

## Teaching Law Practice: Preparing the Next Generation of Lawyers

Edited by Charles Cercone, Nelson P. Miller & Christopher Trudeau. Lake Mary, FL: Vandeplas Publishing (2013), 150 pages, ISBN: 9781600421990.

The key thesis of *Teaching Law Practice: Preparing the Next Generation of Lawyers*, revolves around the editors' definition of "law practice." For them, law practice consists not just of legal knowledge, skills, and ethics. It also requires "identifying emergent client populations," in order to "configure, price, and deliver valuable legal products and services," plus an understanding of how to analyze "work processes to sustain delivery of those products and services" in as effective a manner as possible. (p. 11). For law students to be "practice-ready" then, they must learn how to maintain a client base, how to account and bill for their services at the behest of that client base, and learn how to work efficiently by creating and constantly analyzing work processes. How a law professor teaches this knowledge to law students fills out the rest of the book.

The book dramatically illustrates how varied the implementation of this teaching can be, as a different professor from Thomas M. Cooley law school writes each chapter. The examples range from problem-based pedagogy to collaboration between a contract professor and a legal writing professor; from formulas to conversations. Some common themes run through the examples: make students write, show students documents in addition to cases, and connect the class to the real world of law (my favorite: property "is the one class that [all students] will use at some point in their lives—because everyone needs somewhere to live." (p. 90).

Although interesting and entertaining, the structure of the book and the homogeneity of the authors limit its potential usefulness. First, the book consists of two sections, one written by professors of doctrinal courses and one written by professors of skills courses, implying a difference between them. But the two sections address the same issues, making the distinction moot and leaving the reader confused by the separation. Second, all of the authors (and the editors) come from the same law school. Two facts substantially differentiate that law school from most others: it has focused on creating practice-ready students for at least 50 years and operates on a trimester system, making its applicability to the classes, timing and structure of other law schools unclear.

Helpfully, the authors do provide broad, general ideas about how they teach law practice to their students. But there are few solid, immediately useable ideas for the classroom, and insufficient detail and context to be able to adapt those ideas to one's own instruction. These bits of information are tantalizing, though, and I would imagine that the authors have come to expect contact from readers requesting more details about how they teach law practice. I may email one of them myself.

Overall, this book might be useful to skim to see if any of the ideas seem worthy of a follow-up with the individual author. Otherwise, I would skip it.

Reviewed by Taryn Marks, Faculty Services & Reference Librarian, University of Florida Legal Information Center, in 2017.