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Teaching Legal Judgment: The Applied Legal Reasoning Framework for Business Law Pedagogy

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Abstract: *Business law occupies an unsettled position in the business curriculum. Although widely endorsed, research finds that business law courses often fail to develop practical legal judgment. This paper views common issues, excessive coverage demands, limited engagement, law-school-style methods, and recall-based assessments, as symptoms of a single design problem: structuring courses as condensed legal education rather than managerial competency training. Drawing on experiential learning, situated cognition, and legal strategy, the paper presents the Applied Legal Reasoning Framework. Its four dimensions are situated issue recognition, integrated legal-ethical judgment, developmental sequencing, and implementation calibration. The framework incorporates operational constraints into course design while distinguishing generalist courses from licensure-focused ones, where comprehensive doctrinal coverage remains appropriate. It concludes with implications for curriculum design, faculty development, assessment, and future empirical research.*

Keywords: *Business Law; Pedagogy; Applied Legal Reasoning Framework; Experiential Learning; Situated Cognition; Legal Strategy*

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): *SDG 4: Quality Education; SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions*

INTRODUCTION

Consider a newly promoted operations manager who must decide whether to sign a supplier agreement by the end of the week. The contract contains an indemnity clause she only partly understands, the supplier seeks immediate execution, and the company's attorney is unavailable until the following week. A decision will nevertheless be made. In that situation, the relevant capacity is not a memorized catalogue of contract rules. It is the ability to recognize that the clause has legal significance, estimate the exposure created by the decision, and determine whether the matter can be handled internally or requires legal counsel. That capacity is legal judgment. Developing it is a central justification for including business law in management education.

Many courses do not develop this capacity. The managerial relevance of legal knowledge is well established; scholars have argued for its value over several decades (Siedel, 2000; Babu, 2017; O'Brien et al., 2018). The unresolved question concerns pedagogy. Many programs teach business law in a manner that serves neither legal education nor management education, leaving the course suspended between the two. The concerns identified in the literature are strikingly consistent. Within the single course most programs devote to business law, instructors struggle to reconcile breadth with depth (Kuzenski, 2023; Lampe, 2006; Butler & Madhloom, 2016). Students often experience the material as difficult and disconnected from their intended careers (Hemarathne, 2025; Khan, 2021). Lecture-based methods adapted from law-school

instruction are poorly suited to students who do not intend to practice law (Douglas, 2012; Cameron & Dickfos, 2015). Examinations tend to reward memorization rather than reasoning through legal problems as they arise in managerial settings (Loafman, 2023). Ethics and interdisciplinary content, though frequently endorsed, appear unevenly in course design (Babu, 2017; Bagley et al., 2020; Cavico & Mujtaba, 2018).

These concerns have persisted for more than two decades. The field has yet to provide a single explanation for their recurrence or a clear conceptual alternative. The argument advanced here is that the problem is not a lack of teaching techniques, since many have been proposed, but a mistaken account of the course's purpose. Business law in MBA and undergraduate business programs is often designed, implicitly or explicitly, as a compressed version of first-year legal education. The underlying premise is that the course's primary content is legal doctrine, presented in simplified form, with application added when time permits. This premise is mistaken, and it produces the chain of problems repeatedly identified in the literature.

In response, this paper proposes the Applied Legal Reasoning Framework (ALRF), which reorients business law education toward the judgment managers exercise in practice. ALRF consists of four interdependent dimensions: situated issue recognition, integrated legal-ethical judgment, developmental sequencing, and implementation calibration. The first three address what students learn and how instructors teach it. The fourth incorporates program-level realities, including course load, faculty readiness, and student background, into the design itself rather than treating them as implementation obstacles. Together, the four dimensions reposition the business law course as a form of applied reasoning education rather than a scaled-down legal curriculum.

The paper proceeds in four steps. First, it reviews the documented problems in business law pedagogy and traces them to a common conceptual source. Second, it grounds ALRF in experiential learning theory, situated cognition, and the literature on the manager as a legal strategist. Third, it presents the framework, including the interaction among its four dimensions and its scope conditions. Finally, it considers implications for curriculum design, faculty development, assessment, and future research.

