We live in an increasingly interconnected world. Traditional boundaries between inquisitorial and adversarial systems are becoming blurred and are even converging in some areas, notably criminal procedure. Nonetheless, differences in rules, procedures, and courtroom trial practices persist in the world’s courtrooms. Those who undertake to teach courtroom advocacy skills to students and lawyers from other systems or even other cultures with similar systems must be mindful and respectful of these differences; not everyone will necessarily benefit from learning storytelling practices or psychological persuasion techniques that might be used in an American criminal jury trial.

I suggest, however, that there are universal principles of courtroom advocacy and persuasion that apply anywhere and can be taught across systems and cultures. These include (but are not limited to) thorough case investigation and analysis, preparation of persuasive written pleadings and motions to the court, the ability to make organized oral presentations to a decision-maker, basic questioning techniques for witnesses, and summations that tie the facts of the case to the governing law and lead the fact-finder to the desired result. The identification and use of these principles can literally open a world of possibilities for cross-cultural and cross-system collaboration and education.