

# *Nova Law Review*

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## The Flat Learning Curve

Phyllis Coleman\*

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## THE FLAT LEARNING CURVE

PHYLLIS COLEMAN\*

If you've ever thought that some students just don't seem to get it, the following e-mail exchange should be of interest.

**From:** Paul Nonothin  
**Sent:** Monday, January 5, 2004 2:00 PM  
**To:** Professor Snodgrass  
**Subject:** Sales Grades

Dear Professor Snodgrass:

Grades for your class have just been posted. What did I get?

Paul Nonothin

\* \* \* \* \*

**From:** Professor Hiram Snodgrass  
**Sent:** Monday, January 5, 2004 2:30 PM  
**To:** Paul Nonothin  
**Subject:** Re: Sales Grades

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

As you know, exams are graded anonymously. Consequently, I cannot tell you the grade you received because I do not know your number.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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\* Professor of Law, Nova Southeastern University. B.S., M.Ed., J.D., University of Florida.

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**From:** Paul Nonothin  
**Sent:** Monday, January 5, 2004 5:00 PM  
**To:** Professor Snodgrass  
**Subject:** Re: Sales Grades

Professor Snodgrass:

My number is 0. What did I get?

Paul Nonothin

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**From:** Professor Hiram Snodgrass  
**Sent:** Monday, January 5, 2004 5:15 PM  
**To:** Paul Nonothin  
**Subject:** Re: Sales Grades

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

Zero is not a valid exam number. Please check with Student Services to get your actual number.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From:** Paul Nonothin  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 6, 2004 2:30 PM  
**To:** Professor Snodgrass  
**Subject:** Re: Sales Grades

Professor Snodgrass:

I went to Student Services. They told me my number and said you had given me an "F." Obviously you made a mistake. Please correct it immediately.

Paul Nonothin

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**From: Professor Hiram Snodgrass**  
**Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2004 4:15 PM**  
**To: Paul Nonothin**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

I repeat, I cannot check unless you give me your exam number.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From: Paul Nonothin**  
**Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2004 4:30 PM**  
**To: Professor Snodgrass**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Professor Snodgrass:

I forgot my number. Call Student Services. I know they have it.

Paul Nonothin

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**From: Professor Hiram Snodgrass**  
**Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2004 4:35 PM**  
**To: Paul Nonothin**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

I will not check with Student Services. If you wish me to review your exam, you must give me your number.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From: Paul Nonothin**  
**Sent: Tuesday, January 6, 2004 5:30 PM**  
**To: Professor Snodgrass**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Professor Snodgrass:

My number is 1.

Paul Nonothin

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**From: Professor Hiram Snodgrass**  
**Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2004 9:15 AM**  
**To: Paul Nonothin**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

I checked and there is no mistake. You missed every multiple choice question and failed to discuss any of the relevant issues in the two essays.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From: Paul Nonothin**  
**Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2004 9:30 AM**  
**To: Professor Snodgrass**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Professor Snodgrass:

First let me say I am very mad that it took you so long to respond.

As for the exam itself, I never do well on multiple choice questions and don't think it was nice of you to point it out. Further, check and you will see I carefully filled in the machine-graded card. At least you should give me points for neatness.

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In addition, while I understand I didn't hit any of the issues on the essays, it was not fair to give me an "F." Don't you know what that does to a person's self-esteem--to say nothing of his GPA?

I attended almost half the classes. I admit I was surfing the web most of the time but I kept my instant messaging to a minimum. Indeed, I told all my friends to only send emergency e-mails during your lectures.

By the way, I was very confused by the language in that U.C.C. thing you kept referring to. Just a friendly suggestion: You should eliminate that from the course the next time you teach it.

I also want you to know that I had to teach the course to many of the students in the class (because they couldn't understand you either). Inexplicably, they all got better grades than I did.

Paul Nonothin

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**From: Professor Hiram Snodgrass**  
**Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2004 10:15 AM**  
**To: Paul Nonothin**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

Your grade will not be changed.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From: Paul Nonothin**  
**Sent: Wednesday, January 7, 2004 4:00 PM**  
**To: Professor Snodgrass**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Professor Snodgrass:

I just checked with Student Services and they have not yet received your grade change. When will you submit it?

Paul Nonothin

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**From: Professor Hiram Snodgrass**  
**Sent: Thursday, January 8, 2004 10:15 AM**  
**To: Paul Nonothin**  
**Subject: Re: Sales Grades**

Dear Mr. Nonothin:

As I said in my previous e-mail, there will be no grade change.

Professor Hiram Snodgrass

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**From: Paul Nonothin**  
**Sent: Thursday, January 8, 2004 2:00 PM**  
**To: Professor Howitzer**  
**Subject: Family Law Grades**

Dear Professor Howitzer:

Grades for your class have just been posted. What did I get?

Paul Nonothin

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