

Should You Use A Textbook to Teach Legal Research?

By Nancy P. Johnson. 103 Law Libr. J. 415 (2011).

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

Keywords: Advanced Legal Research; Bibliography; Course Design; Hybrid; Information Literacy; Learning; Legal Research Instruction; Low-Cost; Online; Print; Research Skills; Subject-Specific Legal Research; Survey

Reviewer's Summary:

In this article Johnson examines the use of textbooks in legal research instruction. She begins by briefly covering the history of legal research texts. This is followed by discussion of the reasons not to use a textbook, such as belief that the students will not do assigned reading, concerns about affordability, and eBook accessibility concerns. At the heart of the article is a section summarizing the results of a survey taken by students at Georgia State who completed a legal research course taught with web-based materials in lieu of a textbook. The survey respondents liked the cost savings, environmental benefits, and targeted information, and disliked the lack of organization, the inability to use it later as a reference, and reading lengthy passages on a screen. The final section reviews selected legal research texts for the benefit of professors who decide to use a textbook.

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