



Specification for a “Welcome to Law and Law School” Program for US Law Students

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[1] What this is

This is a specification, which means that it lays out a concept that animates an *educational* program, lays out the purposes of the program, and identifies the required or expected elements of the program. Metaphorically, it borrows the idea of a specification from the field of *computer* program development. Before writing code, good developers produce a specification for a program; the coding itself follows - meaning that the specification might be implemented, in code, in multiple different ways.

Here, the program is a year-long introduction to law school, law, the legal system, and the legal profession for students entering a US-style JD program. The program is intended to sit alongside and complement brief “welcome to law school” “orientation” programs, the traditional first-year analytic curriculum (courses in Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, and so forth), and the now-traditional first-year curriculum in legal research, writing, and analysis.

The concept at work here and the requirements that flow from that concept are designed both “horizontally,” meaning that they should work together to generate a comprehensive, top-to-bottom and beginning-to-end experience for beginning law students, and also “vertically,” meaning that they should link up with complementary experiences that law students will go through during their second and third years.

[2] What this is not

This is not a syllabus. It does not map out readings, assignments, and activities. It does not prescribe a sequence of meetings or classes or activities. It does not specify learning outcomes or assessment techniques. It does not assume that the program will be supervised or taught by a particular faculty member or team or anyone in particular. All of those topics are questions to be raised, considered, and resolved in building a program that relies on the specification.

This is not a menu. Program developers will decide how to implement the requirements listed below, but it is our hope that they implement all of them rather than picking and choosing.

And, last, it is not a “how-to.” It is not a method for producing a better person, or a better-prepared law student, or a more-likely-to-succeed new law graduate. Because the specification



may be implemented in different ways, program developers can and should decide on their own objectives and how their implementations of the specification suit those objectives.

[3] Who produced it

The header includes the logo of “[Future Law Works](#),” which is an informal North America-based collective of ambitiously reform-minded law professors, present and former practitioners, LegalTech entrepreneurs, non-profit leaders, and judges. Future Law Works convened for the first time in the Fall of 2018 and has met from time to time since then. The Future Law Works experience inspired the conversion of the “Innovation Practice Institute” at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law (Pitt Law) to the “[Future Law Project](#),” under the supervision of [Professor Michael Madison](#). Professor Madison is also one of the convenors of Future Law Works. This specification is the product of Professor Madison, in his capacity as director of the Future Law Project, working closely with a team of Pitt Law students christened “[Future Law Fellows](#).” They are: Madison Myers (Pitt Law class of 2024), Sharon Basch (Pitt Law class of 2025), Mary Nagel (Pitt Law class of 2026), and David Mazza (Pitt Law class of 2026).

Professor Madison and the team of Future Law Fellows met regularly during 2023-2024 to do three things, leading eventually to this specification.

One, they engaged in a deep and broad critique of Pitt Law’s current introduction to law and law school program, called “Pitt Law Academy.” Some of that critique was subjective, in the sense that it engaged the student Future Law Fellows in reflecting on what they liked and disliked about their respective Pitt Law Academy experiences and what they know from talking about the program with their classmates. Some of that critique was objective, in the sense that the team drew on research, summarized next.

Two, they investigated related, comparable programs at other US law schools. The best known of those include the [LLEAP program at Case Western Reserve University](#); the [Law in Practice Program at the University of Minnesota](#); the [Legal Profession course at the University of Indiana at Bloomington](#); and the [Professional Development Program at Baylor University](#).

Three, they researched and talked extensively about how professional education of all sorts, and professional practice of all sorts, are changing rapidly, given developments in information technology (including but not limited to Generative AI), developments in the organization of professional services (in law, the rise of LegalTech and the changing roles of private law firms and in-house law departments in delivering legal information and legal services), and the economics of studying and practicing law.



[4] Why?

