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## **SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAW: INCORPORATING BASIC COMPLAINT AND ANSWER ASSIGNMENTS THROUGHOUT AN UNDERGRADUATE PARALEGAL STUDIES CURRICULUM**

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*Paralegal Studies programs should be designed to teach undergraduate students the fundamentals of the practice of law, but without the increased rigor seen in law schools. Many students come into universities with an unrealistic sense of what practicing law entails. Accordingly, Paralegal Studies programs should strive to incorporate assignments early in the curriculum that allow students to complete simulated legal work to ease students into the study of law. Students need to know that becoming an attorney or paralegal is not as mystifying as it may seem. This article suggests that students complete a simulated complaint and answer assignment in an introductory law course. The required elements of each pleading would be covered, with a focus on using appropriate skills to draft a persuasive document. The same assignment should be assessed in a later course - perhaps Legal Research and Writing or a capstone course - to allow students to create an advanced document using the skills learned throughout the program. By infusing this assignment throughout the curriculum, students will enjoy learning about the law and will be able to concretely see their own progress.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Paralegal Studies or Legal Studies undergraduate programs are typically designed to expose students to the law to prepare them for future careers. Some students use the study of law as an ancillary adjunct to a future business career, while others study law at the undergraduate level to prepare them for paralegal or attorney careers. Regardless of which path a student chooses, understanding core legal concepts is important.

Typically, Legal Studies programs nimbly cater to both paralegal and pre-law students by offering course offerings that directly relate to the practice of law. That approach seems to work well; fusing the two populations of students into one coherent program allows students to understand and appreciate the role and value that each brings to their clients. Paralegal Studies programs focus more on practice-based instruction to immediately prepare students for a career in the law<sup>1</sup>, while Pre-Law programs<sup>2</sup> focus either on law school preparation or broad interdisciplinary instruction with a heavy emphasis on reading and writing.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the nomenclature of the programs, they all have one thing in common: learning the law as a tool to help advance the interests of future clients.<sup>4</sup>

Some students may perceive the study of law as boring or involving nothing more than the arguing of mundane minutiae. While this may be true in some circumstances, by and large the study of the law is engaging, insightful, and even fun. The problem that many Paralegal Studies instructors have is to figure out how to “turn the lights on” for students and to change that perception. Students who may have an aptitude for the law may miss out pursuing a satisfying career if not engaged early enough in their collegiate careers.

This article seeks to address the problem that undergraduate Paralegal Studies instructors face. It proposes a unique assignment that intends to make law fun and to demystify the actual practice of law. For faculty interested in incorporating such an assignment, both the assignment and an accompanying rubric are attached as appendices. It involves a simple personal injury claim arising out of a car accident, and importantly, both the plaintiff and defendant have viable claims that the other party is the one at fault. This requires students to critically think through both the strengths and weaknesses of their client’s claims before drafting a complaint and an answer that appropriately advocates for their respective positions.

At its core, the study of law involves critical thinking and writing, and these skills can be introduced and assessed even at the freshman level. The hope is that when students engage with hypothetical simulations, they will get that “aha!” moment and realize that not only is the study of law interesting, it is also attainable. To that end, instructors are encouraged to use civil procedure assignments as the vehicle for this kind of student engagement. As will be seen below, civil procedure allows students to tackle substantive legal issues while practicing language of the law. By employing templates and modeling their work on actual rules of civil procedure, students can feel a sense of understanding that a lecture simply cannot replicate.

Using civil procedure early in a Paralegal Studies curriculum gives the added advantage of bolstering the program assessment process.<sup>5</sup> Complaint and answer assignments are simple enough to introduce to a freshman-level course but can also be revised to add levels of complexity more suitable for a senior-level capstone course. Introducing the concept at the early stages of a student’s

career and then increasing the difficulty at the end of a student's undergraduate experience gives program assessors a valuable opportunity to determine what skills the program provides to students. More importantly, it allows the students themselves to see the progress they have made, leading to a greater sense of fulfillment.

