



Using Case Studies in Law Teaching

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Myths

Independent work
is better than
group work

Skills and doctrinal
classes should not
overlap

What is a case study?

- A self-contained simulation exercise
- Includes:
 - Instructions
 - Email from “supervisor” or “client”
 - A fact summary and exhibits/documents/videos/appendices
 - Legal resources – statutes, cases, etc.

Traditional Case Method

- Uses a court decision to exemplify principles of law
- Employs hub-and-spoke discussion between professor and students
- Analyzes a dilemma after it has been resolved

Case Study Method

- Uses a narrative of a legal dilemma to exemplify principles of law
- Employs skill-building as well as discussion and teamwork between participants, who step in the shoes of an actor
- Analyzes dilemma as it unfolds

Why Use Case Studies?

Active Learning

NextGen Bar

Professional Readiness (lawyer and non-lawyer careers)

ABA Standards

Active Learning

Passive Listening

Taking Notes

Polling

Discussion of Info

Ad Hoc Hypo

Case Study

Role Play

Simulation

Externship

Clinic

NextGen Bar

Tests what lawyers actually do

Question prompts tell them their role and give them a task

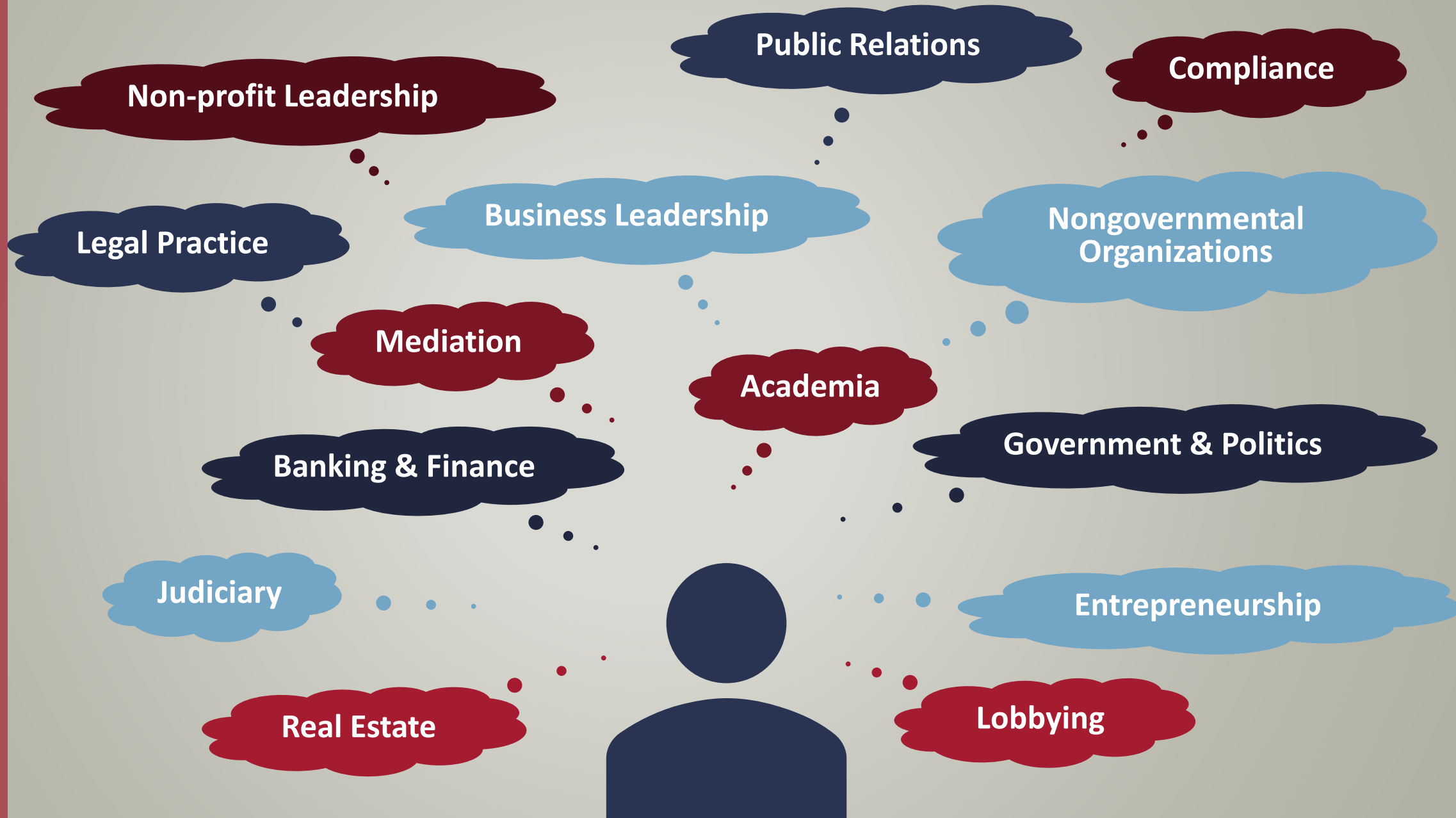
Skills are in; memorization is out

Marry doctrine and skills, just like practice

Uses documents that look authentic

Practice Readiness for Different

Career Paths



ABA Standards

- Professional Identity (303(b)(3))
- Problem solving, communications, ethical responsibilities, professional skills (302)
- Prepares students for “effective, ethical, and responsible participation as members of the legal profession” (301)

Breakout Session

- Incorporating case studies into doctrinal (and other) classes
- Nuts and bolts of teaching a case study
- Designing a case study
- Identifying the right topic for a case study
- Meaningful scoring and feedback

Finding Case Studies for Law Teaching

- <https://casestudies.law.harvard.edu/>
 - Free for professors; very inexpensive for students (usually between one and five dollars)

If you wish to make your own, I would love to help! Email:

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