The theme that dominated discussions leading to this specification, that dominates discussions within Future Law Works, and that dominates global conversations about the future of law, legal systems, and legal services is: change. What law is, what law does, what lawyers do, and how lawyers do it ... are changing, and changing rapidly. Law schools, like all systems of higher education, are poorly equipped to adapt to large-scale, rapid social change; at most they can evolve, incrementally. But evolve they must, for the good of their graduates and for the good of society.

Against a default curricular model that still relies extensively on the “Langdellian” system inaugurated at Harvard Law School in 1870, a well-constructed introduction-to-law program is a modest but critical instrument of institutional advancement and evolution. In the short term, law graduates will be better prepared to thrive; in the longer term, systematic attention to programs built on this specification may push law schools toward broader, thoughtful improvement across the board.

It is possible, in other words, to view this specification as addressing a “gap” in the current default model of legal education. It is also possible to view it a catalyst for broader and more systemic change to that model.

US law schools that have built introduction-to-law-school curricula over the last 15 years have typically been motivated by the 2007 Carnegie Report on legal education (“[Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Practice of Law](#)”), which drew renewed attention to what the report called “Professional Identity Formation” as a key element of legal education.

That report, while influential, is limited by the Carnegie Foundation’s well-known biases in favor of educational training that “slots” graduates into known roles in professional life specifically and workplaces generally. “Professional Identity Formation” for law graduates, in the Carnegie Report, consists largely of ensuring that new graduates are equipped - analytically, ethically, socially, emotionally - to perform the roles that lawyers learned to perform during the 20th century in the US.

This specification cuts more broadly. If “Professional Identity Formation” is a key goal of legal education - something that we regard as debatable, given Carnegie’s premises - then “identity” should include and address a broader suite of values, interests, capabilities, and goals than simply those that map onto success as a practicing lawyer.

There is, in fact, no single, best “model” of legal education or of preparing to convert the law degree into a successful professional career as a lawyer or otherwise. Law graduates, like all

On Carnegie generally: [David Labaree, “A kinder and gentler report: Turning Points and the Carnegie tradition, J. of Educational Policy 5\(3\): 249-264 \(1990\)](#)

On the Carnegie Report and legal education: [Kristen Holmquist, Challenging Carnegie, J. of Legal Education 61\(3\): 353-378 \(2012\)](#)

On human skills in the age of AI: [CitiGPS, “What Machines Can’t Master: Human Skills to Thrive in the Age of AI” \(2024\)](#)

On human skills and legal education: [ABA Commission on the Future of Legal Education, “Principles for Legal Education and Licensure in the 21st Century” \(2020\)](#)

And see generally [the works of Richard Susskind](#).



graduates of professional degree programs, should acquire not only a basic grounding in analytic skills and substantive knowledge of various sorts but also introductions to and preliminary training in a broad range of things: individual capacity, such as emotional intelligence, risk awareness and assessment, resilience, communication (beyond “legal writing”), and effective collaboration; what we might refer to as “collaborative capacity,” such as effective participation in project teams and group activities of various sorts; and “other directedness,” meaning the ability to subordinate one’s personal values and objectives, where appropriate, to those of others, including (but not limited to) clients.

Beneath (or above) all of those things are matters of foundational knowledge as to the origins and functions of legal systems generally and as to matters of self-determination: decision-making competence as to ordinary matters of living independently and as to matters of building and advancing a professional career.

[5] Who may use it

The specification is intended for legal educators and trainers in all settings: law schools, law firms and law offices, in-house law departments, non-profit and government organizations - in short, anywhere early career professionals are being introduced to the elementary expectations of professional lives grounded, in any respect, in law.

The authors make no claim whatsoever of proprietary right or attribution. If the specification is implemented, program developers may, and should, implement it however they wish.

