

Written Statement:

Law schools ordinarily focus on summative assessment and ignore the pedagogical utility of learning from assessment. From the beginning of the writing program, I have used course goals and assessment criteria to make formative assessment possible. (see attached syllabus) I am explicit in the classroom about a growth mindset, and the low-risk early assignments help students learn to learn from their mistakes. These staged assignments allow me to intervene in the writing process to help students find their way to success. The curricular design similarly focuses on growing from fundamentals to specialization.

2. The Law, Language and Leadership Class

Here is a short description of the course I created that combines leadership theory and rhetoric. I wrote the description as part of an application to participate in a workshop at the annual meeting of the Association of American Law Schools. The workshop focuses on the recent development of a leadership curriculum for law schools, and participation was limited. My application was accepted, which means I'll be sharing the class with the greater law school community.

Abstract for application for workshop participation:

Abstract

Professor Terrill Pollman, UNLV Boyd School of Law
Introducing Leadership Development into the Law School Curriculum
Law, Language, and Leadership

Law, Language, and Leadership is a course I created at the William S. Boyd School of Law, UNLV. The course, worth three graded credits, focuses on leadership theory and rhetoric. It also gives students opportunities for both teamwork and experiential learning. A substantial part of the course is students working in teams on leadership projects that benefit the community.

The projects: Students work in small teams on projects to benefit the law school, the city of Las Vegas, or the state of Nevada. One semester is scant time to get a project going, and I emphasize at the outset that students must plan for a successful exit strategy—either a natural end to the project or the means through which it will carry on. Examples of projects have included: creating website where non-English speaking parents can find help with parent-teacher conferences, writing a guide for law students to the FAFSA, lobbying for more recycling of organic material in Las Vegas, publishing

a guide to success for students in “at-risk” high schools, making a film of interviews with successful first-in-the-family to attend college students, writing a handbook for tribes on working within a new water law program, founding an organization for law students on creating work/life balance, creating a website listing local businesses who will accept “special needs children” in services such as dance, music, or sports lessons. One of the most important lessons that emerges from students actually doing these projects rather than a simulation, is that through working with real people students learn that plans seldom play out exactly as you imagine they will. For example, students sometimes find that the community organizations already address the problem the students’ project focuses on. The team’s job then becomes to learning to work with those groups already in place. Students begin to understand that adjusting to the realities while working toward a common goal is part of the process.

Leadership Theory: The leadership theory component of the class makes up about half of the class time. Early classes are devoted to an overview of leadership theory. After a survey of the major types of theories, the class focuses particularly on two theories: Danial Goleman’s leadership styles, and Bolman and Deals’ leadership work with framing. Students apply these particular theories through class exercises and reflection papers throughout the semester. After that foundation, using readings that range from Machiavelli to Howard Gardner, the class moves to students leading class discussions on leadership readings. Students pose “PQs” or “provocative questions.” They are

evaluated based how interactive they can make the class discussion, and are encouraged to create special exercises based on the readings. I also invite local leaders in the areas of education, politics, philanthropy, and law to speak to the class.

Leadership in law firms is the topic of at least two classes and a major in-class exercise.

Rhetoric: My own teaching area is legal writing and rhetoric. UNLV's highly regarded writing program requires three semesters of writing classes. After co-teaching a leadership theory class with John Valery White, then my dean, I combined my interests to create a class on leadership and rhetoric that would meet UNLV's requirement for a third semester of writing and communication.

For the rhetoric component of the class, in addition to classic materials, I use an unusual text: *Made to Stick*, by Chip and Dan Heath. It is an extremely accessible rhetoric text masquerading as a business book; the students enjoy it. The class also studies classic rhetoric, looking at organization, audience, logos, pathos, ethos, syllogism and enthymemes, tropes and schemes.

Classes are devoted to both visual rhetoric and to rhetorical analysis of famous speeches— Shakespeare's St. Crispin's Day; Lincoln's Gettysburg Address; Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream. Students then write a rhetorical analysis of a speech of their choosing. Finally, as part of final presentations, students write, analyze, and give their own speeches. Most students say they are amazed that no other law school class requires public speaking, beyond moot court exercises.