



Lee Burgess: Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we're having a conversation about the LSAT with Steve Schwartz from [LSAT Unplugged](#). Your Law School Toolbox hosts are Alison Monahan and Lee Burgess, that's me. We're here to demystify the law school and early legal career experience, so you'll be the best law student and lawyer you can be. We're the co-creators of the [Law School Toolbox](#), the [Bar Exam Toolbox](#), and the career-related website [CareerDicta](#). Alison also runs [The Girl's Guide to Law School](#). If you enjoy the show, please leave a review or rating on your favorite listening app. And if you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to us. You can reach us via the [contact form](#) on LawSchoolToolBox.com, and we'd love to hear from you. And with that, let's get started.

Welcome back to the Law School Toolbox podcast. Today we are chatting about upcoming changes to the LSAT with our guest Steve Schwartz from LSAT Unplugged. Thanks for joining me, Steve.

Steve Schwartz: Thanks so much for having me on, Lee. Pleasure to reconnect.

Lee Burgess: Absolutely. I know, we were just having a chat before the podcast about how we had talked just a few months into the pandemic, and what a different world it is now here in July 2021. Thankfully.

Steve Schwartz: Lots of changes, and with all those changes out there in the world the LSAT is once again going through some changes coming up.

Lee Burgess: Of course, so I think it's great that we're going to be able to talk about that together. Before we dive into the details about the changes of the LSAT, we've had you on the podcast before but I'd love for listeners who haven't heard [your podcast before](#), if you could share a little bit about who you are, what you do, and how they can find you if they're interested in the work that you're doing.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, sure. Thanks so much for asking, Lee. So again, my name is Steve Schwartz, I host the [LSAT Blog](#), I run the [LSAT Unplugged YouTube channel](#) and [podcast](#), I have a live online [LSAT course](#), we meet via Zoom several nights a week. I've been doing this since 2005, believe it or not, so it's been a very, very long time. I got into this back when I was considering going to law school myself, but I got sidetracked with the LSAT, I actually got completely obsessed with it, and I've since never looked back. I've created nearly 10,000 LSAT-related videos, I've got a daily podcast, multiple episodes going out every single day on both YouTube and the podcast, and I've got plenty more going on inside the course as well. So, lots of things for folks to check out if they just search @LSATUnplugged.



- Lee Burgess: Awesome. There's no judgment about being obsessed with tests, when you're hanging out with my crew over here. It's like a secret club of people who like to think about tests.
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah. I don't know what it is, but there is something about that instant feedback, getting those results, seeing what's going on there, and learning along the way.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah. We were just, on my team, putting together some curriculum about The Bluebook, which is how you do legal citations, and it's a big deal when you're on the Law Review, that's where you really learn how to Bluebook. And a lot of people really don't like The Bluebook, it's incredibly tedious, but my team loves The Bluebook and we had all sorts of fun discussing The Bluebook. And then I was like, "We are our own unique little crew here, who want to talk about The Bluebook." I feel like that's... It's a small group, small group. So it's good we found each other.
- Steve Schwartz: No, I totally get that. I totally get that. The LSAT's kind of the same way for me, so I get that. It's like at first you might not love it when you first encounter it, but once you develop an ownership of the material and a mastery of the material, then you can't stop talking about it. And so, what you've got to do is you've got to find other people who feel the same way. And as for the students who haven't yet learned to love it, it's like, "Well, if you just could see it this way." And I kind of want to show folks that way, and I'm sure you do too. That's the way you get into this, right?
- Lee Burgess: Totally. I think when I started studying bar exams and things like that, after I'd become a lawyer, when you start to study them from a different perspective – not the gatekeeping perspective, which I think is how we come to these exams, with the fear that they're kind of the gatekeeper – but instead, when it shifts and it becomes a little bit of a game, when you start to see the patterns, where you start to see what they're trying to do, you see the repetition, you see how you can prepare for it so it doesn't seem so out there or wonky, which I think when you're taking it in the moment it can feel, then it becomes fun, because you're like, "Well, I like to win, so I just like to beat things."
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah, I think this plays very well to the stereotypical Type A mindset that a lot of lawyers have. I understand that, I have that a mindset as well. But I think you're right, it's like if you could just see the patterns you can then demystify these exams and you'll see, "Hey, if you can do the practice ones, you can do the actual as well." It's the same thing, just with different window dressing.
- Lee Burgess: It's so true. I actually remember sitting in an exam, it was my last semester of law school, it was Community Property, which is a class that you just basically take in California, which is Family Law in California, basically. And I had taken



