagogical needs of a diverse student population seeking assistance beyond the classroom. Such professionals have succeeded in assessing student learning styles. LRW professionals also need to identify student needs and develop an individualized instructional design that is engaging and responsive to each student's needs. In addition, LRW coaching should include communicating an outline for understanding the legal writing editing process. Employing support initiatives that are responsive to current learning requirements, future LRW professionals who desire to make informed assessments and provide holistic services to law students beyond the classroom, should assess each student's needs and design individualized virtual support plans for students endeavoring to master legal research and writing.