

Teaching After Dark: Part-Time Evening Students and First-Year Legal Research & Writing Classroom

By Bonny L. Tavares & Rebecca L. Scalio. 17 Legal Writing: J. Legal Writing Inst. 65 (2011).

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Reviewer's Summary:

In this article, Tavares and Scalio focus on the JD evening program and the needs of traditional evening students. They suggested best practices to structure an effective legal research and writing course. The authors started the article by discussing some general introductory information about teaching evening students. They then provided a thorough history, starting back when law school went from an apprenticeship model to a classroom one. Following that, they looked at some plus and minuses of evening programs. Next, they detailed some advantages and disadvantages of evening programs, including things like economic reasons, the diversifying of student bodies, as well as lack of time to do various things. The authors also talked about who evening students are. Some characteristics listed include being highly motivated, pursuit-driven, and diverse.

The authors end the article with suggestions for effective learning environments, both programmatically and pedagogically. Some programmatic practices include determining when it is best to schedule the course, creating smaller sections, making thoughtful staffing considerations, and making sure the program rigor is balanced with preparing the students for practice. A few pedagogical tips include teaching in a workshop approach, adjusting to reach different learning styles and generations, using technology in and for class, and managing expectations.

Summarized by: Cassandra Patterson, Georgia State University College of Law, in 2020.