### **CIVIL PROCEDURE**

Civil procedure can serve as a useful tool to explain substantive legal issues in a legally appropriate way. A civil procedure assignment has the important benefit of introducing students to legal writing. This sense of a real-life professional activity can provide an enriching and enlightening experience for a student's first introduction into law.

Civil procedure is the language of the law. Using writing assignments that incorporate civil procedure can give students a "noteworthy view of law practice" that can lead to powerful learning opportunities.<sup>6</sup> Students can see that what they are doing is a real-world application which may motivate them to do well on the assignment.<sup>7</sup> While first-year law school courses use civil procedure assignments to learn doctrinal concepts used in litigation, undergraduate courses can use civil procedure for a different goal: allowing students to demystify the legal process and give students a sense of accessibility to otherwise complex concepts.<sup>8</sup>

Several commentators have noted the value of civil procedure assignments in law-based classes. Providing a practical application to esoteric legal topics allows students to "put this [doctrinal] topic into perspective".<sup>9</sup> Applying the rules "in a real way" forces students to abstain from rote memorization and instead rely on application and analysis – both higher-order skills in Bloom's Taxonomy.<sup>10</sup> Any well-constructed class should emphasize these higher-order skills, and a civil procedure assignment supports the attainment of these superior student learning outcomes. These simulations can provide students with a deeper understanding of both civil procedure and the underlying issue in the case, whether involving a tort, contract, or other area of law.<sup>11</sup> Students are also typically more engaged, attentive, and ask more perceptive questions when applying the law rather than listening to a straight lecture.<sup>12</sup>

While there are several quality civil procedure assignments available in an instructor's toolbox, a complaint and/or answer is one that is regularly used in law-based courses. For example, civil procedure professors can assign a complaint and/or answer drafting exercise to focus on analytical skills relevant to litigation.<sup>13</sup> Utilizing a complaint assignment early in the semester is a great introductory tool for the rest of the course and can set the stage for a better understanding of concepts to be discussed later.<sup>14</sup> The underlying substantive arguments to be made are certainly important, but instructors should also set aside time to go over the considerations involved in the drafting process itself.<sup>15</sup>

### **THE COMPLAINT ASSIGNMENT**

This article suggests that assigning a civil procedure-based project in an introductory Paralegal Studies course can be just as impactful for undergraduate students as they are for law school students in a 1L Civil Procedure course. Of course, the complexity, detail, and rigor of the assignment should be significantly reduced, but offering such an assignment can allow students to

reap the same benefits. Experiential learning with simulations supports active learning and ensures course material is covered effectively.<sup>16</sup>

Such an assignment offers one other important advantage. Many students who are in an introductory course either have lukewarm interest in the law or simply have not considered the full possibility of a legal career. Freshman students tend to be more flexible with their career options and are thus often looking for a subject to “turn the lights on” and ignite a career passion. It is difficult to capture the attention of an unenlightened student with one monotonous lecture after the next. Instead, instructors should view simulated exercises as essential to all civil procedure modules.<sup>17</sup>

An introductory survey course should be a captivating gateway experience that facilitates interest in the law. Thus, assignments should be created with the assumption that students have no prior interest or knowledge in the law to remain accessible for everyone.<sup>18</sup> Further, giving students the perspective of real-world legal writing at such an early stage in their academic careers can instill feelings of adequacy. If students can draft a complaint, they can see that a career in the law is possible. This is the goal for an introductory class, and the complaint assignment does just that. After successfully completing the assignment, students may envision themselves doing the work of a legal professional. Drafting a reasonably adequate complaint is not terribly difficult, even for freshman, but the rewards can be tremendous.