[6] How to use it

The design of the specification anticipates that it will be “built out” and implemented in its complete form. The best mode of implementing it would build in explicit references to and pathways to further training and education in the values and competencies that the specification addresses. Those values and competencies would be addressed via part-time jobs, via externships and internships, and via community service and law clinics and law labs. But they may (and should be addressed) in other classroom experiences, in work for student organizations; the point is that the material encompassed within the introduction-to-law program provides a kind of material, cultural, and practical “infrastructure” for everything that follows. In short, this should not be a single, siloed “course”; it should lay the foundation for what follows educationally. If that metaphor doesn’t suit, try this one: the program built out of this specification should become the “spine” of a complete program of legal education.

We know that we can’t control how the specification is used “in the wild,” and importantly, we don’t want to. Maybe we’ve erred: omitting important topics, laying emphases in unhelpful places. Please: use it, and improve it.



[7] The concept

Paradoxically, perhaps, the core concept animating the specification is the proposition that “the law” and “the legal profession” are rapidly becoming dis-integrated. Despite the persistent, conventional organization of the law school curriculum, “law” is no longer the discrete body of explicit and tacit expert knowledge that it once was; an enormous amount of dispute resolution, regulation, and planning formerly undertaken with the aid of law and lawyers is now pursued via technology and technology-enabled firms (cue computer scientists, computer engineers, coders, and entrepreneurs), with the aid of management consultants and financial advisors, aided by real estate brokers, insurance brokers, or social workers.

The tools, skills, and capabilities needed for professional success *as a lawyer* now directly implicate the same tools, skills, and capabilities in any professional setting rather than distinct or discrete “legal” skills. Despite the ongoing hype about lawyers’ needing to master IT systems, including AI systems, those tools and skills are largely *human skills* - personal and interpersonal capabilities that machines cannot replicate, even as they get bigger, better, faster, and more accurate. Trial work aside, the essence of modern lawyering isn’t legal reasoning or advocacy based on close analysis of “legal” texts; it is advising, judgment, and risk management in an increasingly complex world of formal law, informal practices, and economic, social, cultural, and political demands.

In short, “law,” “the legal profession,” “the legal system,” and “being a lawyer” all differ substantially from what many incoming students suppose. The purpose of the introduction-to-law program is to explore the multiple meanings and implications of that statement - to show where the myths and stereotypes hold up (as in trial practice, for example), and where they do not (almost every place else).

Many incoming law students come bearing a variety of aspirations and ambitions for themselves, many of them grounded on out-dated or idealized beliefs about what law is, what law does, and what lawyers’ roles are. Worse, many have no particular aspirations or ambitions for themselves whatsoever, aside from the idea that being a “lawyer” is their destination. The program should begin the ongoing processes of de-mystifying student identities and equipping students not simply to “survive” law school but to help them accurately assess their pathways into the profession.

What might those pathways look like? Law graduates today often mature into careers that have relatively little to do with practicing law, even if they begin professional life as practitioners. The up-or-out partnership-based private law firm, a staple of the legal profession during most of the 20th century, is recognized today as a slowly dying breed, largely for economic reasons; the number of law graduates starting their careers in that setting has been steadily declining for at least 15 years and shows no sign of growing. An increasing number of new graduates skip law

This framing - the ongoing erosion of law as a field of knowledge and expert practice; the need to train new lawyers substantially differently; and the introduction-to-law course as a means of anchoring new concepts and pedagogies in the old law school curriculum - is purposefully provocative. Is the conceptual and practical autonomy of “law” as a field of knowledge and practice really eroding? Aren’t law students still training to become lawyers?

Maybe not, and certainly yes.

We believe that the specification here remains solidly useful, even important to students, if it is treated as an incremental improvement over the current state of legal education rather than as a marker of larger transformations.



firm or law office roles altogether, moving directly into in-house positions, management consulting, government service, or for-profit or not-for-profit administration, including LegalTech. The large majority of law students who move directly into judicial clerkships will find themselves competing for other professional jobs within a year or two. A small but distinct number of graduates may aspire to academic careers, in law or in other fields. Yet well-intentioned career services offices persist in asking first year students if their preferred career route is “litigation” or “transactional work,” a framing that is as out of date as the personal computer.