this professor multiple times, I had taken her for Constitutional Law, I had taken her for Family Law. I really enjoyed taking her classes, she was brilliant. And when I got this third exam for her that I'd taken, I remember opening it up and reading it. And I at that point had studied so many of her exams, because I had taken most of these classes, I almost chuckled because I was like, "I can tell exactly what you're asking for." I was just like, "Here you go", and I was so successful on that exam. But it was an interesting way to end my law school career, of this idea of, "Wow, when you really get to know how somebody writes a test, the test becomes very direct." And it really kind of started to change my perspective on the need to study the actual test and not just study law or prepare for things in different ways.

Steve Schwartz: Agreed. The nice thing about that is if you actually can narrow your focus to just the exam, there's really a limited set of things they're testing you on. And so, in exams like this where they make so many of the previous test forms available, if you even just look at a handful of them and you analyze them the right way, you will see those patterns and then you'll be well prepared to go into test day, rather than trying to study all of law, or all of logic, as a lot of folks try to do on the LSAT.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, they can only get so creative. It's just these tests are really hard to develop, I think people forget that. They think that they just can get super creative and create these off the wall things, but they can only do so much of that. These tests are not easy, and so they're going to be somewhat repetitious at a certain point. Or there's going to be repetition at a certain point.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, they're very clever in the tricks they create, but in a way they're also kind of lazy, in that they re-use their best tricks. They're like, "This one was fantastic. This initial logical reasoning question on the LSAT was about climate change, let's make it instead about heart disease or car accidents." So the trick underlying it is the same, just the window dressing is different. And so I think that's one of the benefits of studying these old exams, that you see the new one, it's just the same thing.

Lee Burgess: Exactly. And the same, I think, becomes true in law school exams, and definitely for the bar exam, especially on really heavily-tested topics where you can get essay after essay after essay. I always think of professional responsibility, which they test in California almost every single season, and I could tell you a list. It's like, "This is the duty of loyalty, but someone's going to sleep with their client, or there are going to be multiple partners trying to be represented by the same lawyer." It's like you start to come up with, "Tick off a list of these fact patterns that you're going to see", because they're only so creative in the fact patterns.

Steve Schwartz: That's so cool. What I love about this, especially, is that what pre-laws need to do to get into law school, to master that exam, it sounds like it's a lot of the



same things they need to do in law school and for the bar exam as well. So it's about spotting these patterns, understanding the reasoning, and then just re-applying it to different situations.

Lee Burgess:

Yeah. I think the main difference is that you don't have that body of law that you're trying to study, you're really just trying to study the test. And I'll be honest, I don't think I really viewed it that way when I was studying for the LSAT. I'm trying to remember how I viewed it. I viewed it as something I was trying to do at night after work, I guess. But I don't know that I... I wasn't as into test-taking as a skill at that point, which is ironic because I was tutoring for the SAT in law school. But I think actually tutoring for the SAT, once I was in law school as a part-time job, was really when my perspective on exam-taking shifted, because then I think you study the test in a different way, to teach something. I mean, it's always different to teach it than to try and learn it for yourself. And as soon as I started to really dig into the patterns of the SAT, it was almost like in hindsight I'm like, "Oh, maybe I should have prepared for the LSAT in a different way. Maybe that would have been better." Because I just don't think I dove into it and studied in the same way as I needed to, even going back to SAT math, to be able to teach people SAT math.

Steve Schwartz:

I hear you on that. I mean, hindsight is always 20/20, but the cool thing is that you eventually did adopt that mindset. I can definitely think back to back to my history. I adopted it with the LSAT only after several months of trying to study for the LSAT, because everything else I was doing just wasn't working. But if I could see the exam from the testmaker's perspective and see those patterns, that's when everything radically shifted for me. But I'm not a standardized test geek by any stretch, I did not apply any of this mindset to the SAT back when I was studying it, or any of those other exams I took up to that point. The LSAT was really where it changed for me. And I think part of it was just because the reasoning on this kind of exam, similar to how I suspect it is for law school and the bar exam as well, is that it's fundamentally different in nature. Yes, there are patterns in so many of these exams, but these are not really tests of content, not really tests of memorization. That's why law school exams are generally open book, right?