SOURCES OF THE JUDGMENT GAP IN BUSINESS LAW EDUCATION

The literature identifies several distinct problems, but many can be traced to one tension: doctrinal coverage and practical application compete for limited class time, and coverage usually prevails. This tension is not merely logistical. It reflects an implicit belief about the purpose of a business law course.

Doctrinal Coverage as the Default Organizing Logic

Kuzenski (2023) studied undergraduate business law textbooks and found that the sheer quantity of material instructors feel bound to cover drives much of what goes wrong in these courses. One three-credit course expected to move through contracts, torts, agency, employment law, intellectual property, business organizations, and regulatory compliance leaves instructors racing through topics too fast for anything to stick. Lampe (2006) said much the same nearly twenty years earlier and called for a model built on fewer topics taught with more

depth. Butler and Madhloom (2016) saw the pattern in the United Kingdom: business students were not undone by the difficulty of legal ideas so much as by how many arrived, and how quickly.

The tendency to cover as much doctrine as possible is more than a problem of time management. It imports an assumption from legal education, namely that competence depends on broad exposure to major doctrinal categories. For future lawyers, that assumption has force because specialization typically comes later. For future managers, it is less persuasive. A manager need not understand negligence as a litigator does. A manager needs to recognize when a decision may expose the firm to a negligence claim, assess the practical stakes, and know when to involve counsel. These are distinct skills, and they require a distinct pedagogical approach.

Student Disengagement and Perceived Irrelevance

Across several countries, business students describe law courses as difficult, unengaging, and disconnected from their intended careers (Khan, 2021; Hemarathne, 2025; Douglas, 2012). Khan (2021) found that business students in Pakistan regarded law as separate from the management skills developed elsewhere in the curriculum. Hemarathne (2025) reported a similar pattern among management undergraduates in Sri Lanka: students struggled with legal vocabulary and found it difficult to connect the material to their future work.

This response should not be dismissed as apathy. It is a predictable reaction to a course that asks business students to learn law through methods designed for law students, without the professional context or career incentives that support that mode of learning. When doctrine is taught as decontextualized content, students notice the disconnection because the disconnection is real. The problem lies in a curriculum that has not been redesigned for its primary audience.

Limits of the Lecture-Based Transfer Model

The dominant instructional format in these courses remains the lecture, supported by textbook reading and examination (Douglas, 2012; Cameron & Dickfos, 2015). This format may be more effective in law schools, where students have chosen legal study, the case method supplies an established structure for engagement, and multiple semesters allow concepts to develop. In business programs, the same format is less effective. Douglas (2012) found that problem-based learning generated stronger engagement among business students than lecture-based instruction. McDonald et al. (2022) found that active learning anchored in realistic business scenarios improved engagement and the workforce skills employers value. Reems (2021) similarly argued for teaching business law through student experience rather than topic coverage.

The evidence supporting active methods is consistent, yet adoption remains uneven across institutions, constrained less by a lack of workable methods than by the habits and incentives associated with syllabus coverage (Endeshaw, 2002). The central question is why the default approach persists. The answer proposed here is that the underlying conception of the course has not changed. Instructors may alter delivery methods, but as long as the course is

understood primarily as a body of doctrine to be covered, coverage will continue to displace the methods that research supports.

Assessment Practices and the Persistence of Recall-Based Evaluation

Loafman (2023) sharply criticizes how heavily business law assessment leans on conventional exams, which reward recall over the applied reasoning the course claims to develop. Putman (2025) showed that a business simulation can do double duty, teaching and assessing at once, by capturing how students handle legal issues inside the flow of a business decision. McDonald et al. (2022) and Reems (2021) likewise back case studies, role-play, and reflective writing as assessments that show more of what a student can do.

Exam-centered assessment is the natural counterpart of doctrine-centered teaching. When a course is organized around doctrinal topics, assessment tends to measure doctrinal knowledge. Changing the assessment without redesigning the course creates a mismatch between instruction and evaluation. The assessment problem, like the problems of engagement and pedagogy, follows from the same conceptual source.

Theoretical Foundations for an Applied Reasoning Model

If the divide between doctrine and practice reflects a conceptual error rather than a resource shortage, the next question is what should replace it. Three theoretical traditions, each addressing a different part of the problem, provide the foundation for the Applied Legal Reasoning Framework.

