



## Dana Neacsu, Librarian and Lecturer-in-Law

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### Abstract:

- Librarians have stopped dusting shelves of books.
- But we continue to dust off brains
- We promote love of knowledge.
- More and more our work is about bringing our instruction to patrons
  - In the classroom
  - Online
  - Online after the classroom time proves insufficient.

### Introduction:

At Columbia Law School librarians have been an integral part of the legal research and writing curriculum since 2005. We teach incoming 1L students the travails of researching as a lawyer. The research component has changed since then many times. At the beginning, it was very ambitious. The librarians intended to impart all their research knowledge to first-year students in only seven 50-minute classes. We did not succeed.

But we learned from our mistakes and we moved toward further cooperation with the writing instructors. Eventually, the research classes focused only on how to use the proprietary databases to research the writing assignment. The formula was quite successful as we met with our 10-15 students in seven classes (four classes taught by us and 3 by the vendors).

Alas, nothing good lasts long, and our classes are now incorporating 40-45 students in seven classes. How can we maintain the on-hands individualized teaching that legal research to new students requires? When the classroom time does not allow for individualized, hands-on teaching methodology, then the research instructor needs to find ways to have a similar impact on students. How? There are new platforms which enable the instructor-student connection while the instructor is able to perform well defined tasks for more than one student. Librarians need to be innovative and adopt the newest, least expensive technology which gives them if not face time, "screen time" with their students. This is the role of using join.me in after class digital meetings.

### Join.me:

If you need to make sure that your students learn specific research skills, combine the in-class lecture and practice exercises with additional well-defined tasks which you can perform for the students who did not understand them in class, and due to the large number of attendees did not feel comfortable asking for help.

Understanding that it may be difficult to meet with 80-90 students – if you teach multiple 40-student sections – on an one-on-one basis while performing additional reference, research, teaching, collection and professional development tasks, digital platforms may be the way to go.

- Conference calls may not be the answer in a research teaching environment where you need to show and tell;
- Google docs offer a "chat" option, but the students cannot see the instructor's computer screen, they can only follow written instructions, which sometime may be too cumbersome;
- WizIQ (<http://www.wiziq.com/academic/>) may be an option, but after a free trial it charges substantial fees, and while the instructor can be heard and the students can "chat" back, again the students cannot see the instructor's demonstration;
- Join.me (<http://join.me>), on the other hand, offers all the tools a research instructor needs, and more importantly for a librarian who teaches legal research, join.me, in its basic form, is free.

### The Premise:

Teaching legal research requires hands-on classroom time. When the classroom becomes a lecture hall, then it is up to the individual librarian to make sure that her students have understood the mechanics of legal research.

Question: How do you locate topical secondary sources on Bloomberglaw?

The answer can become very convoluted if the student needs to describe the process.

With join.me the instructor can suggest multiple answers and demonstrate the correct answer.

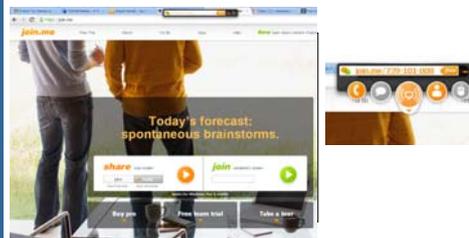
Multiple Choice Answer:

- Type the topic in the research box
- Go to "Legal Analysis & News," then choose "Books & Treatises," and click on one of the topics featured under "Practice Center."

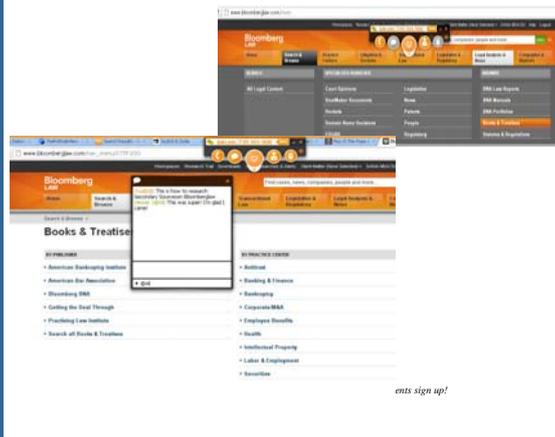
Upon demonstration the students understand the correct answer is b.

### How It Works:

Go to join.me and use the basic feature. The main disadvantage of the basic feature is that the identifier where your students need to go and share your screen will change every time you log in.



Despite this disadvantage you can still share with your students a live research demonstration



ents sign up!

### Conclusions:

If the instructor captures the students' attention in the class, then the students will join her afterwards for additional practice exercises. When that happens, the pitfall of research lecturing becomes corrected, and everybody wins: students, instructor, and the institution.



... and if you win, your employer may purchase a professional licence for you which allows you to have a stable URI, and phone number (if a student wants to call in)!

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