Lee Burgess:

Yeah, depending on the law school, but yeah. And then it's the cruel epilogue to that, which is the bar is not. So, you can get sucked in, depending on your law school. My law school did mostly closed book exams, but ironically I feel like the higher "ranking" the law school you go to, the more into the Ivy League you get, the more open book exams you get. And then if those students show up for the bar and they're like, "What do you mean it's closed book with 13 subjects? Hold on, that's not how I roll." Yeah. Alright, so just as, I guess, a later-pandemic surprise, just keeping everybody on their toes, the LSAT decided to go ahead and change things up again, coming in August 2021. Could you go ahead and



summarize for our listeners who may not know what's coming down the pipeline, what the changes are?

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, sure. So basically, once the pandemic hit, the [Law School Admission Council](#), LSAC, they switched the exam to be online and they went to a three-section format. They also changed the name temporarily to be the [LSAT-Flex](#), indicating what? Flexibility, maybe that it wasn't the regular LSAT, maybe it wasn't the long-term plan. And so, as the pandemic kind of comes to a close, we hope, they are shifting the format once again, to be four sections. So they're adding back in an experimental section starting with the August 2021 LSAT, coming up in roughly a month and change here. The reason they're doing that is because they want to test out new LSAT questions for future test forms. So that's the summary; I can go into more depth of course.

Lee Burgess: Okay. So yeah, it seems like this fourth experimental section, when I was reading about it, I can imagine that if people felt like they only had to do these three sections, that this would be an unwelcome surprise and cause anxiety for a lot of people. I was feeling the anxiety coming through the computer screen when I was prepping for this podcast. So, why do you think this idea of this extra experimental section is going to cause worry for LSAT takers?

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, so you're absolutely right, Lee, that nobody wants to do an experimental section. It does cause anxiety and it is an unwelcome change. So, basically I think the anxiety comes from the fact that you're doing a longer exam, the LSAT-Flex was seemingly easier and it actually was easier for a lot of folks, because it's a shorter exam. Endurance is not as much of an issue. When you add in an extra section, you now have a longer test sitting, and you also have the uncertainty around it, not knowing what the content of that extra section is going to be. So, are you doing a second section of logic games, a second section of logical reasoning, or a second section of reading comprehension? And what's the placement of that section in the four sections total? It could be first, second, third, or fourth. And while you're doing it, you don't know whether it counts.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, it's really, I think, more than the kind of exertion of having to do the longer test, this mental feeling that what you're doing may not count, or they're being messed with. Do you think that is one of the things that people are going to have to fight against?

Steve Schwartz: It is, yeah. So it's the feeling of not knowing which one it is while you're doing it. If you screwed up on something, is it the one that counted or the one that didn't matter? Obviously, you hope it's the one that didn't matter, but you're never really going to know. And once you get your score back, you can kind of guess at it, of course. And you can, of course, talk online with others on forums and such after the fact. A certain amount of that is allowed if you keep it vague and general in nature. But yeah, you don't know which one it is during, and that



causes problems. You don't know whether to cancel your score or keep it. Factors like that, things like that.

Lee Burgess: So do you think that – I think you discuss this some on your blog, but I'm curious for my listeners – some people... I even remember back in the dark ages, when I took the LSAT, that some people would be like, "Yeah, I could guess which one it is. One seemed a lot harder." How do you feel that the consistency of the sections generally is? Do you think that people can try and figure it out, or do they just need to let it lie?