Experiential Learning as a Basis for Legal Pedagogy

Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory holds that learning proceeds through a cycle of concrete experience, reflection, concept formation, and testing in action. This theory provides a basis for rethinking business law pedagogy, and Douglas (2012) and McDonald et al. (2022) drew on it directly in designing their interventions. Its implication extends beyond adding exercises to a lecture course. If learning begins with concrete experience, the basic unit of a business law course should be a business situation, such as launching a product, hiring employees, or closing a deal, in which several legal issues arise together. Legal problems appear this way in managerial practice, and the classroom should reflect that structure.

Situated Cognition and the Transfer of Legal Knowledge

Situated cognition (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Brown et al., 1989) treats knowledge as connected to the settings in which it is learned and used. When knowledge is learned only in the abstract, transfer to new situations is often weak. This helps explain why a student who can list the elements of a valid contract on an examination may fail to identify a contract issue in a case study or later in an actual transaction. Khan (2021) and Hemarathne (2025) reported this pattern: students could recite rules but struggled to apply them in unfamiliar settings.

The implication is that legal knowledge for managers must be learned within managerial settings if it is to remain usable there. This does not require abandoning legal principles. It requires placing them in the decisions where they matter. Pedagogically, abstraction should follow experience. Students first encounter the legal problem as a business problem, analyze its components, and then receive the doctrinal framework that names and organizes what they have begun to understand.

The Manager as Legal Strategist

Siedel (2000, 2017) has argued, more steadily than anyone in the field, for treating business law as a strategic management capability rather than a technical specialty. His six forces model folds the legal environment into the competitive forces that shape strategy, sitting alongside Porter's five. Bagley et al. (2020) carried the logic further, pressing for a systems view that knits law, strategy, and sustainability into one framework for graduates who can think across boundaries.

This line of scholarship completes the theoretical basis for ALRF. Experiential learning theory explains how business law should be taught; situated cognition explains why context matters; the legal strategy literature identifies the instructional goal. The aim is not to produce managers who possess legal knowledge in the abstract. It is to develop managers who can use legal reasoning to make better decisions, manage risk, and create value under conditions of uncertainty and time pressure. This is legal judgment in the professional sense, and treating it as the primary outcome changes how the course should be designed, taught, and assessed.

The Applied Legal Reasoning Framework

Building on these foundations, this paper proposes the Applied Legal Reasoning Framework (ALRF) for business law education in MBA and undergraduate business programs. ALRF consists of four dimensions that operate together: situated issue recognition, integrated legal-ethical judgment, developmental sequencing, and implementation calibration. The first three define the course's instructional and learning priorities. The fourth explains how those priorities should be adjusted to a program's institutional conditions. The four dimensions are not sequential steps. Each is a design constraint that should shape the syllabus, class sessions, and assessment scheme. The framework is presented in Figure 1.