Therefore, using a complaint as the vehicle for learning in the introductory course is optimal.<sup>19</sup> A sample assignment available for undergraduate introductory courses is included in the appendix. Although the underlying substantive law and facts could literally be anything from contracts to property law to employment law, this hypothetical focuses on an everyday, easy-to-understand car accident case. Car accidents make good examples because they commonly implicate comparative negligence, thus allowing both sides to creatively advocate for their clients. Exploring tort law makes the assignment less intimidating because students can relate to lawsuits based on common, everyday negligent conduct. Drafting a hypothetical case based upon, for example, the vagaries of probate law would be inappropriate for students who likely have no prior background in the law.

In this hypothetical case, students are confronted with a car accident that occurs in the middle of a busy intersection. Students are given a generic description of the law, without reference to a particular statute. In this example, students are simply told that the plaintiff must prove that defendant acted negligently, and this negligence was a proximate cause of the injuries suffered. At this point, students do not need to be overwhelmed with statutory references or legalese – instead, the focus is on understanding the facts and applying them to an easily understood law. That added layer of complexity should be added in a capstone course, as will be discussed below.

Importantly, the facts of the hypothetical must be constructed in such a way to give both the plaintiff and the defendant strong and weak parts of their case. Students must carefully review the facts of the case and identify their strongest facts. Students are next asked to map out their arguments from beginning to end, focusing on the strong facts that bolster their client’s case. Then, students must identify the weak aspects of their case and think critically about how to mitigate their impact. The complaint assignment should be intentionally drafted to exclude some important

facts – this incentivizes students to critically think through the problem and ask the instructor for more details. The instructor can then supply those missing details, and the student’s grade should improve based upon these queries.

An entire class period should be devoted to going over the form and purpose of a complaint. Templates are an easy way to show students what the caption should look like, how the facts of the complaint are listed in numbered paragraphs of one or two sentences, the importance of the prayer for relief, and how to create a signature block.<sup>20</sup> Students are encouraged to follow the template and adjust their own complaint to the facts of the sample case. The instructor should clearly state that the purpose of the complaint is not to legally argue the case. Instead, the point of the complaint assignment is to draft the numbered paragraphs in a way that conveys the facts persuasively, emphasizing the good facts and minimizing (or perhaps not mentioning in some cases) the bad facts. Ethical considerations are also covered – students are heavily downgraded if the complaint contains any false or misleading information.

An important aspect of this assignment would also include devoting time in class to discuss the dangers of “legalese.”<sup>21</sup> Legal writing should center on conveying information and persuading the reader.<sup>22</sup> Legalese can impede that result by confusing the reader or causing the reader to simply skip over possibly important words that complete the argument. Instead, students are asked to write in plain, professional English that, while not informal or colloquial, simply tells the story of the car accident from the plaintiff’s perspective.

This assignment is ideally done in-class.<sup>23</sup> Students can, and should, be paired together to promote collaboration and deliberation. If/when students are confronted with a question of procedure or substance, the instructor is available to assist. Rather than have a legal or factual issue derail the group so that the momentum of the writing process stalls, the instructor can instantly resolve any confusion and allow the students to continue working.

While the complaint assignment, by itself, is a great tool to introduce learning, combining this assignment with a corresponding answer assignment can reap further benefits for student learning. After the complaints are submitted, the instructor should create copies of the students’ complaints (with student names redacted). These complaints should then be randomly distributed to the class. These complaints are then used as the basis for drafting an answer. In other words, students draft answers in response to complaints written by their fellow classmates.

At this point, all students are instructed represent the defendant to draft a responsive answer, using templates and guidance from the instructor. Students are told to admit, deny, or deny for a lack of information the allegations in every numbered paragraph<sup>24</sup>. Students are also advised to uphold the ethical duty to admit to those statements that are known to be true, and deny only those allegations that are plausibly deniable. This has the unique benefit of allowing students to respond to a variety of possible complaints, without the instructor needing to pre-draft them.