Steve Schwartz: They need to let it lie. And there's that, of course, how can you not try to guess at it? It's what you're thinking about, obviously. It's like, "Don't think of an elephant" – of course you're going to think of an elephant. You're going to of course try to figure it out during, which I don't recommend. You're going to try and figure it out after, which is fine, although I recommend generally staying off of the forums, because they only feed the anxiety. But it's not obviously harder, it's not obviously different, they're not testing out some radically new question type. They are trying to calibrate the difficulty of sections as a whole, largely, for future test administrations, when what is currently an experimental section will become one of the scored sections on a future exam. But these are very subtle differences in difficulty. It's not like you're going to have four super tough logic games on the experimental, and then four average-difficulty ones on the actual. It's not like that. They're not different question types either; it's just basically maybe on a scored section you have one easy, two moderate, one difficult, because there are four logic games total in this section. And then on the experimental section maybe it's two easy, one moderate, one difficult. But where do you draw the line between easy and moderate? These are all shades of gray. Even I wouldn't be able to tell during a section. I'm in the mix working on it, as the students should be as well.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. So, like most things with these exams, you really have to not let your head get in the way, and play the game that you're given. Here are the game is, from my perspective, you just need to knock out of the park whatever is given to you, and then let LSAC worry about what is the counted sections and not the counted sections. You just need to show up for all of them.

Steve Schwartz: Exactly. You need to give your full effort on every section as if it was scored.

Lee Burgess: Mm-hmm. So, with this experimental section, any changes in scoring, numbers of questions in the sections, how the questions are broken up? Everything stays consistent?

Steve Schwartz: Everything stays the same. So you're still doing one scored section of logic games, one scored of logical reasoning, one scored of reading comprehension. What happens within a section is exactly the same, whether it's the LSAT-Flex,



the new four-section LSAT, as well as all prior LSATs all the way back to 1991. None of that changes. All that is different now is that they are adding back in the experimental section, so you're doing an additional fourth section that could be any of those three types: games, reasoning, or reading comprehension. But what happens within that extra section is also going to appear identical to all other LSAT sections, back to 1991. The only change that has happened that's really significant is back in June 2007, when they added in a dual comparative reading passage. I should just mention that to be comprehensive in what I'm saying here, but that's not related to this format change.

- Lee Burgess: Got it, okay. Yeah, it's funny how you remember things differently. I took the LSAT, I guess it was 2004, must have been, maybe 2004-ish? Yes, I started law school in 2005, so I must have taken the LSAT in 2004. But it's funny when I think about it, because I was also prepping, refreshing my recollection about this and the length of each of the sections, and I believe that the entirety of the test now with the four sections is like two and a half hours of testing, two hours 35 minutes. Am I remembering that correctly?
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah. So let's see, we've got four 35-minute sections for the new four-section LSAT, plus a 10-minute break. So that works out to about two hours 35 minutes. And it actually used to be five sections before the pandemic, before the Flex as well. So it actually ended up being, including bubbling in your name back on the paper, LSAT was probably like three and a half hours total.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, which is funny because I remember it being an incredibly long amount of time. But then what's funny is when you go through law school, where almost all your exams are three, three and a half hours, and then you take the bar, which when I took it was three days, I'm like, "That was nothing." It's amazing how your perspective changes. But it's funny because I can remember 20-something-year-old Lee, in her early 20s being on a Saturday at UC Berkeley, just like, "Oh my gosh, this test is so long."
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah. I'm glad you brought that up actually, because that's another thing that is worse about the older formats, and better, I think at least, about the newer formats. Both the three-section Flex and the new four-section online LSAT, they're online. You could take it at home, or if your at-home environment isn't suitable, you can take it at a hotel or Airbnb, LSAT will reimburse you up to \$125. And so, you're not going to a test center with a bunch of other people. There's not that commuting time, there's not the stress and anxiety of having other test-takers around, the proctors walking around, you're not taking all that time to bubble in your name on a Scantron or anything like that. We're past all of that. So, test day is actually a lot shorter, and if your home environment is suitable, you can do all your practice tests at the same desk, on the same device that you'll do the actual thing.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. I've found while the bar exam has been remote that a lot of people have found that to overall reduce anxiety, the ability to really create the testing environment to study in, when you really couldn't do that. Because I think there was a lot of intimidation about going to these centers, being around a lot of people, and the collective anxiety that you can gain from being around other people. Are you hearing from your students about technical glitches, about issues with the online proctoring, or have things really worked themselves out in that department?
- Steve Schwartz: I'll admit, there were a lot of issues with the online proctoring in the earlier administrations of the exam moving online, back in May and June 2020. They've largely worked out a lot of that since, fortunately. And what they've worked out will presumably continue as we go into to the four-section version. Of course, there will always be tech issues for some percentage of folks. There are things, however, you can do to minimize the likelihood of that happening. One is to check all the [ProctorU](#) requirements. The LSAT online is administered by ProctorU, which also administers several other exams online, like the GMAT and the GRE. So, go on their site before test day, check all the tech specifications, make sure that you're using an appropriate device, and ideally do that far in advance so you can get used to, for your practice test as well, using that same device. Also, on ProctorU, there's a test-it-out simulation where you can check if your device and its updates with software are suitable for their system. It's [test-it-out.proctoru.com](#). And you can actually walk through it either automated, or if you scroll down there's also a support rep you can connect with live.
- Lee Burgess: Okay, that's great. One thing that I definitely think is something that students need to keep in mind as they're studying and creating this online exam environment for themselves is they do still need to sit down and take the test like it's a practice test. I think that there's the flip side – I think it reduces anxiety for a lot of people, it makes people feel more comfortable because they're not dealing with the kind of extreme situation of being in a testing location. But the flip side of that, you've got to figure out how to gear yourself up to take this seriously. It can be weird to take things super seriously in your house. Maybe we're more used to it now, because we do so many things at home, but I do think that especially if you haven't been working from home or you don't have a setup at home that you're really comfortable with – creating, doing whatever sort of ritual you need to do to make it feel important, I do think is something to practice as well.
- Steve Schwartz: I agree with you. I think that you want to take every practice test like it's game day, and you want to take those with the gravity that you'll take the actual thing, knowing that, "Hey, this matters." I don't want to ramp up the anxiety for folks or anything, but I also think you've got to know that the LSAT is the number one factor in a law school admission process. And so, if it requires watching Legally Blonde or something like that, or putting up a picture of your