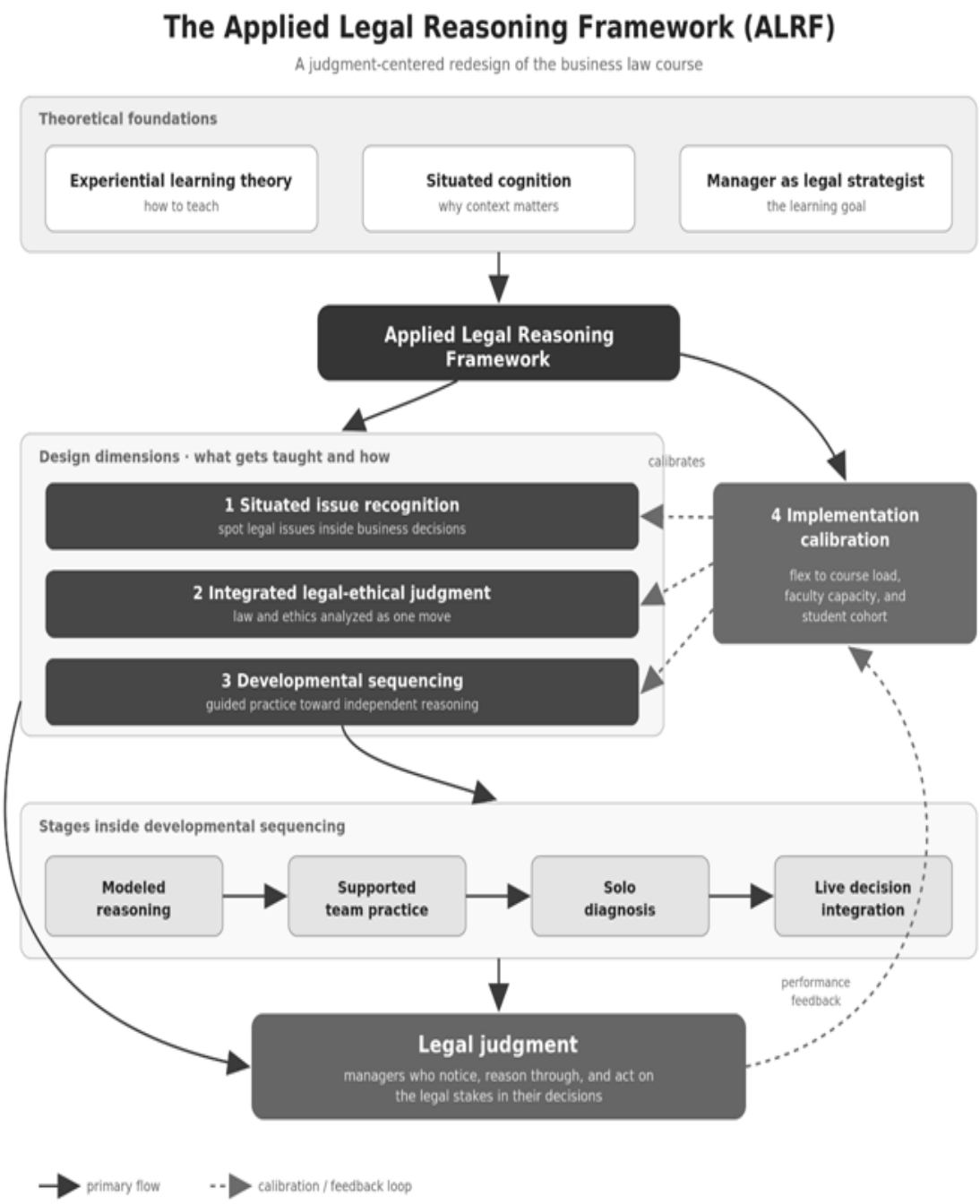


Figure 1: The Applied Legal Reasoning Framework (Source: Author's own depiction)

Situated Issue Recognition

The first dimension replaces doctrinal coverage as the organizing principle with situated issue recognition: the capacity to identify, analyze, and respond to legal issues as they arise within business decisions. The syllabus is organized around business contexts rather than legal topics. Instead of separate weeks on contracts and torts, for example, the course might begin with the launch of a new venture. This context brings entity formation, supplier contracts, intellectual property, and regulatory compliance into a single decision sequence.

This reorganization does not reduce the amount of law taught. It changes how students encounter the law: embedded in situations, connected to other managerial concerns, and requiring judgments about which legal issues matter most. Lampe (2006) called for this shift, although the field has adopted it unevenly. Butler and Madhloom (2016) developed part of this approach in teaching company law through structured business scenarios rather than stand-alone doctrinal lectures. ALRF extends that logic across the general business law curriculum.

What sets situated issue recognition apart is that it makes issue-spotting, noticing that a business situation carries legal weight, the primary skill rather than a side effect of knowing doctrine. Siedel (2017) held that issue-spotting is the single most valuable legal skill a business leader has, well above reciting rules. Under ALRF, every class opens on a realistic business scenario, and the first question never changes: where are the legal issues here? Doctrine follows, as the tool for resolving the issues the students have already found.

Integrated Legal-Ethical Judgment

The second dimension integrates ethics into legal reasoning rather than treating it as a separate course unit. Under ALRF, legal and ethical reasoning operate as connected forms of analysis. Legal issues often carry ethical implications, and ethical problems often have legal dimensions. Separating them, a practice Cavico and Mujtaba (2018) criticized in their review of law and ethics instruction in business schools, weakens both forms of reasoning.

Babu (2017) observed that the intersection of law and business produces ethical questions that neither field can address adequately in isolation. ALRF turns that observation into a design rule: each scenario should include both legal and ethical tensions, and students should reason through them together. The relevant ethics here is the everyday ethics of managerial choice, including the space between what is lawful and what is right. This paper keeps that focus deliberately narrow rather than extending it to broader questions of social responsibility or sustainability, which require separate treatment.

