

**TEACHING  
WORKSHOP FOR  
NEW LAW  
TEACHERS**

Susan J. Bryant, City University of New York School of Law  
Lawrence C. Levine, University of the Pacific McGeorge School of Law  
Nancy Levit, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law  
Stephen I. Vladeck, American University, Washington College of Law



# TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY...

2015 AALS WORKSHOP  
FOR NEW LAW SCHOOL  
TEACHERS

By Steve Vladeck

[svladeck@wcl.american.edu](mailto:svladeck@wcl.american.edu)

American University Washington College of Law

Friday, June 5, 2015

## #10

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

# Write. Everything. Down.

- The undeniable value of communication.
- The Syllabus (yes, you need one) as a guide, and not just vague aspirations.
- The Charming Student Canon: Ambiguities in course materials construed *against* you.

## #9

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

### Teach to the *whole* classroom.

- Different kinds of learners.
- Different work ethics / intellects.
- Introverts vs. Extroverts vs. Gunners.
- But also, literally, teach to the entire *physical space* that is the classroom.

## #8

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

### Teach *outside* the classroom.

- Linger before / after class.
- Use office hours effectively.
- Teach over e-mail – including the importance of imposing limits.
- Find other ways to reach quieter students.

## #7

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## To use technology, you must command it.

- To Powerpoint or not to Powerpoint...
- Make friends with the A/V and IT staffs.
- Always prepare for techno-disasters.
- Be transparent about *why* and *how* the technology is supposed to help students.

## #6

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## Consistently provide a roadmap & segues.

- Helps students understand why this particular reading *matters* / where it fits.
- Great opportunity to tie up loose-ends.
- Even if students don't *understand* where the class is going, at least you'll appear to...

## #5

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## You should set *a* tone for the discussion.

- We'll get to what *kind* of tone in a minute, but pedagogical consistency is important.
- Plan in advance how you'll handle difficult topics and/or inappropriate comments.
- Don't be shy about diving on the grenade.

## #4

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## You must *own* your mistakes.

- Don't try to bluff your way out of it...
- There are lots of ways to say "I don't know" that won't lose students' respect.
- If you really screw something up, don't be shy about mocking yourself.

## #3

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## How to say “you’re wrong” with grace.

- Students will get stuff really, *really* wrong.
- Where possible, find ways to defend the answer even while highlighting its error.
- Where not possible, stay engaged with that student and help them rebuild their pride.

## #2

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## The value of flourishes and flair in your class.

- Have *fun* – whether through trivia; videos; music; anecdotes; or, where all else fails, showing embarrassing videos of yourself.
- The idea is to smooth over the rough edges of the material and to be in it *together*.



# #1

TOP TEN TEACHING TIPS THAT  
I'VE PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY

## Teach to (and with) your personality.

- They're going to challenge you *either* way.
- You got here by being you. Why stop now?
- Maybe your personality is great for teaching; maybe it isn't. But students want to know *you*, and not an invented persona.



# Teaching

Workshop For New Law Teachers

AALS 2015

**Susan J. Bryant, City University of New York School of Law  
Lawrence C. Levine, University of the Pacific< McGeorge School of Law  
Nancy Levit, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Law  
Stephen I. Vladeck, American University, Washington College of Law**

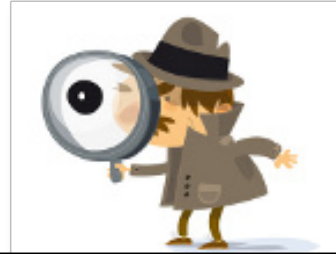
***Tell me, and I will forget. Show  
me, and I may remember. Involve  
me, and I will understand.***

**Confucius, circa 450 BC.**



## Goals for Exercise

- How Lawyers Use the Law
- Importance & Malleability of Facts
- Lawyer's Role in Developing Facts
- Law in Context



## Our Client - Marie



- 20 years old immigrant from the Dominican Republic.
- Charged with Aiding and Abetting a Theft.
- Went to Macy's with a Friend