dream law school to motivate you throughout your studying process, that can help. Look at that before you take every practice test and look at it before the actual thing to know, "Hey, this is real, this matters." I think on test day itself, folks will typically feel that, but it's also worth making sure that you take every practice test as if it were the actual. And the benefit is that while it can ramp up the seriousness of your practice tests, it can then relatively diminish the negative stress you might feel on test day itself, so that it feels like just another run-through.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, it's like you want a good level of adrenaline. It's like you get a little adrenaline to give you focus, to make sure that you have your act together, that you're not distracted, but then you don't want so much adrenaline that it's turning into the "fight or flight" response, and then your brain goes blank.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, exactly.

Lee Burgess: I think it's also good to remember... I'm a big biography reader, and I'm always fascinated to read stories about how impressive people get ready to perform whatever they're supposed to do. And I thought it was interesting, I just started listening to Brandi Carlile's autobiography that she recently wrote, called [Broken Horses](#), which if any of our listeners really like audiobooks, a friend of mine told me I had to listen to it because she reads it and she sings on the book. It's unbelievable, highly recommended.

Steve Schwartz: Oh, wow.

Lee Burgess: Anyway, but she was talking about being a stage performer, and that from a very young age she felt that she had to get dressed in a certain way to present a certain persona on stage, and that there was something about putting on this costume almost, to make it feel very real, and that there was a respect for the performance. And I think that that type of a feeling, even for lawyers who practice law, or practice law in court specifically, of putting on the suit, is kind of like putting on this persona that performs at a certain level. And I think when you're doing these tests at home, where you can be in your PJs if you want, or your fuzzy slippers or whatever is comfortable to you, there's that line. Because you do still have to decide what you're going to do to get into the mindset. And I think you've got to play with that, because everybody's is going to be different. It's like some people perform really well in their pajamas, some people don't. That's just one example of the comforts I think that we can cling to. But you want to show up as the exam-taking version of yourself, who's pumped and ready to go, just like athletes will listen to certain music before having to compete or things like that. It's like there is typically something that has to happen, a ritual of some way, to show up in the moment.