## **PROGRAM ASSESSMENT**

This assignment can serve the program as well. It is recommended that this exact, identical hypothetical be given in the capstone course in the Paralegal Studies curriculum. A complaint,

again, would be drafted on behalf of the plaintiff. This time, however, the level of complexity and student expectations would increase. For example, students could focus on the jurisdiction's tort statutes. The assignment could require students to perform legal research focusing on the case law requirements that must be proven in a tort action, such as comparative negligence, negligence per se, and tort presumptions of fault in vehicle accidents.

Armed with that knowledge and a basic understanding of torts from previous classes, students should be able to produce higher quality artifacts that focus on the legal issues in the case. Further, assuming that legal writing is incorporated in the curriculum (even if a legal writing course is the senior-level capstone), students should be able to produce a polished complaint that serves as the basis for the lawsuit. While instructors should continue to remember that students are in their undergraduate course of study, expectations should still be sufficiently high to allow students to demonstrate the skills learned throughout the program.

After the complaint is submitted, a subsequent assignment in the capstone course could be a trial brief. With the complaint as a springboard, students would draft a persuasive brief using the research and arguments already developed. Completing these two assignments in tandem allows students to see the natural progression of litigation. It can be difficult for students to understand the entire arc of a case when assignments are done in isolation; combining these two assignments in one class, with the same fact pattern, can alleviate some of the tunnel-vision that can confuse both pre-law and paralegal students.

Data collected from the introductory course would show students' competency with the assignment. The grading rubric should assess areas such as grammar, style, persuasiveness of the writing, adherence to format, and readability of the complaint. Obtaining this data early on can give program assessors valuable insights regarding student outcomes for law-based skills. This is like a pre-test that establishes a baseline of understanding, a valuable marker for program assessment.<sup>25</sup>

The same rubric should be used to assess the complaint in the capstone course. Of course, additional components can and should be assessed, such as the thoroughness of the legal research and the application of the law to the facts. For example, the complaint could emphasize facts the jurisdiction finds relevant or compelling. However, for purposes of program assessment, the same basic markers should be assessed. This would be akin to a post-test. Given that the assessment and the rubric are the same, the program can view what level of improvement has occurred. The expectation is that the quality of student writing should improve.

Another important aspect of designing student learning outcomes in this manner is the benefit of repetition. Students retain information better after seeing the same information in multiple formats. As one scholar noted, "[t]he combination of different ways of providing and receiving information and the repetition allows students to better master the information and retain more knowledge."<sup>26</sup> Another professor has noted that "[p]eople learn ... through repetition and building blocks. You lay something down clearly once, and you repeat it, and every time you build on it you go back and repeat the basics . . . [t]hat repetition is crucial to what makes people learn."<sup>27</sup> Repeating the same concepts at the beginning and end of the student's undergraduate career can increase student understanding of the content.

## CONCLUSION

Civil procedure focused assignments are remarkably flexible tools to introduce the law to students and engage them with material. Students who ordinarily would show little to no interest in pursuing law as a career, may only need to be shown the law in a way that is fun and exciting. The law is interesting and engrossing, and instructors should be committed to developing assessments that capture and illustrate the stimulating side of the law.

The complaint and/or answer assignment does just that. It engages students in a real-life simulation and shows them that learning the law is not one boring rule of law after another. If a student's first interaction with the law is a fun assignment that allows each to draft pleadings as a legal professional would, students may feel a sense of ownership over their work and imagine themselves working in a law firm in the future. While other civil procedure assignments may be just as effective, the complaint has the advantage of being conceptually simple while at the same time illustrating an important pleading in civil litigation.

Ideally, this assignment can be used to further the goals of program assessment. Giving this assignment in multiple classes allows the program to determine the effectiveness of its instruction. This two-step assessment provides faculty with a tool to critically analyze their programs to make changes that are better suited to meet programmatic goals. Given that continuous improvement is the gold standard for all proper program assessment, using this assessment can be one effective tool in ensuring programs are making positive changes to the curriculum.<sup>28</sup> Continuous improvement, combined with the complaint's impact on a student's perceptions of a career in the law, can greatly enhance the effectiveness of a Paralegal Studies program.