This approach differs from the common arrangement in which ethics is assigned to a separate course or distributed thinly across the curriculum. Business law is a suitable site for legal-ethical reasoning because it routinely presents situations in which compliance and conscience diverge: actions that are lawful but ethically questionable, or actions that may be unlawful yet appear fair in context. These tensions are central to the legal judgment future managers need to develop.

Mini-Case: Ethical-Legal Convergence in Practice

A single 75-minute class session illustrates how integrated legal-ethical judgment works in practice. Students receive a two-page scenario before class: a regional logistics firm is two hours from signing a subcontracting agreement that a large client needs to meet its product launch date. Just before the call, the subcontractor's owner privately tells the logistics manager that two of his drivers lack the current state-required license classification. Missing the deadline risks losing the client account. Requiring compliance first may put the subcontractor out of business.

The session opens with a legal-analysis phase (roughly 20 minutes). Students map the firm's exposure: regulatory fines, vicarious liability if an unlicensed driver causes an accident, and potential breach of the main client contract if the timeline slips. This grounds the class in doctrine from within a business decision rather than a textbook topic. The instructor then pivots with a single question: "The subcontractor told you voluntarily. What do you owe him, and what do you actually do?" The conversation shifts register (30 minutes). The legally safest move, refusing to sign until compliance is confirmed, penalizes a supplier for being honest. A decision that protects the relationship carries real liability. Students quickly discover that resolving the legal question does not settle the ethical one, and they have to hold both threads at once.

The final 25 minutes use a structured debrief. Small groups present a recommended course of action with an explicit legal rationale and an explicit ethical rationale. The instructor highlights points where the two converge (document the disclosure and give a 48-hour compliance window) and points where they diverge (the legally prudent void-and-rebid may be ethically questionable if the subcontractor disclosed in good faith). Students submit a one-paragraph individual reflection on what drove their recommendation. The session produces two assessment artifacts, a group recommendation and an individual reflection, neither of which a conventional recall exam could capture. Both require the integrated judgment ALRF is built to develop.

Developmental Sequencing

The third dimension treats teaching and assessment as one problem through developmental sequencing: a structured climb from supported to independent legal reasoning across business contexts that grow more demanding. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development, ALRF moves students through four phases over a term.

In the first phase, modeled reasoning, students work through pre-built scenarios with explicit prompts pointing them toward the legal and ethical dimensions. In the second, supported team practice, they take on looser scenarios in groups without those prompts, building issue-spotting with the help of peers. In the third, solo diagnosis, they face fresh scenarios on their own and show they can carry the reasoning into unfamiliar territory. In the fourth, live decision integration, they work through complex simulations of the kind Putman (2025) described, where legal reasoning has to combine with financial, strategic, and operational choices as the clock runs.

This climb doubles as a pedagogy and an assessment scheme. Each phase yields artifacts (analyses, recommendations, simulation decisions, reflective journals) that an instructor can

mark for the quality of legal reasoning, ethical sensitivity, and practical judgment on display. Loafman's (2023) call for assessment alternatives and McDonald et al.'s (2022) case for active-learning assessment both fit inside it. The sequencing matters because it keeps students from being dropped into a simulation cold; the early phases build what the later phases test.

Implementation Calibration

The fourth dimension is the one most reform proposals leave out, and the omission helps explain why promising models stall after a pilot. Implementation calibration treats a program's operating conditions (course load, faculty capacity, cohort makeup, cultural setting) as a design variable built into the framework, not a list of constraints to apologize for once the model is finished. Three calibration questions come up again and again wherever business law is taught, and ALRF answers each one head-on rather than leaving it to local improvisation.

The first question is how much of the framework one required course can carry. Most programs allot a single course to business law (Kuzenski, 2023), and a model that needs more time than that is a model no one will run. ALRF does not ask for more time. It asks for the same material organized on different principles. A course that raises contract, tort, and regulatory questions through a single venture-launch scenario reaches the same doctrinal territory as a course marched through topic by topic, and the evidence points to better retention, since context aids recall more than isolated memorizing does (Douglas, 2012; McDonald et al., 2022). Where a program runs more than one course, calibration means spreading the four dimensions across the sequence instead of cramming them into one term. Where a program runs only one, it means picking a smaller set of contexts and phases and doing them well rather than reaching for full coverage of all four dimensions at once.

