

A Methodical Approach to Legal Research: The Legal Research Plan, an Essential Tool for Today's Law Student and New Attorney

By Caroline L. Osborne. 32 Legal Reference Services Q. 54 (2013).

Article Categories: Advanced & Subject-Specific Legal Research Instruction; Course Creation & Design

Keywords: Assessments; Course Objectives; Feedback; Google; Learning; Legal Research Instruction; Pedagogy; Research Planning; Research Skills

Reviewer's Summary:

This article explores the legal research plan as an assessment tool to teach law students a methodical approach to legal research. At the beginning, the article focuses on the issues facing law students and new attorneys when approaching legal research questions and how the Google search places them at a disadvantage. It goes on to provide a historical review of legal research texts highlighting the development of the methodical approach across time. The authors move on to discuss the legal research program at Washington and Lee School of Law including the development of the course around learning objectives. At the heart of the article, the authors advocate that the legal research plan is both a formative and summative assessment providing learning opportunities and feedback to students while also assessing their skills.

Summarized by: Kelly M. Leong, Fordham University, School of Law, in 2020.