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Teaching Legal Research Outside the Classroom

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Teaching Legal Research Outside the Classroom

Traditional Lecture Materials -- Flipped

Screencasting

Devotes class time to the application of concepts. In a flipped classroom, students are responsible for watching video lectures, which can be accessed at their own pace and in a time convenient to them. This generates more time for hands-on or small group collaborative work. Screencasts allow teachers to cover material in class, but it still requires the same amount of class time as it would if the teacher lectured from the board. Thus, students need to have access to a computer, and some may prefer the traditional lecture format.

Presents opportunities for collaboration. Bloomberg Law and Wills Law offer students the opportunity to watch the lectures at their own pace and then come to class to discuss the concepts. This allows for more informal learning and allows students to ask questions of the material. Screencasts also allow students to pause, rewind, and view as many times as possible.

QR Codes

Connect traditional materials to their online counterparts, online resources and/or instructional video.

QR codes allow students to scan a QR code that directs them to the video on the web or to a course management system.

Connect print classroom materials to their online counterparts:
- A paper syllabus can connect students to the online video materials in a flipped classroom.
- Instead of a printed handout, research guides, directions to an app, with a QR code.

The tools:

Twitter

Use as a class messaging tool. Engage students in the conversation outside of class, with messages or questions that are posted. Students can respond to these messages in a variety of ways.

Class Surveys & Polls

Enforce class participation. Replace clickers with polling platforms on the web. Students can respond from their mobile device.

Technical support

Both instructors and students will likely need technical support from the institution administrator to be able to use screencasting software to produce instructional videos or access online materials.

Student buy-in

Students need to use their personal, mobile devices, like Facebook and Twitter. This can be confusing and requires students to be comfortable with using technology.

Time Investment

Planning and producing video materials for Screencasting is a significant time investment. All the content must be recorded and transcribed before it is released. Once the video is uploaded, it can be accessed by students at any time, so it is important to have a plan for how to manage this process.

Challenges

Access to technology & Cost

Providing technology to the classroom or remote students requires purchasing software licenses or paid subscriptions to add up to a significant cost. Students also need internet access to view the video.

Teaching the technology

Despite advances in technology, not all students will be comfortable with the technology. Introducing a new tool into the classroom will require time to train the students, but it will require time and effort from instructors.

Technical support

Both instructors and students will likely need technical support to use the technology. They will need to be trained on how to use the system, and they will need to be available to answer any questions.

Student buy-in

Students need to use their personal, mobile devices, like Facebook and Twitter. This can be confusing, and it requires students to be comfortable with using technology.

Time Investment

Planning and producing video materials requires a significant time investment. It all requires content, which must be transcribed and edited. Then it is released in a similar way, on a regular schedule.

Benefits

Engage passive students: Twitter can be used to engage passive learners. Students can pose questions and ask follow-up questions.

Materials are available at their own pace.

Students can view course materials at any time. They can review course materials and ask questions about them as they come up. Students can also pose questions and ask follow-up questions about the materials.

Increase opportunities for student-student interaction.

Screencasting can be used to engage students in the conversation outside of class. Students can post questions or comments about the course materials. These questions can then be asked in class or in small groups to apply the concepts presented. Students can also ask questions of each other about the course materials.

Can be implemented gradually.

Students can choose whether to use tools like Twitter or Facebook to connect with others. This allows students to gradually learn about the tools and become comfortable with them.

Collaboration

Using tools to learn outside the classroom provides opportunities to collaborate with other information professionals and legal professionals to create the best content for their legal research.

It's a wonderful chance to take advantage of the expertise of colleagues and combine resources.

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