Steve Schwartz: Yeah, I totally agree. And you're right, it's going to be different for every person. I have heard stories of people going to LSAT tests, back when it was in-person, putting on a suit for it, which had the downside of maybe stressing out some of the other folks in the room. Luckily at home, if you want to wear a suit, it's not going to bother anybody else. But it could also be things... I love the playlist thing, I've been recommending Test-A playlists for years, whether it's 40 inspirational speeches in two minutes on YouTube, or listening to the Legally Blonde soundtrack. Something like that I think can really help you to get into the mindset. And I've got a tip that might sound a little bit weird, but it works for me and some other folks too, which is do five push-ups or jumping jacks before starting, to get your adrenaline up for the practice tests, because at least that way you know what it's going to feel like on test day. You know you're going to feel pumped up, you're going to feel excited, and so if you can practice reducing that a little bit for yourself, training your body in that way, training your mind in that way, I think it can only help.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. And I think the same is true for folks that may feel that they bring too much anxiety to the table, because some of the times, the flip side of that is, if you have an issue like showing up and being able to calm yourself down, we often talk about having mantras or breathing exercises that you do, that you meditate before you start. It's almost like you have to figure out how to meet yourself where you are that day, and practice so you can be like, "Oh man, I get super nervous when I sit down to do this, so I better take some steps to affirmatively calm myself down." Or if you're like, "I'm a little too chill, I can't get my juices going" – then it's like get up, do something physical, like you said, listen to music. Whatever you have to do. But that's why you have to practice this stuff, so you've got the habit. You just want to show up in a certain way every single time, and then it's going to feel comfortable. I used to do performing and stuff like that. Even when you would show up for a performance, there was always adrenaline, even if you incredibly prepared. But if you get used to it and you know how to use it, then it's helpful.

Steve Schwartz: Exactly. You've got to put yourself in those situations. And so I think a lot about acute stress versus chronic stress, when we're talking about things like adrenaline taking the test and such. Chronic stress while you're studying for the LSAT for three to six months or longer – obviously, that's not going to serve you to be in a constant state of worry that entire period. And that's where things like mindfulness meditation can help, which I also highly recommend. But acute stress, in terms of, "Okay, maybe once a week, or twice a week at most, I'm taking a practice test" – that's stressful, because I place importance on the practice test score. And on the one hand you don't want to place too much importance on those scores, because it's not the real thing and you don't want to be stressed out needlessly, but the benefit is that you get used to that feeling of the heart lifting and racing and knowing what's going to happen, and dealing with that for two-plus hours. You're going to have that on game day also, better



get used to it and know how to bring yourself back down. And that's where mindfulness can help, not only before the exam to center yourself, but then going in – if you get bogged down on a question you panic as a result – knowing how to snap yourself back out of that.

Lee Burgess: Yeah. No, it's very true, you've got to be able to come back from something frustrating, something demoralizing. It can happen, and you've got to be able to not throw up your hands, and keep fighting, because you don't know, that could be the experimental section for all you know at that point in the moment. Okay, so with this new four sections, I am a big fan of doing these full practice exams to work on issues of fatigue and focus, which I think a lot of people can struggle with. So, how do you think you should set up your practice, especially as you march closer to the exam, to reflect the four sections? How do you make sure that you're ready for any of what is thrown at you?

Steve Schwartz: That's a great question. I'd mix up any potential combinations. So, you've got your three-scored sections – again, one of games, one of reasoning, one of reading comp, and then you have the fourth that could be anything. So first off is you say, "Well, the experimental section could be first, second, third, or fourth, mixed in with the others. It could also be any of the types." And so you've got four different potential placements, you've also got three different types. So you're dealing with, what, roughly 12 different potential permutations. Plus you've got to consider that games, reasoning, reading comp, can appear in any order. So I'm not a combinatorics expert or anything, but there's a lot of different combinations you could end up with, right?

Lee Burgess: This would require a spreadsheet.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, exactly. Yes, you can deliberately try to get every single combination in your practice tests. I recommend taking at least 10 practice tests, and I just talked about more combinations than that, so it's not like you have to do every single iteration or variation there. But I would say just randomize it, randomize it. And [LSAC's LawHub](#), which is the best place to do practice tests since they look exactly like the ProctorU system on test day – take your practice tests in there. But the problem is that they only present it in the order with games being first, logical reason being second and third, and then reading comp being fourth. So, you need to do them out of order, which I recommend doing using self-paced mode.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, that makes sense. I could even see using index cards and just mixing them up.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah. Randomize it, yeah. Grab bag.



