

LWI One-Day Workshop: Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Practice and Teaching: What We Can Learn from Each Other

December 4, 2020

9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (CST)

9:30 – 10	Welcoming Remarks Tom Cobb, Director of Legal Writing & Dean Anthony Niedwiecki <i>Mitchell Hamline School of Law</i>
10 – 10:25	Finding Inspiration in the Wisdom of bell hooks: Embracing the Revolutionary Notion of Education as a Practice of Freedom In her classic pedagogical treatise, “Teaching to Transgress, Education as the Practice of Freedom,” bell hooks espouses a new instructional practice that conceives of teaching as an act of resistance. As relevant today as it was when it was originally published in 1994, hooks posits that the crisis within higher education, and within our society more broadly, requires all forms of domination, including those that exist within spaces of learning, to be systematically deconstructed. Teachers, hooks argues, have a critical role to play in this process. Hooks provides thoughtful guidance and tangible recommendations to encourage teachers to create spaces for constructive confrontation and interrogation of existing structures. This presentation will seek to explore and expand upon hooks’ theory of education as a liberatory practice by discussing what we can learn from each other as we strive towards self-actualization, an essential quality of engaged pedagogy. Erin Carr <i>Mitchell Hamline School of Law</i>
10:25 – 10:50	Professionalism in a Pandemic Professionalism skills are important in legal writing courses. Timeliness of submissions, prompt and engaged attendance, and personal accountability are important “soft” skills. In response to the pandemic, law schools have moved to more flexible models, which support and accommodate students’ needs and anxiety. Moving to a more flexible method is a positive move in challenging times overall. However, will this flexibility benefit students in terms of “professionalism” when they are in actual law practice, which isn’t always flexible? This presentation will discuss the difficulty in striking the balance between professionalism and the pandemic.

	<p>Nicole Raymond Chong <i>Penn State Law</i></p>
10:50 - 11	BREAK
11 - 11:25	<p>Crash and Burn? The meeting of practice and academia</p> <p>As an academic, I find it easy to forget the applicable and necessary skills to be an excellent practitioner. But, as the result of a collaboration with a partner from my previous firm, I was reminded of what I love about practice and what my students need to hone in order to succeed.</p> <p>We recently co-taught a course and through our partnership, our students came to appreciate both the academic aspects and practical application, what a law school may expect and what the court may ask for, and through practical writing exercises, how to hone key skills.</p> <p>Megan Davis <i>University of Houston Law Center</i></p> <p>Jonathan Brush <i>Partner at Rogers, Morris, and Grover, LLP</i></p>
11:25 - 12:15	<p>Technological Collaboration in Client Counseling</p> <p>In our blended learning Contracts class, we engaged students in a client counseling exercise as part of a capstone simulation. Hampered by the constraints of the pandemic, we turned to the technological tools available to practicing lawyers to design the exercise for online learning. The exercise resulted from a design and teaching collaboration among the course professor, an instructional designer, and an educational technologist. While we'll demonstrate the exercise and share student work product, we'll also discuss the benefits of pedagogical collaboration between professors and design and technology professionals.</p> <p>Gregory M. Duhl, Amanda Soderlind, and Selva Palani <i>Mitchell Hamline School of Law</i></p>
12:15 - 1	LUNCH
1 - 1:25	Walking the Walk: Practicing the Skills We Teach