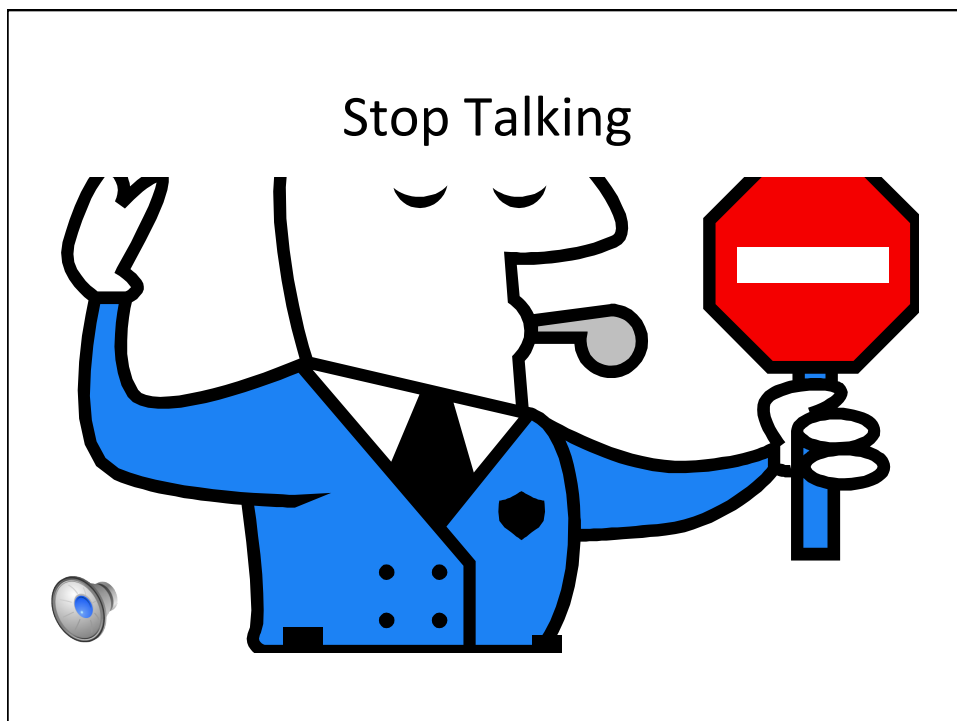
## Aiding and Abetting Elements

- (1) Another person (principal) committed the crime.
- (2) Mens rea. Assessor intended that crime be committed (knowledge of the principals' intent to commit.)
- (3) Actus reus. Provided some form of assistance to the principal.

## With Colleague Plan to Interview the Security Guard

1. Questions: Facts consistent with our client's story? (left side)
2. Questions: Facts inconsistent with prosecutors' theory (distracting the sales person)?
  - Facts about what did not happen? (right side)
3. Questions: Both sides – how does he know what he knows?
4. Harmful facts – leave out

TASK	ELEMENTS
1. Facts consistent with our client's story? (left )	(1) Principal committed the crime.
2. Facts inconsistent with prosecutors' theory. Facts about what did not happen? (right )	(2) Assessory intended crime be committed (knew principals' intent)
3. How does he know what he knows? (left & right)	(3) Provided some form of assistance to the principal.



## Start Interviewing Security Guard

Assess Interview:

What arguments can we make using the facts from the security guard that our client did not assist in commission of the crime?

If she intended to assist she would have done.....

Doing these acts shows another intent

Reasonable Doubt?

## Assess Interview: Draw the Scene

- Who was where?
- What does it look like?
- Compare with Neighbor
- Look at posted questions Twen to do a short reflection.

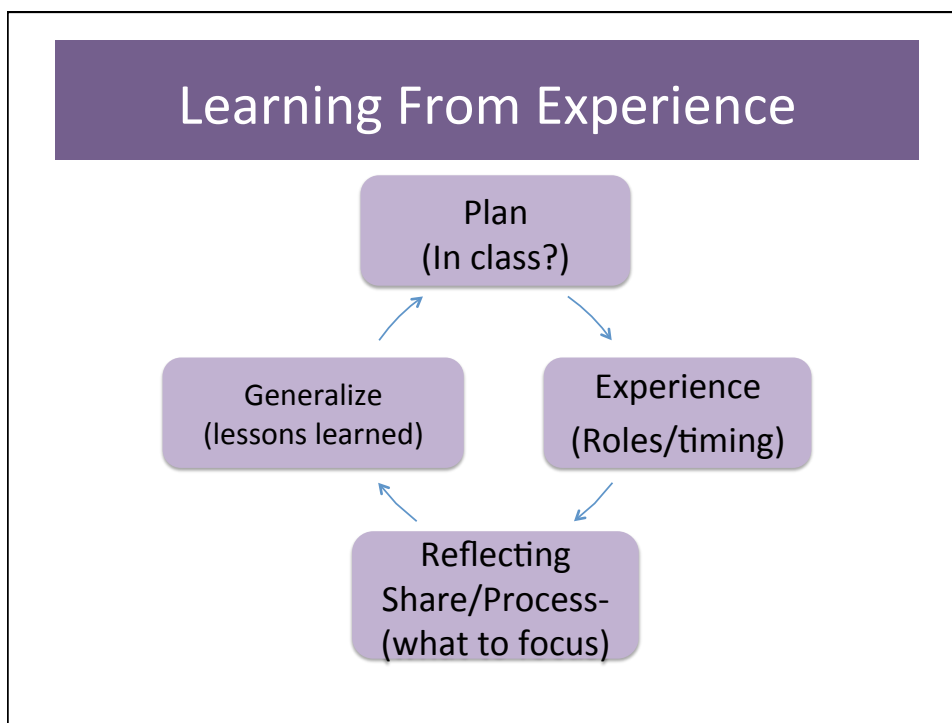
## Lawyer's Role



- "[A]n attorney must engage in a reasonable amount of pretrial investigation and 'at a minimum,...interview potential witnesses and...make an independent investigation of the facts and circumstances in [the case.](#)'"
- *Bryant v. Scott*, 28 F.3d 1411 (5th Cir.1994), courts in 76 cases from around the country have cited this language.

## In Context

- Racial Profiling
- Plea Bargain Offer – disorderly conduct/no jail
- If a Legal Permanent Resident is convicted of a crime of moral turpitude within the first 5 years after admission AND is sentenced to ONE year or longer, they are deportable.



## Wrap –Up

- Experiential Learning puts Faith in Learners
- Teachers Play an Important Role in Constructing Exercises & Planning Reflection/ Hypothesizing
- Learning Continues as Participants Continue to Reflect, Plan based on New Hypothesis, Do – the Learning Cycle Continues.