- Lee Burgess: Yeah. Or just have a friend give you an order. Especially if you're someone with the tendency to self-sabotage, I think giving it over to chance or someone else can also help you make sure that you do whatever makes you feel uncomfortable, because if you hate logic games, you are less likely to want to do two of those sections when you sit down to do practice. But that's probably the most important thing to do, is to do the things that make you feel most uncomfortable.
- Steve Schwartz: Oh, I hear that one all the time. Everyone says, "I don't want to get two sections of games" or, "I don't want to get two sections of reading comprehension." It's like, if you don't want to do that, that means you need to do it that much more, so if it did happen, it wouldn't be the end of the world. Hey, if you love logic games, doing two of them is no big deal, that wouldn't stress you out as much, and so your practice test scores could be inflated as a result. And so, I absolutely agree there.
- Lee Burgess: I know, nobody wants to have to study what they're bad at, but that's pretty much... I don't know, as I get older, it's like, "That's really what life is about, doing the things that make you feel uncomfortable. That is where growth happens, in just about anything."
- Steve Schwartz: Exactly.
- Lee Burgess: So, what do you think is coming down the pipe for the future of the LSAT? Do you think it's going to remain online in a permanent way? Do you think that the pandemic has permanently shifted things?
- Steve Schwartz: I do think it will remain online long-term. I can't see a reason why they would move away from that. They made earlier efforts, pre-pandemic, to put the LSAT on a tablet. LSAT historians from two-plus years ago will know what I'm talking about. But the thing is that now that it's online they've created this entire system around it, operations around it, invested in this system around it. I can't see them going back. The convenience of letting people do it at home, the convenience for LSAC of not having to book testing centers and hiring proctors who are doing it on the weekend as a side gig who may not have the right instructions and experience and know-how to administer it properly. I can't see them going away from that. ProctorU administers tons of exams, they know what they're doing. It may cost LSAC a little bit more to do it this way, but I think they probably save a lot in customer support. And it's easier to not ship tablets everywhere. There were plenty of issues with that back when it was in-person. They get to avoid all of that now.
- Lee Burgess: Yeah, I can see that. I'm remembering. during the pandemic, there was also some discussion about law schools really accepting the GRE, that maybe the LSAT wasn't going to have the same power as it used to. What do you think is on



the future for the admissions scores that are going to be used to do law school entrance?

Steve Schwartz: Yeah, there definitely are law schools taking the GRE, and that number is only growing. I think that law schools want to source more applicants however they can get them, and if the ABA isn't cracking down on the use of the GRE, which they're not, then I would see, on a long enough timeline, virtually every law school taking the GRE. However, it's still a very low percentage of applicants who are applying with the GRE, and a very low percentage getting admitted with the GRE. The LSAT is still the main game in town, and I think for applicants it's a way for them to show that they're serious about law school in particular; they're not just applying on a whim and also applying to tons of other grad schools as well. The LSAT I believe also has more predictive power of first year law school grades. And so I think it will still be the primary exam. LSAC has also done a lot to foster its relationships with law schools and serve them, and so I think that law schools will continue to seemingly prioritize it.

Lee Burgess: Do you think students should consider during both the GRE and the LSAT to see if there's one they outperform on, or do you think it's better to try and just focus on one that you think and just go all in?

Steve Schwartz: Well, it's hard to study for two exams simultaneously, or even not simultaneously, because you're learning two, preparing for two, taking the practice tests associated with two. So I think it'd be hard to do both, although if somebody already has a GRE record they could apply it and see if it happens, if it's good enough. I also know that a lot of pre-laws hate math.

Lee Burgess: I know, I was going to say that part.

Steve Schwartz: And the GRE's got the math.

Lee Burgess: I know.

Steve Schwartz: So, I think that even though folks don't seem to like logic games that much either, or may not like reading comp, depending on their preferences, it still is better than math and brushing up on that. So, I think that folks will still tend to favor the LSAT.