The second question is how ready a faculty is for the move from lecturing to facilitating scenario work. Instructors used to delivering doctrine face a genuine adjustment, and institutions differ widely in how much help they offer (Endeshaw, 2002). ALRF calibrates to that by separating the dimensions that need new scenario materials (situated issue recognition, integrated legal-ethical judgment) from the one that mainly needs a change in facilitation skill (developmental sequencing). A program short on faculty-development resources can adopt the first two using shared, jointly built scenario libraries before taking on the full four-phase sequence, which asks more of an instructor in each session. The order in which a program adopts the dimensions is itself a calibration choice, not a departure from the model.

The third question is how the framework should adjust for cohorts that differ in size, language background, and prior exposure to case discussion. Large, linguistically and culturally mixed cohorts are a real challenge for any method that leans on classroom discussion (Kariyawasam & Low, 2014). Calibrated well, ALRF's supported team practice phase turns that challenge into an asset: small-group scenario work lets students from different cultural frames bring distinct readings of a legal or ethical issue, something a big lecture cannot do. Where students have little experience with open, discussion-based learning, often a feature of systems built on lecture and recitation (Khan, 2021; Hemarathne, 2025), calibration means stretching the modeled-reasoning phase and trimming the solo-diagnosis phase, giving students more structured practice before they reason without support.

These adjustments do not alter ALRF's core logic. They indicate where a program should begin, how quickly it should proceed, and which dimension should lead in light of its starting conditions. A framework that specifies its content but remains silent on implementation is not more rigorous for that silence. It is less useful to the institutions expected to adopt it.

Interaction Among Framework Dimensions

The four dimensions do not run in isolation, and reading them as a checklist of four separate features misses the point. Situated issue recognition produces the raw material the other three act on: a scenario surfaces legal issues, but the scenario alone does not say whether those issues are also ethical, how much help students should get in resolving them, or how the program's own limits should shape the scenario's design.

Integrated legal-ethical judgment supplies the evaluative lens that issue recognition lacks by itself. Once a scenario surfaces a legal issue, this dimension asks what else is at stake beyond compliance, turning issue-spotting into judgment rather than rule-matching. Developmental sequencing supplies the structure that keeps the first two from swamping students: a venture-launch scenario rich enough to carry real legal and ethical weight is exactly what a first-week student cannot handle alone, which is why the same scenario type recurs across phases at rising levels of independence rather than appearing once. Implementation calibration decides how much of this machinery a program can run at a time, feeding back into how scenarios get chosen (simpler, single-issue ones for stretched programs; complex, multi-issue ones where faculty capacity allows) and how far the sequence compresses or extends.

What results is closer to a loop than a list. Calibration choices made at the start of a term shape which scenarios get used; scenario design shapes how much ethical complexity students meet; the complexity students can handle shapes how fast the sequence moves; and what the sequence reveals about performance feeds back into the next term's calibration. A program running ALRF over several years should expect its calibration choices to shift as faculty build scenario libraries and gain facilitation experience, not because the framework changed, but because the conditions the fourth dimension tracks did.

Scope Conditions and Boundary Cases

ALRF is not a universal theory of legal education, and claiming otherwise would undo the very distinction the paper has drawn. It is built for generalist business law and legal-environment courses serving MBA students, undergraduate business majors, and similar groups whose careers run through management rather than legal practice. Three conditions mark where it stops fitting.

The first is doctrinal specialization. A course built to prep students for a specific licensure exam, a CPA-track regulation course, say, or a paralegal certificate, has its content fixed from outside by the exam, and reorganizing around context cannot stand in for that coverage. ALRF's logic applies more to how such a course frames its material than to a redesign that drops content the exam requires.

The second is single-topic depth. An upper-level elective built around one legal area, securities regulation or international trade law, is already organized around a context, since the

subject itself is the context, and adding business-scenario framing on top of an already-focused doctrinal sequence buys little. ALRF answers a different problem: the spread of doctrine across many topics in one survey course, not the depth of doctrine within a single one.

