



How Engaging Students Outside of the Classroom will Engage Students Inside the Classroom

Presented by:

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Workshop Description:

This workshop seeks to inspire participants to spend more time with students outside of class, because doing so will motivate their students to be more active participants in class. The ideas and strategies to be discussed have broad application to all law teachers in classes of all sizes. The presenters will discuss ideas they have used outside of the classroom to improve the in-class experience, and will also solicit input from attendees on successful techniques that they have used. Through role-playing, the presenters will brainstorm with the group different scenarios for student meetings and a range of effective faculty responses.

Some Ideas and Strategies That We Have Used Successfully:

- ✓ The use of structured office hours:
 - When using structured office hours, the professor requires a small number of students to drop by during each regularly scheduled office hour. The objective behind this technique is to have at least one-on-one meeting with each student during the semester. There are several benefits to this including:
 - the professor gets to meet each student individually, which demonstrates to the students that the professor cares about him or her;
 - the professor meets **all** students, not just the ones who choose to engage him or her. As we all know, oftentimes the students most in need of support and guidance are the ones least likely to initiate a meeting;
 - students are more likely to speak up in class and less likely to miss class if they believe that the professor actually knows who they are.
- ✓ Student Information Index Cards
 - Name, Address, email address they actually check, phone number
 - Undergraduate institution
 - Important work experience
 - Interesting fact
- ✓ Using photo rosters to call students by name both in class and at individual conferences.
- ✓ Requiring students sign an attendance sheet at each class. Sending absent students a brief e-mail after class will dramatically improve attendance.
- ✓ Orchestrating a class or section lunch or coffee get together.

- ✓ Adapting some of the techniques unique to Legal Writing conferencing to general conferences with students, such as the “Legal Writing Prescription” one presenter gives students, which focuses on their most acute legal writing problem. The Professor and the student prepare the prescription together during a conference on a specific writing assignment. The prescription is reviewed at subsequent conferences to see if it is working. Has the student improved their rule analysis, or their grasp of IRAC? Is their writing style less wordy? This concept can be easily be expanded to accommodate an exam-based class. For example, a Professor could easily develop a form that students need to complete before they set up a meeting to discuss an exam. The form could ask students to compare their answer to a model answer, or ask students to critically self-evaluate their response using a rubric. This will shift the focus of the meeting from pleading for a better grade to a substantive discussion about improving exam-writing skills.



Legal Writing Prescription
Professor Stein

Name: _____

Date: _____

Writing Rx: _____

Signed: _____

Dispense as written-
There is no substitute for good legal writing!

Enough Talking, it's Time to Demonstrate. . . .

- ✓ Two different types of students and two different faculty responses:
 - How do you handle the student who is convinced that they “know it all” and is extremely resistant to faculty input/suggestions?
 - How do you handle the student who is so distressed at what they perceive to be the poor quality of their own work that they are unable to “hear” faculty input/suggestions?

Now It's Your Turn. . . .

- ✓ Please pick a partner and brainstorm different student/teacher scenarios you may have encountered and ways those interactions were or were not effective.
 - If they were effective, can you articulate to your partner why, are there techniques that you used that will be helpful for the group to hear?
 - If they were not effective, why not? How do you think you could have made that interaction more successful?
- ✓ The entire group will then come together to share the results of their sessions.

Selected Resources on Student Conferences

Susan B. Apel, *Principle 1: Good Practice Encourages Student-Faculty Contact*, 49 J. Legal Educ. 371 (1999).

Candace Mueller Centeno, *A Recipe for Successful Student Conferences: One Part Time Sheets, One Part Student Conference Preparation Questionnaire, and a Dash of Partial Live Editing*, 18 Persp.: Teaching Leg. Res. & Writing 24 (Fall 2009).

Christy DeSanctis and Kristen Murray, *The Art of the Writing Conference: Letting Students Set the Agenda Without Ceding Control*, 17 Persp.: Teaching Leg. Res. & Writing 35 (Fall 2008).

Philip C. Kissam, *Conferring with Students*, 65 U.M.K.C. L. Rev. 917 (1997).

George D. Kuh, *The Other Curriculum: Out-of-Class Experiences Associated with Student Learning and Personal Development*, 66 J. Higher Educ. 123 (1995).

Legal Writing Institute Monograph, *The Art of Written Critique*, http://www.lwionline.org/monograph_volume_one.html.

Robin S. Wellford-Slocum, *The Law School Student-Faculty Conference: Towards a Transformative Learning Experience*, 45 S. Tex. L. Rev. 917 (2004).