

A STORY OF COLLABORATION AND ATOMIZING FACTS

Family law and domestic violence clinicians in the Washington D.C./Baltimore area ask:

How do we teach our students what is a fact as opposed to a conclusion, an inference or an assumption?

Below is our experiment in creating approaches to teach atomizing¹ facts.



Atomizing Facts in Cross-Examination

- *Use ambiguous picture
- *Students identify a storyline/case theory
- *Students provide factual support for or against storyline/case theory
- *Must provide one fact at a time
- *If provide assumption or conclusion, ask student to break it down to discrete fact
- *Discuss how atomizing facts relates to cross-examination construction



Developing Details in Direct Examination

- *Read *Measuring Penny*, by Loreen Leedy
- *Discuss the various dimensions for measuring objects
- *Formulate questions to ask about a particular object
- *With context given for the object, students ask additional questions based on context
- *Discuss how vivid description can help a fact finder understand an object's importance

¹ We credit this term to Prof. Danny Shemer, Criminal Practice Clinic, University of Baltimore School of Law.

Submitted by: Margaret E. Johnson, Assistant Professor, and Leigh Goodmark, Associate Professor, University of Baltimore School of Law; Catherine Klein, Professor of Law, Margaret Martin Barry, Associate Professor, and Lisa Martin, Clinical Associate, Columbus School of Law, Catholic University; Laurie Kohn, Visiting Professor, Georgetown University Law Center; Jane Stoeber, Assistant Professor, Seattle University School of Law; and Amy Myers, Practitioner-in-Residence, Washington College of Law, American University.