

## **Legal Research Assessment**

By Simon Canick. 28 Legal Reference Services Q. 201 (2009).

**Article Categories:** Course Design; Legal Research Instruction for 1Ls

**Keywords:** Assessments; Course Design; Legal Research Instruction; MacCrate Report; Pedagogy

### **Reviewer's Summary:**

After a brief discussion about the increase in librarian-taught first-year courses between 2002 and 2008, Canick summarizes the goals of legal research instruction as outlined in the MacCrate report and other major articles on legal pedagogy. There is a brief aside to highlight challenges that have surfaced with an increased librarian presence in first-year classes, including dynamics between librarians and primary instructors and students' tendency to give research and writing classes lower priority than doctrinal classes during the first year. The bulk of the article describes the pros, cons, and ideal uses of the following research assessment tools: objective homework assignments/quizzes, simulation style research exercises, observation and Socratic dialog, peer assessment, pathfinder/research guide/annotated bibliography creation, and objective, end-of-term examinations. Canick heartily endorses the observation/dialog model in an oral exam format as the most comprehensive (though also most time consuming) format, and ultimately suggests utilizing a combination of assessment methods.

**Summarized by:** Savanna Nolan, Georgetown University, in 2019.