

Leveraging AI in Enriching Judicial Education

by Danielle M. Teagarden

EXPLORATORY PROJECT · METHOD AND LIMITS

How we know what we know

Who did what to produce these numbers, and how far to trust them.

Three layers

AI ASSISTANT, PART 1

Retrieval and coding

Run on full-text opinions from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026

- Retrieved Indiana appellate opinions by ranked searches, month by month
- Filled in a fixed set of categories, keyed to the Rules of Evidence, for each of the 176 opinions (July to September 2025 only partly)
- Ran a second pass without seeing the first
- Produced the dataset, codebook, runbook and first Excel heat map

AI ASSISTANT, PART 2

Audit and presentation

Checks and builds

- Recomputed every count from the table with code you can inspect
- Audited the rule-family rollup and the data fields
- Twelve AI agents compared claims with the courts' own opinions and rule text in the October 23, 2026 primary-source audit
- Built the figures, three decks, handouts and the website

PEOPLE

The verification gate

Still to do

- Read every reversible and every harmless record against the opinion
- Reconcile coverage differences between passes
- Decide what is citable and sign off

Trust ladder

DONE

Screening

AI coded, then a second AI pass

WE ARE HERE

Audited screening

Every count recomputes from the table; the coding itself is not fully verified.

TO DO

Human-verified

A person reads every reversible and harmless record against the opinion

TO DO

Citable

Sampling frame documented, agreement statistics reported

AI-assisted screening, then a primary-source audit by AI agents (all eight reversals, 12 random criminal opinions and 14 other opinions checked against the court’s own documents); no person has yet read every record.

From 176 opinions to 8 reversals



“Reversed” means an evidence ruling contributed to reversal, in whole or in part. Where a court held a ruling proper and added an alternative “even if error, harmless” holding, the opinion is coded by its primary holding.

Plain limits

- **Not a census.** Opinions were found by ranked searches; counts are directional.
- **Not a risk rate.** 4.5% describes these 176 opinions (95% Wilson score interval 2.3% to 8.7%). Trial rulings that were never appealed are not in the denominator.
- **Published opinions carry the reversals.** Seven of eight are published: 7 of 52 published opinions (13.5%) versus 1 of 124 memoranda (0.8%).
- **One quarter is lightly coded.** The 49 opinions from July to September 2025 have no holding notes. Analyses of holding text use the other 127. All 8 reversals fall in those 127 (6.3%; 95% Wilson score interval 3.2% to 11.9%), so the headline may be slightly understated.
- **Every count recomputes from the table; the coding itself is unverified.** Recomputing checks the arithmetic, not whether each opinion was coded correctly.
- **Two passes agreeing is consistency, not proof.** Both used the same search tool and model family, and no second-pass data are published.
- **Reporter (N.E.3d) citations are unverified.** Use the docket number and the opinion on the court’s site.

IF SOMEONE ASKS “CAN I CITE THIS?”

Describe it as a screening estimate from 176 opinions, give the interval, and say that the dataset was coded with AI assistance and audited against the court’s documents by AI agents, but that no person has yet read every record. Check any individual case against the official opinion before relying on it.