[8] The purposes

Each of the following goals has both direct impacts and positive spillovers impacts:

- Establish a shared baseline for student success.
- Accelerate student success in the modern legal world, both on a collective basis and on a student-by-student basis.
- Generate a shared culture of all-school engagement in student well-being.
- Create an information baseline as to student health, well-being, and administrative processes such as career services, to reduce the burden on various administrators associated with individual students repeatedly asking common questions or seeking standard guidance.
- Enlist the alumni community generally in student success.

[9] Requirements: putting the specification into practice

Logistics and format:

[a] Length. The program should be required for all first-year students and should continue throughout the first year.

- **Practice implication:** *The decision as to whether to implement the program should take into consideration the total student workload during the first year.*

[b] What students get. Student engagement and effort should be recognized in some way: via an award of academic credit that is commensurate with the institution’s view of the importance of the work that students do; via some other form of compensation (Starbucks gift cards, for example, or prize drawings); via student eligibility for distinctive status elsewhere in the JD program and/or at graduation (distinctive performance coupled with distinctive performance in other, related courses or programs could lead to celebration of a cohort of students at graduation (e.g., “[Insert branded name or name of program] Scholars [or Fellows, or something]”).

- **Practice implication:** *This requires some mold-breaking and some imagination. Schools generally - not only law schools - typically regard academic credit as the only meaningful “currency” that students do or should recognize. In practice, that logic tends to fall apart. Credit-for-coursework tends to turn the class experience into a commodity, at least*



from the students' standpoint and often from the teachers' standpoint as well. If the school wants students to take this program seriously and to value any part of it, then the school needs to take affirmative steps to make the program attractive and useful beyond simply offering academic credit.

[c] First, you have to entertain. Student motivation matters. This isn't spinach, something that you have to eat to make yourself strong. At least it shouldn't be. The program should be engaging and stimulating enough in its own right that students regard participating as a personal or professional opportunity rather than as (yet another) obligation in a schedule jammed already with too many things required by the school. That means that as much as possible, the program should traffic in concreteness and specificity rather than in abstractions and generalities. Also, it should be fun (if possible), compelling (perhaps), or interesting (at least).

- **Practice implication 1:** *There is a bit of Hollywood in this. The program should do more than simply put teachers or leaders at the head of a classroom and expect productive and meaningful conversations to follow. Production quality matters: staging, lighting, sound, supplemental materials. The phrase "first, you have to entertain" is borrowed from a podcast interview given by the Hollywood filmmaker Bruce Cohen, who attributed it to his mentor: Steven. As in Spielberg. Some Spielberg movies are "message" movies. All Spielberg movies are popcorn-worthy entertainment. Or are meant to be.*
- **Practice implication 2:** *Students should be motivated to engage not only by the identity of the speakers/teachers or by the content of each class or even the course as a whole; the very design of the experience should be engaging, even compelling. This is less "Hollywood movie" and more "theme park experience." In the best world, the course is the law school equivalent of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" ride at Disney theme parks. The idea of the ride compels people to stand in line.*

[d] Require work product, and assess it. There should be some form of assessed work. Student attendance should be monitored; students should be required to attend X number of Y percentage of meetings, which could be virtual and/or in-person events. But attendance should be a baseline, not a cap. Students should be expected to *do* something - writing something (things?), present or lead a discussion on something, collaborate on something, and so on. The "things" need not be long or elaborate. Journal entries should be disfavored, because their inherently subjective character makes fair assessment difficult. Pass/fail grading should be disfavored, because it sends a signal to students that the work is unimportant.

