

Teaching in the First Year

AALS Workshop for New Law Teachers
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Introduction

1. Teaching 1Ls Can Be Especially Rewarding
 - Eager, focused students
 - First year is often particularly memorable for them
2. There Is No Single Right Way To Teach
 - Socratic v. nurturing / playful v. straight-up / 'big' v. low-key / board v. PowerPoint
3. Teach *Aspirationally*
 - Even if a 'service' course, find aspects that interest you and convey your interest
4. Teach *Defensively*
 - Put in the hours on class prep. (class \approx court appearance)
 - Learn students' names and use them in class
 - Give clear advance notice of rules and expectations
 - Stay within allotted class time
 - Tough is fine, but never convey frustration, disrespect

Video: Background

5. 'Mock' Class for admitted students
 - Indicative of what a first-week, first-semester class might be like.
 - **Except no laptops**, which pose a real pedagogic challenge
6. Assigned a casebook-edited version of *Appelhans v. McFall*, an Illinois appellate decision
 - William (Billy) McFall (5), riding his bike, collides with pedestrian Maxine Appelhans (66), breaking her hip
 - Appelhans sues Billy for negligence (and his parents for negligent supervision)
 - Trial Ct. grants defense motion to dismiss the claim against Billy under the longstanding "tender years doctrine" (kids < 7 are incapable of negligence)
 - Intermediate App. Ct. denounces the rule as outdated but upholds it and affirms.

Video: Content

7. First Clips: *Start Slow*
 - Work hard at remembering what it's like not to know anything
 - Explaining the little things can help with the bigger things
8. Second Clip: *The Promise and Perils of Two Methods of Engagement*
 - Pop culture references
 - Potentially valuable, but also a 'risky business' ☹
 - Positive feedback
 - Gives a warm glow; maybe too warm?
9. Third Clips: *Role-Playing and Ball-Hiding*
 - Inserting students into the situation can be effective (where appropriate)
 - How to teach students what they don't know: embarrass or coddle?
10. Fourth Clips: *Judicious Use of Hyperbole Can Help Clarify*
 - "You're Telling Me What?!"
 - Be careful: You can exaggerate yourself out of your point
11. All Clips: *Four Suggestions*
 - Use visuals
 - Make generous use of diagrams, charts, slides, handouts, etc.
 - Less is more – set targets
 - Class time moves 3x faster for you than for them; don't overdo it
 - Before each class identify a few "take-away" ideas, points, or questions
 - Summarize, double- back
 - Wrap up at end of class / beginning of next class
 - Find ways to circle back to earlier discussions
 - Take a look at yourself
 - Taping a class might be useful
12. Final Suggestions
 - Steal moments at which to 'see' and 'hear' what's going in class; how students are interacting with each other and with you; adjust accordingly
 - Consider mid-term course evaluations (off the record)