

Online Legal Research Workshops

By Frederick B. Jonassen. 22 St. Thomas L. Rev. 470 (2010).

Article Categories: Course Creation & Design; Legal Research Instruction for 1Ls; Surveys & Empirical Research

Keywords: Active Learning; Computer-Assisted Legal Research; Course Design; Legal Research Instruction; Legal Writing; Online; Pedagogy; Process-Oriented; Survey; Treasure Hunts

Reviewer's Summary:

In this article, Jonassen discusses his use of an in-class workshop to teach electronic legal research to his 1L legal research and writing course. He begins by explaining the drawbacks of the lecture/treasure hunt approach and the benefits of an active learning approach. He summarizes two articles about using hands-on legal research exercises and addresses issues raised by them including: designing the exercise to require more analysis than a treasure hunt but less than an open memo, requiring the exercise to be completed with a group in order to encourage learning from peers, and balancing a minimum of detailed guidance with the time constraints of the exercise. The second half of the article details the exercise that he assigned during his in-class workshop session including the hypo, and the exercise questions. He ends by summarizing his students' research results, and their positive survey responses evaluating the workshop.

Summarized by: Cheryl Kelly Fischer, UCLA Law Library, in 2019.