- **Practice implication:** *Monitoring and grading means that systems and personnel need to be recruited, put in place to do the work, and supervised. A surprising amount of both monitoring and assessing likely can be automated, and third-year law students can be trained and made responsible for much of the assessing, but team-based human engagement of some sort will be required.*

[e] Vary the meetings across large and small sessions. The program should meet via a combination of large and small sessions. Large sessions should be directed or taught primarily by full-time members of the law school community, whether full-time faculty or senior



staff, and virtualizing them (asynchronously, possibly) should be an option. Small sessions should be directed or taught in different postures: full-time faculty or senior staff; adjunct faculty; alumni volunteers; and/or peers.

Special guest speakers are likely most effective in the small session context; putting guests “on stage” in a large session risks making the experience less about changing the beliefs or practices of the individual student and more about celebrating the guest. Guests can be energizing, even inspiring, but the program should avoid the risk that students will interpret their presence as justifying the students’ time, as in the hypothetical equation, “Being in this course means that I get to listen to famous people.”

Virtualizing the small sessions should be disfavored. The “things” (work) expected of students should be produced and assessed primarily in the small session context. For a 3-credit/3-hour experience, the program could meet twice per week, once in a large session, once in a small session. Or three times in small sessions. For a 2-credit/2-hour or 1-credit/1-hour experience, a single meeting per week is likely both necessary and appropriate. Meeting for a single long session once per week, whatever the academic credit allotment, minimizes administrative overhead but dilutes the significance of the experience from the students’ standpoint and makes it difficult to assess student work fairly, consistently, and in a timely way.

- ***Practice implication 1:*** *The program requires a coordinated team-based approach to teaching and content-delivery. That means recruiting colleagues and allies, and keeping the “train” running on time. A program coordinator will be needed to make this successful, either on a full-time or significant part-time basis. Institutional partnerships may relieve some of the time/expense burden of managing the program; law firms or in-house law departments might contribute money and/or talent in exchange for partial or complete sponsorship credit.*
- ***Practice implication 2:*** *Asynchronous, virtual delivery of “large session” content means that the program may build up a library of “pre-packaged” material that can be re-used from year to year and (also) re-purposed for additional audiences, via CLE trainings or otherwise.*

Substance:

[a] Organize the curriculum around “modules,” each of which may be one week or multiple weeks in length. Each “module” should include, at least, one large session and one small session. Work product may be keyed to one or more modules. The sequence of modules can be varied depending on a school’s sense of priorities and depending on resource considerations.

[b] Divide modules between “law-related” and non-“law-related” content. Some of the course should be about law, the legal system, the legal profession, and lawyers. Some of the course should be about clients. Some of the course should be about systems generally. And some of the course should be about students, student life, student expectations, student capabilities and competencies, student success, and student disappointment.

[c] Modules about law, the legal system, the legal profession, and lawyers are important because it is no longer true that law schools can expect that incoming students have



well-formed and accurate understandings of these fundamental elements of civic life. This is “standard” information that all students need to understand in essentially the same way. The modules should include:

- **Basic civics - “law,” the legal system, and “rule of law” practices and institutions.** Themes to address:
 - US and international systems; common law and civil law systems and their origins;
 - Constitutionalism, the judiciary, legislation, and administrative law; and
 - Distinctions and relationships between law and politics.
- **Advanced civics - connections among law and other “order,” especially markets and communities.** Themes to address:
 - Relationships between 20th century law and market capitalism in the wake of the Industrial Revolution; and
 - Relationships among law, social norms, and community/ies self-determination, both retrospectively and prospectively, from neighborhoods on and up to international “law.”
- **What lawyers do: an introduction.** Themes to address:
 - Legal professionals vs. lawyers (new and elastic categories and classifications vs. established, fixed, older definitions);
 - Contacts between “litigation vs transactional” as a rough distinction for all practicing lawyers vs. a fuller account of “what is out there,” with an eye to helping students begin to learn build their own paths/careers;
 - The emerging roles of technology throughout all of law;
 - What lawyers do *not* do, because others do things (this speaks to such diverse fields as management consultants, real estate brokers, psychotherapists, and clergy); and
 - Legal ethics and professional responsibility as a modestly related but mostly different and distinct set of themes, questions, and responses.
- **What lawyers do: there’s more.** Themes to address:
 - Different types of legal services organizations and institutions; how lawyers operate in each; performance expectations in each; whether and how this law school has historically placed its graduates in each;
 - Legal professionals in the community and in civic life generally;
 - Leadership in the profession and in the community, including both values and practices/skills); and
 - Beyond advocacy: lawyers as partners, trusted, advisors, collaborators, and catalysts.
- **Service and clients.** Themes to address:
 - The multiple meanings and importance of service;
 - The who and what of clients, including their needs and interests - but not (for now) including their money; this is not a module on “the business of law” but sets a foundation in place for more economically-themed education; and
 - Conflicts between “service to self” and “service to others” and how to resolve them.