The third is instructional capacity below a working minimum. ALRF's first three dimensions depend on scenario materials that take real time to build, and its fourth depends on a program having enough room to make calibration choices at all (some control over assessment, some support for faculty transition, some tolerance for stepping outside a fixed textbook order). A program boxed in by a rigid, externally mandated curriculum with none of that room will find ALRF hard to adopt past its general orientation. The boundary is worth stating plainly: a framework that claims to fit every setting usually ends up reshaping itself to fit none of them well.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM, FACULTY DEVELOPMENT, AND RESEARCH

Decision-Centered Curriculum Design

ALRF suggests that curriculum designers should begin with the business decisions most relevant to students' likely careers and then identify the legal content those decisions require. This reverses the conventional approach, which begins with legal topics and later adds application. Programs adopting this approach may find that some long-covered topics, such as selected procedural details, can receive less attention, while areas often treated briefly, including technology strategy, cross-border regulatory risk, and the legal dimensions of new business models, may warrant greater emphasis. Shannon (2025) showed how incorporating housing policy into the business law curriculum can strengthen both legal understanding and social awareness, a finding consistent with ALRF's emphasis on context-based instruction.

Faculty Development for Scenario-Based Legal Instruction

Programs adopting ALRF would have to invest in faculty development that moves business law instructors from doctrinal authority toward facilitating applied reasoning. That could mean co-teaching with management and strategy colleagues, scenario libraries built jointly across institutions, and communities of practice that share and refine materials. Endeshaw (2002) raised questions about method in teaching law to business students more than twenty years ago, and the field still has no systematic way to prepare instructors for this particular role.

Portfolio-Based Assessment of Applied Legal Reasoning

Under ALRF, the main assessment shifts from the exam to a portfolio that evaluates student reasoning across the four phases. The exam does not vanish; a well-built one can still test issue-spotting and doctrinal application against the clock. Nevertheless, it becomes one piece of a wider scheme that also draws on scenario write-ups, simulation decisions, reflective journals, and peer review of team reasoning. O'Brien et al. (2018) made the case that accreditation and benchmarking goals back keeping a core business law course in the

curriculum; a multi-method approach under ALRF would hand accreditors richer evidence of learning than an exam-only design.

Directions for Empirical Research

ALRF is a conceptual framework, and its claims need testing. A few directions follow. Comparative studies should measure learning outcomes (retention, transfer, application on the job) for students taught through scenario-based, context-driven designs against those taught topic by topic. Longitudinal work should track whether graduates trained under ALRF show stronger legal reasoning once they are working, the kind of follow-up the field now lacks. Cross-cultural studies should look at how the implementation-calibration dimension holds up across legal systems and educational cultures, especially in the settings where Hemarathne (2025) and Khan (2021) have documented distinctive challenges. Moreover, research on faculty transitions, how instructors experience the move from doctrinal to scenario-based teaching, would feed directly into faculty development.

CONCLUSION

The limitations of business law teaching in MBA and undergraduate business programs are well documented. The missing element has been a framework that explains why these limitations persist, how they are connected, and how programs can address them within existing institutional conditions. This paper locates the source in a single design error: treating the business law course as a compressed legal curriculum rather than as training in a distinct form of managerial judgment.

ALRF offers a different design, built from four interacting dimensions rather than a fixed list. Situated issue recognition reorganizes the course around business situations instead of legal topics. Integrated legal-ethical judgment treats legal and ethical analysis as one reasoning move rather than two separate concerns. Developmental sequencing carries students from modeled reasoning to live decision integration across a structured climb. Implementation calibration, the dimension most comparable proposals skip, says how the other three should adjust to a program's course load, faculty capacity, and cohort, turning the conditions of implementation into part of the design rather than a set of reasons it cannot be tried. The framework also marks its own edges: it answers the spread of doctrine across a survey course, not the depth of doctrine inside a specialized or licensure-bound one, and a program with no room to move on assessment or curriculum has little space to adopt it.

The framework does not require additional courses, expanded budgets, or exceptional instructional talent. It requires a clearer account of the purpose of business law education, one that enables programs to determine where to begin and how far to proceed within existing institutional resources. The practical stakes are substantial. Managers who fail to identify, interpret, and respond to the legal dimensions of organizational decisions expose both themselves and their firms to avoidable risk. Business law courses have long been justified on the basis of this managerial need. Their design should now reflect that purpose more directly.

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