



Jamie Sommer

Course: Advanced Legal Research, Law

Students: 24

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Collaborative and Peer Learning Opportunities for Upper-Level Law Students

Context

My goal for the project was to improve collaborative and peer learning opportunities. The students in this course are upper-level law students who have gained practical experience from summer associate positions, clerkships, and internships. I want to explore ways for the students to share their own valuable learning experiences with their colleagues.

Project

I explored three new activities related to collaborative and peer learning: a team research project in which the students were grouped based on their stated practice areas, an online discussion forum for research best practices, and a peer-review assignment.

Objectives & Outcomes

The class is still ongoing, but early feedback on the team research project and online discussion forum was positive.

Results

The team project was a success. Students reported that they benefited from being able to focus on resources specific to their intended practice area with similarly situated colleagues. The discussion on the online forum exceeded my expectations. The students were generous in contributing posts about their research successes and failures and also in providing thoughtful comments on others students' posts. The peer review assignment has not yet been completed.

Lessons Learned

Students were asked to post comments in the online forum related to two specific exercises. In the future I would like to explore ways to expand this discussion beyond the two exercises and

into a more general discussion forum. The team project successfully allowed students within a group to learn from each other's experiences; however, I need to explore ways to improve sharing between the groups.