

# **Rethinking Legal Research: Preparing Law Students for Using Empirical Data**

By Steven B. Dow. 2011 Mich. St. L. Rev. 523 (2011).

**Article Categories:** Advanced & Subject-Specific Legal Research Instruction; Surveys & Empirical Research

**Keywords:** Empirical Research; Langdell; Law Schools; Pedagogy

## **Reviewer's Summary:**

The stated thesis is that the article will “discuss the current state of law school training in empirical research methods and suggest how the effectiveness of that training can be enhanced.” Instead 82% of the article discusses how the evolution of law school pedagogy under Langdell prohibited the incorporation of empirical methods, and one sentence on the last page suggests adding a required “Legal Research II” class to all law school curriculums. Dow claims that such a step would “revolutionize legal education,” but fails to describe the course in any significant detail, though he says “it should suffice to say that it would teach empirical legal research methods and various other things (other than legal doctrine).” Perhaps if the author (a criminal justice professor) had conducted an empirical survey, he would have discovered that most law schools do not even have an independent “Legal Research I” class outside of first year legal writing and research.

**Summarized by:** Savanna L. Nolan, Georgetown University Law Library, in 2019.