- **Systems: law as a system, as a system of systems, as a system related to other systems.** Themes to address:
 - Systems as ecologies, with adaptive fitness, niches, gaps between (historical) functions and (contemporary) interests, and feedback loops that propel both good and harmful evolution and occasional step-wise change;
 - Individual and community activity (as lawyers and as otherwise) as affecting *system* performance and results; and
 - Lawyers as *system* designers, influencers, beyond “client service.”
- **Business, economics, and finance.** Themes to address:
 - How different sorts of legal services organizations are funded, and how lawyers are compensated;
 - How finance and compensation models affect day-to-day expectations associated with different lawyers’ roles and with their career trajectories;
 - How the economics of legal services organizations affect decision making at all levels of the organization.
- **Values: justice, capability, equity, efficiency/effectiveness.** Themes to address:
 - Identifying and advancing values at small and large scales, for oneself and in the context of system-related work and work for clients;
 - Connections among values, systems, and structures, including origins, termination, and change; and
 - Relationships among law, politics, bureaucracies, and markets, including discussions of economic, political, and social and cultural power and influence.
- **Technology: how it is changing the world, changing society, and changing law and lawyers.** Themes to address:
 - Tools and affordances generally and in legal and professional history, even before IT;
 - Changes wrought by computing and AI, but also by data science and analytics;
 - Technological influences on core features of the legal profession: trustworthiness and risk;
 - Bias in the design and deployment of technology systems and related tools; and
 - Reciprocity (as framed by Thoreau and also by McLuhan) between “humans shaping technology” and “technology shaping humans.”

[d] Modules about individual students. Here, the key point is that the messaging and conversation needs to be the antithesis of “standard.” Each student brings their own strengths and limitations, hope, dreams, and fears to law student. This program needs to “speak” to each student as an individual.

- **About *you* and your future: basics, or foundational principles.** Themes to address:
 - Pre-law background and its (ir)relevance, to address student anxieties;
 - The Langdellian law school and its tendency to infantilize students, also to address student anxieties;



- Being a student vs./and being a lawyer-in-training;
 - Challenges, conflicts, and the fact (and importance) of being challenged - emotionally, socially, and intellectually - by people, values, and concepts that are novel or disagreeable or both;
 - Self-regard: motivation and discipline;
 - Resilience;
 - Mitigating downside risk: relationship abuse, substance abuse, stress and anxiety, and mental health; and
 - Seeking support, both in terms of how to do it and also in terms of why and when to do it.
- **About *you* and your future: next steps, or imagination, exploration, ambition.** Themes to address:
 - Curiosity;
 - Emotional intelligence and empathy;
 - Collaboration, both within and beyond “law”;
 - Communication;
 - Vulnerability;
 - Learning about and learning to use technology;
 - Networks and “networking” for personal and professional value
 - Optimizing upside opportunities: leadership, ambition, pathways (curricular and career), networks and relationship-building; and
 - Students’ present and future selves: how to think about what they like / are interested in, and how to get there (e.g., job-wise, skills-wise, and opportunity-wise). This would include non- “traditional” uses of legal training but would steer away from unhelpful terminology such as “JD Advantage” jobs or careers.
- **Problem solving, risk management, and decision making as critical professional skills.** Themes to address:
 - Problem solving as the classic formulation of the lawyer’s role;
 - Risk management as a newer, modern, probably more accurate formulation; and
 - Models of decision making: rational action; behavioral or “bounded” rationality; and social cognition.
- **Law school success, bar exam, career success: nuts and bolts.** Themes to address:
 - The critical character of basic reading, writing, and research skills (which is not to limit any of these to “traditional” skills of these sorts);
 - Details matter, always, at all levels and in all settings;
 - How to prepare for and take exams and other assessments;
 - What grades mean and what grades don’t mean;
 - Licensure, the bar exam, and their relationship to law school and to professional success; and
 - Making the most of career services advising, and how career services advising intersects with self-directed career development..
- **Law school success, bar exam, career success: advanced.** Themes to address:
 - Personal expectations; family, friends, and peers; “society”;



