

Teaching Law by Design for Adjuncts

Teaching Law by Design for Adjuncts

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This book is dedicated to

My parents, Lydia and Edward, who inspired me to never stop learning.

—Sophie

Adjunct professors, who have so much to offer our students.

—Gerry

My daughter, Kendra Leigh Schwartz, as a thank you for her steadfast and sometimes daunting belief that excellence in teaching is the only acceptable standard, for the joy and pride being her father brings me, and for her ability to make me laugh many times every day.

—Mike

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Introduction

Our primary goal in this book is to provide concrete suggestions for adjunct professors about how to design and conduct all aspects of teaching law students, from sequencing a course to grading an exam. New and experienced adjuncts can apply the book's principles to any law school class.

We hope the book helps you and your students enjoy teaching and learning in law school. At the same time, we caution you not to feel compelled to adopt every suggestion in this book. Not only has none of us adopted every suggestion in this book, but we doubt anyone could do so. Instead, make small rather than wholesale changes, evaluate the effectiveness of every new practice you try, keep doing the things that work, discard the things that don't work, and, above all, aspire to continuous improvement.

The first chapter provides a legal education-focused overview of the research on teaching and learning. The second chapter captures the student perspective on law teaching and learning. Chapters 3 through 7 focus on fundamental elements of teaching: course design, class design, motivation, teaching methods, and assessment. Chapter 8 focuses on things law teachers can do to systematically improve themselves as teachers. Chapter 9 contains a list of teaching and learning resources, including books, articles, videos, and websites.

We hope that this book will be a valuable resource for adjunct professors. We recommend three other important recourses to help adjuncts excel as teachers.

The first resource is the Appendix for this book and for *Teaching Law by Design: Engaging Students from the Syllabus to the Final*

Exam (a more detailed version of this book). The Appendix has many examples of syllabi, exercises, handouts, grading rubrics, and other documents related to Chapters 3–8. The Appendix is available for free on the website of the Institute for Law Teaching and Learning at <http://lawteaching.org/resources/books/teachinglawbydesign/teachinglawbydesign-appendices.pdf>.

The second resource is the American Bar Association's *Adjunct Faculty Handbook* (2005). This 47-page document contains helpful advice on preparing to teach, conducting the class, grading, and working with your law school. The *Handbook* is free and available on the ABA's website at <http://www.abanet.org/legaled/publications/adjuncthandbook/adjuncthandbook.pdf>.

Finally, the associate dean at your law school is a critical resource. The associate dean will be familiar with your law school's policies, resources, programs, and culture. It is important for you to know your school's policies and rules before you begin teaching. We encourage you to develop a strong working relationship with your associate dean. Understanding your associate dean's expectations will help you avoid common problems the associate dean may have encountered in the past. If the associate dean is unable to address your questions directly, she may provide you with a list of other faculty you can use as a resource. As part of our research for this book, we asked associate deans for their advice for adjunct professors. Four themes emerged in their advice: (1) be prepared to work hard—many adjuncts underestimate the difficulty of teaching a law school course; (2) develop objectives for your courses and class sessions; (3) establish and maintain a respectful, challenging classroom environment; and (4) comply with the school's grading policies and deadlines. We agree with this advice and believe that this book will help you meet and exceed the expectations of your associate dean.

While we wrote this book in an effort to share what we believe to be core principles of teaching and learning, the book also is sort of a white paper for the "Context and Practice Casebook" series from Carolina Academic Press. The series is designed to apply the principles from this book, as well as other insights and recom-

mendations from *BEST PRACTICES IN LEGAL EDUCATION* (CLEA 2007) and *EDUCATING LAWYERS* (Jossey-Bass 2007), to the creation of law school course materials.

We wish to thank the many people who made this book possible. We appreciate the support of our law schools, our students, our families, and the helpful folks at Carolina Academic Press.

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