It’s Alive!
Breathing New Life
Into Old Topics

Capital Area Legal Writing Conference
University of Maryland
March 2016
Professors Hugh Mundy, Amanda Foster & Olympia Duhart
Even in 2016, the Basics Still Matter

- Expanded view of LRW
- But...basics skills are still essential
- Students arriving with more limited skills
- Firms less interested in on-the-job training

How do you keep students interested?
How to Revive Some of the basics – Some are “Deadly” Boring

Hierarchy of Authority
Parenthetical Citations
Writing and Editing
How to Revive Some of the basics – Some are “Deadly” Boring
Use a Smartphone
Why Wurie?
Teaching Court Structure and Hierarachy

Hugh Mundy, The John Marshall Law School
Court Hierarchy: Coma-Inducing, Yet Critical

• Essential to understanding binding legal authority.

• Foundational for strong case briefing and analysis.

• Fundamental for effective legal research and writing.
The Parallel Court Structure
State and Federal Courts
The Federal Court System

Article III of the U.S. Constitution places the judicial power of the federal government in “one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts” as Congress might decide to establish.
The Federal Court System

- U.S. District (Trial) Courts (94)
- U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals (13)
- U.S. Supreme Court
The Illinois Court System

Article VI of the Illinois Constitution of 1970 (the Judicial Article) provides for a unified, three-tiered judiciary system.

With a possible “fourth” tier!
The Illinois Court System

- Illinois Supreme Court
- Illinois District Courts (5)
- Illinois Circuit Courts (23)
Using Riley and Wurie

- Final ruling?
- Dates?
- Points of origin?
- Rule of law?
Hierarchy of Authority

Parenthetical Citations

Writing and Editing

Use popular magazines
How can we use the news to help teach about explanatory parentheticals?
Bindi Irwin on Dancing, Dating & Making Dad Proud

MY OWN STORY
Khloé Kardashian Breaks Her Silence

Teresa & Joe Go to Jail
We Destroyed Our Family
The Giudices lived a life of luxury built on lies—now their kids are paying the price. Inside their last days together and what she didn’t tell her girls
• Explanatory parentheticals

    Added to briefly explain the proposition for which the case stands.
How do you choose the words for your explanatory parenthetical?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE INFORMATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case Title:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Court:</td>
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<td>Description:</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>PARTICIPANT INFORMATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>ODOM KHLOE KARDASHIAN</td>
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<td>Type:</td>
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| ODOM LAMAR JOSEPH      |
| Type:                  | RESPONDENT |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTORNEY INFORMATION</th>
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<tr>
<td>LAURA ALLISON WASSER</td>
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On December 13, 2013, Khloe Kardashian Odom filed a petition for dissolution of marriage from her husband, Lamar Odom. The couple married on September 27, 2009. Mrs. Odom cited “irreconcilable differences” for the reason for seeking a divorce. On October 21, 2015, Mr. and Mrs. Odom filed a request for dismissal without prejudice of this divorce petition. The court held that a request for dismissal of a divorce petition should be granted if it is unopposed by either party or jointly filed. Therefore, the court granted this jointly filed, unopposed motion.

If you wanted to cite this case for the purpose of providing support for dismissal of a divorce petition at the request of a party, what would you use as the parenthetical information?

*hint – start with an –ing word.
Possibilities:

(holding that a request for dismissal of a divorce petition should be granted if it is unopposed by either party or jointly filed).

(granting a request for dismissal of a divorce petition because it was unopposed by either party and jointly filed).
Use a disco ball
Duhart’s
LRW Lounge
Thursday
Feb. 17
6 p.m.- Midnight

Admission: One “Draft”
Reviving Writing & Editing Instruction

Objectives

• Teaching students to complete drafts in advance
• Helping students become better editors
• Building a community of writers
• Minimizing the stress associated with the writing process
Essentials

• Lots of hype!
• Explanation of ground rules
• Reinforcement (teaching assistants, law review members)
• Food
• Nonalcoholic drink
• Muzak
• Handouts on editing
• Patience and supportive attitude
Caveats

• Do not attempt to formally “teach” a class
• Do not abandon honor code guidelines
• Do not strictly enforce the hours
  • (Know when to wrap the party, and when to carry on the after-party)
• Do not admit uninvited guests
• Do not try anything that isn’t consistent with your teaching philosophy or personality
Student Reaction to the LRW Lounge

“I liked the LRW lounge. I participated and I liked that it gave us an informal atmosphere to write or ask questions. A lot of students do not take advantage of office hours for various reasons, so the LRW lounge is perfect to get questions answered and write.”
Student Reaction to the LRW Lounge

“The lounges were especially helpful if you came with a good amount of your writing already done, that way you could get a critique from the professor on your arguments – I got feedback on whether my arguments were logical, strong and framed in an appropriate manner. Then I knew what I had to edit.”
Student Reaction to LRW Lounge

“It is helpful as a first year student to spend time around a professor in a more casual manner. A lot of first year is intimidating from a student's perspective. I remember the lounges helped to tear down some of those barriers.”
Questions?
Contact Information

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