

**Inside the Classroom**  
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HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER IN THE LAW SCHOOL CLASSROOM:

IDEAS ON HOW TO (1) DEVELOP YOUR OWN TEACHING STYLE, (2) GIVE STUDENTS MORE ASSESSMENT DURING THE SEMESTER, AND (3) MAKE CLASS MORE INTERACTIVE

- I. Importance of Developing Your Own Teaching Style
  - A. Fine to get teaching tips from others
  - B. Best, however, to develop your own teaching style
- II. Ways to Give Students More Assessment (Feedback) During the Semester
  - A. Guided Practice Questions (GPQs) or easy practice quizzes
    1. I post them the day before class (because I want the students to have done the readings first, before they take the practice quiz)
    2. I stop accepting submissions a half hour before class (which means they can't see the correct answers after I stop accepting submissions) because I want them to do these GPQs before class (because doing the GPQs after class will be too easy – one wouldn't need to do the readings)
  - B. Google Forms makes it easy to give a multiple choice or true/false quiz (can also ask for short answers, but not possible to grade those automatically)
  - C. Not graded, but checked for effort and completeness
    1. I scan the student responses and will email a student if it looks like they didn't do the reading and they were just guessing (in order to get the benefit of the questions and answers.
    2. No class participation credit if it looks like a student didn't do the readings and was just guessing.
    3. I usually include at least one or two easy questions that any student should get right if they did the readings.
  - D. To incentivize students to do these GPQs:

1. I make the GPQs part of class participation grade (in one class I made class participation worth 25% of the grade and students received 1 point for each submission)
2. I tell students that some of these questions will appear on the final exam (and then I do include many of the GPQs on the final exam, but since it should be easy for the students to do well on the GPQs since they have many of the questions and answers in advance, I make this portion of the exam worth only about 15% of the grade)
3. In one class, I would recognize students if they were the only students to get a perfect score.
4. I would announce how many students got perfect scores at the start of each class (so if 10 students got perfect scores, the other students would feel they needed to do better since so many of their classmates were doing well).

E. Benefits

1. Students seemed to feel more comfortable with the black letter law
2. Fewer student questions during class
3. Fewer student questions right before the final exam (because students who had done the GPQs felt they had a good handle on the material)
4. Students would come to class more prepared
5. Students started doing the assigned readings more carefully (so they get a perfect score on the GPQs)

III. Ways to Make Class More Interactive

- A. If students are doing the Guided Practice Questions, they will start doing the readings more carefully so you don't have to spend as much time going over the assigned readings
- B. This should give you more time to give students hypotheticals that they can work through in class.
  1. I like to divide students into prosecution and criminal defense for criminal law and criminal procedure classes (plaintiff and defendant for civil law classes)
  2. Think-Pair-Share. I'll have the students pair up with one or two other students to discuss the hypothetical and come up with an oral argument;

I'll then call on groups at random to present their oral arguments and give them feedback on the spot – like remind them that they should state the applicable rule up front before they dive into their analysis)

3. Good if you can get students to realize that they can't really participate in class if they don't do the readings in advance
4. In my upper level courses, I ban laptops and other electronic devices because otherwise students will get on their laptops or cell phones instead of interacting with their peers during these exercises