	<p>Reformers have fought to suffuse the law school curriculum with skills and professionalism instruction. We should rejoice at these efforts to bolster student competencies.</p> <p>But what about sharpening our own practice-oriented skills? Many professors haven't practiced law for years or even decades. Is there a way for us to walk the walk – and practice the legal skills we preach – all while fulfilling our demanding teaching, administrative, and scholarly responsibilities?</p> <p>In this talk, I discuss opportunities for, and challenges to, realistically reconnecting with practice. I also detail some of the benefits of doing so for our students, institutions, and communities.</p> <p>Ezra Ross <i>University of California Irvine School of Law</i></p>
1:25 - 1:50	<p>Helping Students Understand the Attorney-Client Relationship and the Importance of Legal Writing by Having Them Draft Engagement Letters</p> <p>The presenter will discuss how he has used an assignment in which students work together to develop engagement letters to help them understand the attorney-client relationship as well as such things as helping them understand the importance of tone in communicating with clients.</p> <p>Tim Duff <i>Suffolk University Law School</i></p>
1:50 - 2:15	<p>How to Incorporate Job-Search Strategy into First-Year Legal Writing</p> <p>First-year students often rely on memos and briefs drafted during legal writing classes as writing samples. Students also frequently seek assistance in the drafting of cover letters, cvs, and diversity statements. Our presentation will discuss whether and how LRW faculty should reasonably assist students in their job searches. We will consider the pros and cons of offering direct instruction on drafting cover letters, the suitability of memos as writing samples, and whether and how often LRW faculty should review and offer guidance on application materials.</p> <p>Erin A. Donelon & Vanessa Beary <i>Tulane University School of Law</i></p>

2:15 – 2:30	BREAK
2:30 – 3:30	<p>Technological Competence - Law Student Perceptions of Online Teaching Strategies</p> <p>Students are entering a legal workforce that is highly skilled and reliant on technology. Yet, their legal education is mostly divorced from technology due in part to the ABA’s limitations on distance education. Legal academia and the ABA are being forced to explore ways to provide and improve online legal education. To help provide guidance and empirical support, I surveyed law students in a blended learning program about their perceptions of the engagement strategies used by their professors. I will present the survey findings and interpretations to help improve teaching methods and prepare students for the workplace.</p> <p>Andrele Brutus St. Val <i>University of Pittsburg School of Law</i></p>
3:20 – 3:45	<p>Technology Tools to Make Commenting and Providing Feedback Easier</p> <p>I have been teaching legal writing for nearly eighteen years and I’d like to help newer professors provide meaningful feedback to their students as easily and quickly as possible. I have found that the better the feedback, the better the student learning. It is worth spending the time to make sure the feedback is helpful and clear. Technology today allows professors to save comments and edit them instead of re-typing them each time. I primarily use the “speedgrader” function on Canvas that allows for a wide array of comments and saves everything in one place. Technology allows for paperless commenting and a record of all comments so students cannot misplace them. When using a learning management system, like Canvas, students are also unable to delete the feedback inadvertently. On a simpler level, commenting using Microsoft Word is a nice option that also allows professors to comment and save these comments for student review.</p> <p>Michelle Zakarin Touro Law Center</p>
3:45 – 4	BREAK
4 – 4:25	<p>Roles, Responsibilities, and Respect: Navigating the Adjunct & Student Teacher Tandem</p> <p>Having recently spent two years as a student legal writing instructor at the University of Minnesota Law School, I’d like to share my experience and tips for working with students and, just as importantly, with the adjunct</p>

	<p>teaching partner. With proper training, encouragement, and responsibilities, student teachers or teaching assistants can be a valuable addition to any legal writing program. I'd like to show you how.</p> <p>J.J. Pristanski <i>Director of Parliamentary Affairs for Honourable Kerry-Lynn Findlay</i></p>
<p>4:25 – 4:50</p>	<p>What does it mean to “write like a lawyer”, and how do you answer a student who requests help developing this skill?</p> <p>T.S. Eliot is credited with saying that “Good writers borrow; great writers steal.” In a sense, this is the most obvious way in which lawyers learn writing skills from one another. But while it is easy to borrow a write’s structure, their rhetorical devices, or even steal their arguments, it is nearly impossible to steal voice. Yet voice, for all its idiosyncrasies, can be nurtured by professors and peers to help students instead become “lawyers who write.”</p> <p>Eliot Tracz <i>Mitchell Hamline School of Law</i></p>
<p>4:50 – 5</p>	<p>Closing Remarks</p> <p>Sara Krassin, Program Administrator & Wendy Shea, Assistant Director of Legal Writing <i>Mitchell Hamline School of Law</i></p>