- Health and well-being: beyond mitigating risk; and
- Relationship development in and out of law school, and socializing with peers for both fun and profit..
- **Change Change Change!** Themes to address:
 - What is changing, why, how, and when;
 - Choosing change;
 - Change that is thrust upon you;
 - Resisting, adjusting to, or embracing change;
 - Directing change, for yourself or others; and
 - Navigating life and career changes.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** ABA Standard 303(c), part of the ABA's law school accreditation system, requires that accredited law schools "provide education to law students on bias, cross-cultural competency, and racism" at, among other times, the start of the law school program. DEI-related content might be built into one or more dedicated modules or distributed across several non-dedicated modules as a sub-theme. Themes to address:
 - Recognizing, accepting, and collaborating across diverse individual and cultural interests and expectations in educational, workplace, and community settings.
 - Building and participating in communities; recognizing the uses and limits of exclusion;
 - Dealing with offense, both unintended and intended; and
 - Conflict resolution.

[10] A closing thought

This document began with the admonition that it is meant to complement rather than displace "orientation." Isn't "orientation" enough? Why go to all of this trouble?

The questions are salient, again, because this - the specification and its expectations - is a lot. It's a lot for a school or a faculty to organize, produce, and deliver. It's a lot for students to absorb. We are under no illusion that all students or even many of them will absorb and retain all or even much of the detail that is included in each module. Some law schools may decide that the game isn't worth the candle, that a conventional brief "orientation" is sufficient to advise incoming students of the seriousness of their new tasks, and that the rest - personal development, skills and competencies training, systems awareness, career planning, and exploring personal and collective values - can and should be pursued in the context of the "regular" curriculum.

That's the choice that most law schools have made, and continue to make. We don't propose to second-guess that choice, only to point out that other choices are possible, and that other pathways and outcomes can be imagined. We don't want to overestimate the impact of the intervention. If the specification is a beginning, then modules should be prepared and delivered anticipating the students will take away information and detail that is memorable in one or in several ways - but not necessarily in all of its fullness. Sometimes they will take away and remember little or none of it, or take away and remember topics or specifics that strike the faculty as trivial or marginal. Any implementation should be reviewed periodically and systematically to determine whether relevant goals are being achieved, for the students and/or for the school.



To minimize the risk that the last possibility that purpose will fade amid a mass of details, will dominate, as an analogy, think of a symphony or some other complex piece of music. Long after a performance has ended, listeners may remember a rhythm, or a melody, or a chorus, or a hook. They may remember a sound or a tone; they may remember the style or content of a lead vocal or the performance of a particular performer on a particular instrument. They may remember structure and sequence rather than particular lines, chords, or notes. Course designers should, if possible, “map” their construction of a course per this specification onto one more metaphorical “models” of that sort - perhaps a musical model, perhaps a theatrical model, perhaps a literary model, perhaps something else. If the course “sings” to the students, then the “mapping” should be successful.

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