

Assessing Student Outcomes for WestLaw (Campus Research) database instruction:

This fall I assessed the instruction session covering WestLaw (Campus Research) database given to the Criminal Justice courses within the Department Public Management. Only one class requested instruction this semester, CRJ 3040 (International Law), and there were a potential of 24 students who took the "Exploring WestLaw (Campus Research) exercise. Of these 12 exercises were returned to the professor and eventually to me, or 50% of the class returned the exercise.

The outcomes that were assessed were the students' ability to locate case law in three different ways: by citation, by title, and by topic and/or topics (keyword and/or keyword phrase). Scenarios were set up with the necessary information to find if students could find the proper case and answer the questions about that case. It was expected that 100% of the students would be able to locate the correct cases using a citation search and the title search. It was hoped that 75% of the students were able to locate the legal material using the topic and/or topics searching. The outcomes proved that 100% of the students were able to locate the correct cases using the citation and title searches. When using the topic and/or topics searching, 10 of the 12 students or 83% were able to locate the case in one instance and the appropriate law journal but only 7 of the 12 students or 58% were able to select topics to find a law journal covering the case.

Additional time and hands on practice must be added to keyword searching section of the WestLaw (Campus Research) database. I plan to increase the instruction covering keyword searching by 5 to 10 minutes and give students 3-5 more examples to practice searching using keywords during the instruction session.