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think especially when folks have been outside of a core academic environment for a long time, like if you've been away from school. I remember I took the GRE before I took the LSAT, when I was still trying to decide what I was going to do with my life. And I remember at that point I'd been out of college for a few years, but I had also not taken math since my freshman year of college. I had taken statistics and other things like that for my major. But going back and being like, "Whoa! Triangles? Geography? What?" And I wasn't out of school for



that many years. So, if you've been out of college for 10 years, going back to take the GRE could be dusting off some old school skills for you, especially if you didn't do a major that required math.

Steve Schwartz: Oh yeah. And you did stats, so good on you for that. I never touched stats.

Lee Burgess: Well, I was a Psych major, so I did psych statistics. Not to discredit my excellence in statistics, but I had friends that were math majors and stuff. I was just basically using a computer program to run statistics.

Steve Schwartz: But still, you're right. Math, most pre-laws tend more towards the humanities, from what I typically see. And so, what that means is that if you took any math in college, it was just a requirement. For me personally, I was able to avoid it and do Evolutionary Biology instead for my science requirement. So, that covered it.

Lee Burgess: Wow, look at you. That sounds much more fun than the Calculus I took.

Steve Schwartz: That was the goal, exactly. So I personally haven't touched math since high school.

Lee Burgess: Wow, yeah.

Steve Schwartz: And when I did it in high school I can't say I did that great on it either. So for me, even going back to trigonometry or geometry, I would be so rusty on it. I could probably re-learn it if I really tried. But yeah, it's like, "No, please give me all the readings, I'll take all the reading instead. And if the LSAT has no math on it, then I'm good with that."

Lee Burgess: Yeah, I think the joke is we're both parents and someday it's going to come back to haunt us, because our children are going to do this work, and then come to us with questions like we know something about it.

Steve Schwartz: Yeah. And then we'll have to either admit we don't know it or have to brush up on that, just enough to show them.

Lee Burgess: Right, exactly. Or we have to do what we recommend – go find an expert.

Steve Schwartz: Exactly, exactly.

Lee Burgess: Who would like to be a Math tutor?

Steve Schwartz: Exactly, go look up a Math tutor. Exactly.



- Lee Burgess: I know. I even have friends who are mathematicians and I'm like, "Why don't you do the math?" And they're like, "Oh, I stopped doing math a long time ago. I do patterns and I build models." It's like, "Oh, not even mathematicians do math? What?" I know.
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah. Well you said programs now, it's all about programs now.
- Lee Burgess: It is about programs, yes, and models. Lots of modeling, whatever that means. Alright, well, as we are coming to the end of our time together, for folks looking forward to exams in 2021, 2022, any final thoughts on how they should be thinking about preparing for these tests in this new format?
- Steve Schwartz: Yeah, sure. The biggest recommendation I would have just to remind folks, honestly, that the LSAT has not fundamentally changed. Although you've got this extra section now, the content is still the same, so all your previous materials, all the previously administered exams, all of those prep tests are still perfectly useful. I also want to remind folks that, again, the LSAC LawHub site always puts things in the same order. That's not going to be your order on test day necessarily, so make sure that you're mixing it up, every potential combination, in order to properly get ready for test day.
- Lee Burgess: Awesome. Well, thanks so much for virtually hanging out with me, Steve. Maybe someday when we're all allowed to travel again, we can do it even in-person. What a novel idea.
- Steve Schwartz: That would be fantastic, Lee. I'd love that.
- Lee Burgess: Alright. Well, with that, we're out of time. If you enjoyed this episode of the Law School Toolbox podcast, please take a second to leave a review and rating on your favorite listening app. We'd really appreciate it. And be sure to subscribe so you don't miss anything. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to myself or Alison at lee@lawschooltoolbox.com or alison@lawschooltoolbox.com. Or you can always contact us via our website [contact form](#) at LawSchoolToolbox.com. Thanks for listening, and we'll talk soon!

RESOURCES:

- [Steve Schwartz's LSAT Course](#)
- [LSAT Blog](#)
- [LSAT Unplugged YouTube channel](#)
- [LSAT Unplugged Podcast](#)
- [Law School Admission Council](#)
- [LSAT-Flex](#)



[LSAC Law Hub](#)

[ProctorU](#)

[Broken Horses: A Memoir, by Brandi Carlile](#)

[Podcast Episode 249: Changes to the LSAT Due to COVID-19 \(with Steve Schwartz\)](#)