## APPENDIX: THE CAR ACCIDENT COMPLAINT ASSIGNMENT

### *Facts:*

Michael Simon works at a paper supply company in downtown Widgetville. He is a regional branch manager. Michael's address is 1100 Scranton Road, Widgetville, Florida 99541. Michael was travelling down Davis Highway on the morning of Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at approximately 8:45am. Michael was late for work – he is supposed to be at work at 8:00 – and was in danger of missing a very important strategic plan meeting with the CEO of the company, David Walker.

Although the light was red as he approached the intersection of Davis Highway and Olive Road, the traffic light changed to green when he was 150 feet from the intersection. As he reached 150 feet away, the light turned green. Michael never stopped or slowed down. Michael was driving 57 MPH in a 35 MPH zone, through the intersection.

Ron Swindell was travelling down Olive Road at the same time. Ron works as a city manager for the Widgetville Parks and Recreation Department, and lives at 1200 Paxton Street, Widgetville, Florida, 99541. Before he left home that morning, he received an urgent text from his boss – Leslie Norwood – asking him to return her call about an important planning meeting for later that day. Ron hates meetings – especially those on Tuesdays. As he left the house, he decided to ignore Leslie and hope that the meeting would go away. As he turned down Olive Road, he had a sudden change of heart and decided it would be more painful to ignore Leslie than to talk to her, so he took his cell phone from the center console and called Leslie.

The posted speed limit on Olive Road is 35 MPH. Ron was driving 26 MPH down Olive Road and had his seat belt on. As he approached Olive Road from 300 feet away, the light turned yellow. As he approached the light from 50 feet away, the light turned red. Ron proceeded through the intersection even though the light turned red. Ron knew the light was red but decided to go for it anyway.

Ron was on the phone with Leslie the entire time, arguing with her about the need for fewer meetings for everyone. Ron and Leslie were arguing on the phone for the entire phone conversation. A witness at the scene – George Blunt – was standing on the street corner and saw Ron's car pass under the light while it was red and will testify that it had been red for one full second. George was watching Ron's truck the entire time.

The two cars collided in the intersection. The front end of Michael's car hit the bed of Ron's truck, near the back bumper. Michael tried to brake, but he was unable to stop the car in time. Ron did not see or anticipate the accident and was shocked when he felt the collision of Michael's car.

Ron drove a 2024 F250 Ford Truck, valued at over \$55,000. The truck sustained very little damage and Ron himself was not injured. The bumper of the truck fell off and Ron had to spend \$900 to replace it, but that was the extent of the damage to Ron or his truck.

Michael, on the other hand, was injured. He did not have his seat belt on. Further, the air bag in his 2019 Toyota Prius failed to deploy, but fortunately he stayed in the car. He bumped his head against the steering wheel hard. George called 911 and an ambulance arrived. A police officer – Dwight Stram - came to the scene to investigate. Ron tried to approach Michael to see if he was OK, but Dwight would not allow it. He told Ron that he was the law and everyone must “always obey him and any commands or edicts he makes at the scene of an accident.”

Ron did see that Michael’s left pants leg had blood on it. Ron saw that Michael was conscious and was talking to EMTs but was weak and unable to move. Ron saw the EMTs load Michael into the ambulance and drive away. He noticed that Michael’s Prius was severely damaged – the front end collapsed in on itself and was smashed.

Michael took the car to the mechanics shop a month later. The mechanic fixed the car and gave him a bill for \$12,000. Michael paid the bill out of pocket – he did not have car insurance. Ron’s insurance company is Federal Farm Insurance Company. Neither Ron nor Federal Farm have agreed to pay anything.

