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February 2020 Library Blogs

Legal Beagle's Post

February 7, 2020

Remember What You Learn!



February 7, 2020

The Law Library provides many resources to students for use in studying. The question becomes how to use those resources most effectively. It is not just a matter of selecting the tool best suited to an individual's learning style. It is important to remember what is learned also. Studies show that a technique called "spaced repetition" can "[help users retain knowledge for the long-term with less study time and greater retention rates.](#)"

So what is "spaced repetition"?

Spaced repetition works by recognizing that if you try to learn something in a short period of time, you will forget a significant amount of it. This is generally referred to as the [forgetting curve](#). By repeatedly reviewing and testing the information at steadily increasing intervals over an extended period of time, the amount of retained information is significantly increased. This is the [testing effect](#). Combined, they are the backbone of spaced repetition theory.

More importantly, how can you as a law student take advantage of the benefits of spaced repetition?

One common method is by using [flashcards](#). The flashcards can be made using paper or via an electronic app. There is even a [software](#) package focused on law students using spaced repetition as a tool for learning (for a price).

Some free flashcard apps which use spaced repetition concepts in their design are:

- [Anki Flashcards](#) (Windows/Mac/Linus/iPhone/Andoid)
- [TinyCards](#) (iOS, Android, Web and Windows Phone)
- [TopGrA+de](#) (iOS, Android, Wand Web)

The process of creating the flashcards combined with regularly using the flashcards whether paper or with an app like the ones above, can help you learn and retain more of what you learn for longer.

For sources of study materials in the library to use in creating the content for the flashcards, don't forget the library's [Study Aids](#) guides series. Guides are available for all of the first year courses and many of the second and third year courses. Hint: These are also many of the topics covered by the bar exam.

Finally, if you still have questions, [Ask a Librarian!](#)

February 13, 2020

American Legal History: Amplifying Forgotten Voices



February 13, 2020

The first thought when many individuals hear the phrase "legal history" is undoubtedly of dusty volumes discussing matters that do not reflect our modern society. Perhaps that is because history is often the narrative of the dominant culture and sometimes omits those in the margins. This month at the law library we are featuring a book display and online guide on [American Legal History](#) which features stories of minoritized lawyers. This display is about shining a light on the fight for inclusion and the stories of trailblazing attorneys.

One example of such a trailblazer was Fred David Gray, Sr. [Gray](#) was an ordained minister and an attorney and he represented such famous clients as Rosa Parks, Dr. Martin Luther King, Fr., the Freedom Riders, and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study participants. When he was to attend law school, his state, Alabama, "[offered no in-state opportunity for African Americans to obtain legal education, relying instead on the discredited out-of-state subsidy.](#)" While famous for being a civil rights attorney, he was also President of the Alabama Bar Association. One [biography of Gray](#) reads, "as a young man, Gray decided to 'destroy everything segregated that I could find'. He didn't completely fulfill this ambition, but he came astonishingly close. Working usually (though not always) with other lawyers, he played an enormous role in undermining segregation in almost every area of Alabama life." [Another explains](#), "In 2017, he joined the ranks of South African political and civil rights leader Nelson Mandela, U.S. president Jimmy Carter, and humanitarian Mother Teresa in being awarded a Lifetime Service Award from HOPE International, a worldwide humanitarian and relief organization." Attorney Gray's career is distinguished and an inspiration at all lawyers and law students.

This month's book display and guide celebrate books and resources on female attorneys, African-American attorneys, Native American attorneys, and the ways in which those attorneys overcame hurdles and bias in the American legal system. It also features a book on Feminist legal history which discusses the way in which gender bias and discrimination in the legal system and American society have disadvantaged women, not just female attorneys. For more information on this topic, [see our guide](#).

February 20, 2020

BriefCatch: A New Legal Writing Aid



February 20, 2020

Law students and lawyers spend countless hours drafting, writing, editing, and rewriting papers. But this does not necessarily mean that their work-product is the highest quality. In many cases, having a second set of eyes to review and make suggestions can help attune writers to style and grammar habits that they wouldn't otherwise notice. [Professor Kishbaugh](#), for example, spends countless hours helping students become better writers.

Now, the RWU Law Library provides a new review software, BriefCatch, on all of its computers and for download onto personal computers through students' Bridges accounts. BriefCatch, designed by a legal writer for legal writers, works seamlessly on Windows with Microsoft Word (or through Parallels on Mac), giving users straightforward access right through Word's interface.

So just what does BriefCatch do? It:

- Provides line-by-line editing suggestions and reasons for the suggestions.
- Provides three editing "Catch Modes" where you control whether it reviews for style, errors, and inconsistencies, or everything.
- Generates tailored reports to help you understand your writing habits.

If you want to learn more about BriefCatch, or need help installing it, feel free to stop by the law library for help!

February 28, 2020

Interview with Professor Raposa



February 28, 2020

This week the Legal Beagle is doing some serious journalism by interviewing Professor Raposa. Below is a transcript of our conversation:

1. What is the best piece of advice anyone ever gave you?

To not let anyone else impact your happiness, and similarly, to not care about what anyone says or thinks about you. This is all easier said than done, but it's advice I constantly remind myself of.

2. What is the most rewarding part of working with students on bar exam studying?

Being even a small part in someone's journey to becoming an attorney is extremely rewarding. It's a high stakes exam and an extremely stressful part of someone's life. Being able to just coach someone through it and help someone improve their performance and reach their goal is amazing. I love this job because I get to, in some way, help some people achieve their dream. I think that is so cool.

3. What is your favorite rom-com?

How To Lose A Guy in 10 Days...hands down!

4. Backstreet Boys or NSync?

Both posters were on my walls growing up but I would have to say NSync. Although, "I Want It That Way" is an ultimate classic that I blast in my car on the way to work often. My parents have a really embarrassing video of me singing and dancing to "Bye Bye Bye" by NSync that they like to show me often. No, you can't watch it.

5. What is your favorite type of donut? Please describe and explain.

I like the cookie dough donut the best from a small bakery in Fall River, MA. It's a donut filled with cookie dough, with chocolate frosting and cookies sprinkled on top, with a syringe of fresh milk sticking out of it. It's so good (in moderation)! But, all donuts are amazing.

6. What is your pet peeve as a professor?

I have two main ones and I couldn't choose just one! (1) When students use their cell phones during class (and yes, every time it's very noticeable even if they're trying to be suave under the desk); and (2) Being called "Brittany" instead of "Professor Raposa."

7. Someone told me you love Ryan Cabrera? #truth or #fake news?

Loved...past tense. I was a weird kid. When I was 15 he told me he liked my shirt and it's all I talked about for a year. Clearly I lived an exciting life.

8. Let's talk about your pup. Tell me what he was this year for Halloween?

I have a mini daschund named Fynn. I adopted him two and a half years ago and he's three years old. He's also just the best. He was superman for Halloween this year. In the past he's been a hot dog and an alligator. You can catch a lot of pictures of him in my office!