

Building Bridges: Teaching to Students of Different Backgrounds, Interests, and Strengths

**AALS 2019 Annual Meeting
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Overarching theme: Good teaching practices will help all students, but particularly students who are (or perceive themselves to be) different or outsiders

These students are also the ones most likely in need of reassurance and feeling that there is a place for them in law school

Important things a professor can do:

1. Showing students that you care about them and their learning

Tell them

Student names

2. Being transparent, especially about your expectations for the graded exams

Wayfinding and signaling along the way, including review, preview, and situating material

3. Giving feedback during the semester, in time for students to incorporate it into their approach

At least sometimes aligning practice with your assessment method

The Unified Field Theory of Legal Analysis (handout or on my ssrn page)

4. Using multiple methods

Portfolio theory

5. Remembering that your students aren't you (and that your professor self isn't you as a student)

Putting yourself in the position of someone learning for the first time

Introducing non-litigation aspects, and more generally, showing students there is more than one kind of "normal" in law school

More instruction in negotiation, a foundational skill

6. Thinking about whether to meet your students where they are, where you are, or somewhere in between

"To give anything less than your best, is to sacrifice the gift"

– Steve Prefontaine (1951-1975)