Michael’s medical bills – for his ER visit, surgery on his broken and shattered leg, and future doctor’s visits – equal \$100,000. Michael’s main physical injury was to his leg, due to the force of the front end of the car collapsing inward. Michael also suffered a concussion from the force of his head hitting the steering wheel on impact. Michael had a prior surgery in May 2017 on that same leg due to a freak flag football injury. Since the crash, Michael has also been dealing with anxiety and stress, has taken time off work, and is falling behind at work.

### APPENDIX: COMPLAINT ASSIGNMENT GRADING RUBRIC

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Unacceptable	Acceptable	Exemplary	Score
<b>Caption</b>	Incorrect formatting and does not sue all applicable parties	Does not sue all applicable parties or has incorrect formatting	Correct format and sues multiple parties	
<b>Organization</b>	Complaint is not organized in the right order and/or is missing important parts; numbered paragraphs are not drafted appropriately	Complaint is generally ordered correctly but is missing important parts; numbered paragraphs are generally the correct length, with only a few exceptions	Complaint is ordered correctly and is not missing important parts; numbered paragraphs are tightly drafted to require admissions; paragraphs are short and direct, with one key concept per paragraph	
<b>Facts in numbered paragraphs</b>	Leaves out vital facts crucial to establishing the cause of action; fails to address the defendant's negligence; incorrectly lists some of the important facts; Fails to tell the facts of the case in a persuasive manner	Leaves out at least one major fact and at least one minor fact; some facts are told objectively rather than persuasively	All important facts are included, and complaint accurately describes the case from the plaintiff's perspective; all facts represented in the complaint are accurate; facts are told persuasively	
<b>Style</b>	Too wordy or not persuasive – does not use facts as a way to persuasively present plaintiff's case; several instances of unnecessary legalese used	Somewhat persuasive with only few word choice issues; few unnecessary legalese word choices	Persuasive writing style that accurately presents the plaintiff's case; easy-to-read style designed to inform.	

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<sup>1</sup> For example, the website for the University of New Haven's ABA-approved Paralegal Studies program states it will, "prepare students to become paralegals with the knowledge, values, and skills to perform effectively as professionals working under the supervision of attorneys in various legal environments." *Mission and Outcomes*, UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN, <https://www.newhaven.edu/arts-sciences/undergraduate-programs/legal-studies/mission-vision.php> (last visited Dec. 15, 2025).

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the University of West Florida's Legal Studies Pre-Law program, "prepares students with the critical skills and legal knowledge to excel in law school. . . This comprehensive approach ensures students are well-prepared for law school and successful legal careers." *Pre-Law Options*, UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA, <https://uwf.edu/cassh/resources/pre-law-options/> (last visited Dec. 15, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> See generally, Rebecca Robichaud, *Reimagining Legal Advocates: A New Look for Justice*, 102 U. DET. MERCY L. REV. 357, 393 (2025) (noting that an undergraduate legal studies program can offer "practical, real-world experience in the law").

<sup>4</sup> For ease of discussion, all three types of programs will generically be described as "Paralegal Studies" programs.

<sup>5</sup> See, James A. Croft, *Assessing a Cooperative Writing Process in an Undergraduate Legal Writing Course*, 96 ST. JOHN'S L. REV. 77 (2022) (illustrating the value of using written artifacts for assessment of a class in a Legal Studies program).

<sup>6</sup> Timothy W. Floyd, et al., *Beyond Chalk and Talk: The Law Classroom of the Future*, 38 OHIO N. L. REV. 257, 282 (2012).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> See *id.* at 280.

<sup>9</sup> Michael B. Mushlin & Lisa Margaret Smith, *The Professor and the Judge: Introducing First-Year Students to the Law in Context*, 63 J. LEGAL EDUC. 460, 471-72 (2014).

<sup>10</sup> See *id.* at 472; see also Susan M. Gipson Rankin, *Creating Lightbulb Moments: Developing Higher-Order Thinking in Family Law Classrooms Through Court Observations*, 51 J. LAW & EDUC. 13, 39, n.124 (2022).

