Analogies Designed to Make Learning Legal Research Easier

- Legal research process – putting together a jigsaw puzzle
  - Not an annoying one-solid-color puzzle
  - 1) sort pieces by color = setting up your research Qs
  - 2) outer pieces = secondary sources
    - Shows the scope of the puzzle/problem
  - 3) start on your piles
    - Solve one problem first (or til you’re stuck)
    - Then move on to the next
  - When am I done? When the puzzle is complete

- Case law – a river
  - Citators. You have your case in a fixed pt of the river
  - Table of authorities – everything flowing into your particular case
  - Citator – everything flowing forward from your case
  - Statutes and regs stay the same size whether more are added or taken away
    - Cases grow bigger and bigger until you get to the ocean

- Find one statute. You are a magical mouse. You can see the page, you can find it clearly but you’re only a mouse
  - Transform into a magical eagle and you have a broader view with good vision – TOC/Index – gives you a complete picture

- Citatory – baby case is born and it gets a name and an SSN and forever after the NSA is building a case file on it

- Any Harry Potter analogy

- Legal research = ordering a pizza
  - Strikes fear! Scare them from Google
  - Go on Google, type pizza Cleveland
    - Lots of options and you’re probably happy
  - Instead find the best pizza in a particular area, gluten content, 100% organic, list of ALL options, don’t spend more than $X, provide me a detailed explanation of all the rankings of all the pizzas for all time so I can evaluate your choice that this is the best pizza

- Statutory research – serious illness → get a second opinion
  - Search two versions of a code if possible – each offers excellent additions

- Topic and key numbers = GPS address of where case lives
  - Topic = street
  - Key number = house number
    - Sub-numbers = getting students in the right room
  - Same address works for Iowa, California, etc. –
  - You can then live in a room and look around and know how to build a similar room going forward
• Family rule: successful dentist appointment = ice cream!
  o (1) find rule of law = statute of ice cream (e.g., product incentivization rules)
    ▪ Look at definitions, remedies, defenses
  o (2) tiny cavity on molar = a problem; tiny cavity on a baby tooth = no problem
    (cases interpreting the statute)
  o (3) key numbers to update. Cavity doctrine is still good. But line may be blurring.
    Medium size cavity might be okay
  o Can refer back to it over the course of a semester if you’re talking about one
    piece of the analogy/research process
• Federal, state, local ordinances = like paying taxes
  o Three different tax types, three different jurisdictions
  o Sometimes they relate, but sometimes they don’t
  o All have their own rules BUT some tax the same things
• Court structure and concept of precedent like Russian nesting dolls

**Remember:** know what people like/can relate to (e.g., people might not like cars, football, etc.)