<sup>11</sup> Joseph W. Gannon, et al., *Coordinating Civil Procedure with Legal Research and Writing: A Field Experiment*, 47 J. LEGAL EDUC. 246, 253 (1997).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 253-54.

<sup>13</sup> Floyd, *supra* note 6, at 282.

<sup>14</sup> See Glannon, *supra* note 11, at 253.

<sup>15</sup> Suzanne E. Rowe & Susan P. Liemer, *One Small Step: Beginning the Process of Institutional Change to Integrate the Law School Curriculum*, 1 J. ASS'N. LEG. WRITING DIRS. 218, 223 (2002).

<sup>16</sup> Vickie S. Carlton, *Reimagining Legal Education: Bridging Tradition and Innovation*, 17 J. Marshall L.J. 704, 732 (2025).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Vitiello, *Teaching Oral Advocacy: Creating More Opportunities for an Essential Skill*, 45 SETON HALL L. REV. 1031, 1046 (2015) (observing that "teaching Civil Procedure without experiential learning opportunities was untenable").

<sup>18</sup> Sean Darling-Hammond & Kristen Holmquist, *Creating Wise Classrooms to Empower Diverse Law Students: Lessons in Pedagogy from Transformative Law Professors*, 24 NAT'L BLACK L.J. 1, 23 (2015).

<sup>19</sup> Carlton, *supra* note 16, at 735 (noting that "the ideal way to teach pleadings in a Civil Procedure course, especially after students have thoroughly analyzed *Twombly* and *Iqbal*, is to challenge them with a simulated case").

<sup>20</sup> See generally, The Three Essential Parts, MISS. CHANCERY PRACTICE § 6:3 ("Presently there are three essential parts of a complaint, namely the caption, the separate paragraphs containing the claim for relief, and the demand for judgment of the relief sought").

<sup>21</sup> Chelsi Hayden, *Keep your Briefs Brief*, 81 J. KAN. B. ASS'N 12 (2012).

<sup>22</sup> Indeed, one study noted that judges strongly favor plain English writing over legalese. Sean Flammer, *Persuading Judges: An Empirical Analysis of Writing Style, Persuasion and the Use of Plain English*, 16 J. LEGAL WRITING INST. 183, 220 (2010) (noting that "[j]udges prefer the Plain English style so much that they would rather have litigants submit informal pleadings, filled with contractions and first person, than formal Legalese. Thus, when making a writing-style decision, it is probably better to err on the side of informality and clarity than formal legalese").

<sup>23</sup> This, of course, assumes that the class offered is a traditional face-to-face class. For hybrid or online classes, Zoom rooms could be constructed where the instructor jumps in and out and gives direct, and immediate, feedback.

<sup>24</sup> See generally, Christopher Randolph, *Don't Take That for an Answer: Attacking General Denials and Other Deficient Answers*, 41 ALA. ASS'N JUST. J. 47, 48 (2021) (noting that general denials are frowned upon and the better responses are "admit," "deny," or "lack knowledge or information").

<sup>25</sup> See, Docia L. Rudley, *Organizing Program Level Assessment to Foster Dialogue About Improving Student Learning*, 95 U. DET. MERCY L. REV. 393, 416 (2018).

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<sup>26</sup> Laura M. Padilla, *Whoosh – Declining Law School Applications and Entering Credentials: Responding with Pivot Pedagogy*, 39 U. LA VERNE L. REV. 1, 21 (2017).

<sup>27</sup> Darling-Hammond & Holmquist, *supra* note 18, at 43.

<sup>28</sup> Amanda Watson, et al., *Demonstrating Law Library Value Through Mission-Centered Assessment*, 115 LAW LIBR. J. 5, 8 (2023) (noting that “[i]t is imperative that the profession create cultures of continuous improvement, where evidence gathered through assessment informs decision making”).

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