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**From the Editor-in-Chief. . . .**

This is the 6<sup>th</sup> volume of the *Southern Journal of Business and Ethics*, an official publication of the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business. The Journal is being published in hardcopy and electronically on the Southern Academy's web page at <http://www.salsb.org>.

The SJBE has been included in Ebsco Host services, allowing for full text search on most university library systems! This provides a great benefit to our authors and readers!

All articles that appear in this volume of the *Southern Journal of Business and Ethics* have been recommended for publication by the Advisory Editors, using a double, blind peer review process. A personal thanks is extended to the Advisory Editors for all their hard work and dedication to the *Journal* and the Southern Academy; without their work, the publication of this Journal would be impossible.

This is my sixth year as Editor-in-Chief, and I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the Officers of the Southern Academy for their support, encouragement, assistance and advice throughout this year. I would like to further express appreciation to Will Mawer of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, for his efforts in coordinating the entire process. The publishing of this journal is an intense educational experience which I continue to enjoy.

Many of the papers herein were presented at the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business meeting in San Antonio, Texas, April, 2014. Congratulations to all our authors. I extend a hearty invitation to the 2015 meeting of the SALSBS in San Antonio, Texas, April, 2015.

The Southern Academy annual meeting has been voted the "BEST REGIONAL" among all the regions affiliated with the Academy of Legal Studies in Business (ALSB) featuring over 60 authors and 50 papers. I hope to see ya'll in San Antonio! Please check the web site ([www.salsb.org](http://www.salsb.org)) for further information. To further the objectives of the Southern Academy, all comments, critiques, or criticisms would be greatly appreciated.

Again, thanks to all the members of the Southern Academy for allowing me the opportunity to serve you as editor-in-chief of the Journal.

**M.P. (Marty) Ludlum**

**Editor-in-Chief**

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## **MAKING THE LEAP: USING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOP AND ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING IN LEGAL STUDIES COURSES**

**Susan A. O'Sullivan-Gavin**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Marketing, Advertising and Legal Studies  
Rider University  
2083 Lawrenceville Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648  
[sosullivang@rider.edu](mailto:sosullivang@rider.edu)*

**John H. Shannon**

*Associate Professor, Department of Economics and Legal Studies  
Seton Hall University  
400 South Orange Ave, South Orange, NJ 07079  
[john.shannon@shu.edu](mailto:john.shannon@shu.edu)*

### **Key Words**

Teaching and learning, digital learning content, online education, virtual learning environments, hybrid courses, blended learning, teaching strategies, online teaching strategies, Higher Education, instructional design, reflection, educational technology, curriculum development, curriculum design, instructional technology, teaching technology and technology integration.

### **Abstract**

*This paper will examine migrating traditional Legal Studies courses to hybrid and online courses, the challenges, the differences inherent in the delivery of course content, steps taken to learn best practices in these new learning environments, the various technologies implemented, outcomes experienced, student attitudes toward technology integration, and lessons learned. Our conclusions are that students benefit from these learning environments; students experiment and practice their technology skills while honing critical thinking and communication skills necessary for success in today's global social, legal and business environments. Instructors also benefit by increasing their technology skills and staying current with new course delivery methods. Recommendations, based upon our extensive experience teaching in traditional, hybrid and online environments, are made for Legal Studies instructors to enhance their own courses while making the leap from a traditional course delivery to a hybrid mode and then to a full on-line course.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

As educators adjust to Millennial Learners,<sup>1</sup> it is more important than ever to examine whether or not, and how, technology can complement and enhance course instruction. Information technology and its applications to the business, personal, and educational worlds are ubiquitous and more powerful than ever. Online courses are

“...those in which at least 80% of the course content is delivered online. Face-to-face instruction includes courses in which zero to 29% of the content is delivered online; this category includes both traditional and web facilitated courses. The remaining alternative, blended (sometimes called hybrid) instruction has between 30% and 80% of the course content delivered online.”<sup>2</sup>

Whereas internet access and usage throughout the world is growing, so is its use and application in the world of higher education. Institutions and instructors are utilizing technology in more frequent and innovative methods every year, resulting in rich, collaborative virtual learning environments. Where do students and instructors fit within this move to technology-enhanced instruction? It is important to recognize that student-users are more than ready to interact in technology-rich learning environments. Students born after 1994 have no experience in a world not connected by the internet.<sup>3</sup> While they may operate at different levels of digital proficiency, it is clear that they absorb digital tools more quickly and efficiently than earlier generations. They are clearly digital natives, ““native speakers” of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet.”<sup>4</sup> Whereas digital immigrants are “Those of instructors who were not born into the digital world but have, at some later point in our lives, become fascinated by and adopted many or most aspects of the new technology...”<sup>5</sup>

Students have access to the internet everywhere, at home, in public libraries, most businesses, on campus and in residence halls, via handheld devices<sup>6</sup> and for some, in their vehicles. Our students are quite comfortable operating in digital environments since many applications emphasize sharing and collaboration at some level. Future business managers need to know not only how to use evolving collaborative tools, but must also need to understand conceptually how these tools can benefit not only their organizations, but also their own professional growth. Current and future educators need to analyze how technology can be used to enhance and complement course delivery, beyond posting a syllabus in the institution’s Learning Management System (LMS). Whether or not instructors are digital natives, modern course delivery systems and Web 2.0 tools must be examined for potential integration into course content and delivery. The ability to create virtual classrooms and create content collaboratively can lead to new approaches to teaching and learning that will significantly change our previous conceptions.<sup>7</sup> In addition, instructors will enable students to be fully

<sup>1</sup> Marc Prensky, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*, 9 ON THE HORIZON, no. 5, 2001, at 1.

<sup>2</sup> I.E. Allen and J. Seaman, *Changing Course: Ten Years of Tracking Online Education in the United States*, Pearson, Sloan Consortium and Babson Survey Research Group, 7 (2013), <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/highered.html>.

<sup>3</sup> British engineer Sir Tim Berners-Lee developed the World Wide Web (WWW) in 1989. The WWW became publicly available on the internet on August 6, 1991, <http://home.web.cern.ch/about/birth-web> (last visited August 4, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> Prensky, *supra*, note 1, at 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* See also Marc Prensky, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants II, Do They Really Think Differently? Part II*, 9 ON THE HORIZON, no. 6, l. 9 (2001).

<sup>6</sup> We emphasize mobile devices because there is little difference in the ubiquity of phone or tablet since these students have had access to personal devices for years.

<sup>7</sup> Jo Ann Oravec, *Bookmarking the world: Weblog applications in education*, 45 J. OF ADOLESCENT & ADULT LITERACY, no. 7, 616 (2002).

prepared for the business world where “Workgroup communities AND customer outreach provide daily updates on products and services.”<sup>8</sup> The use and application of technology to augment course content and delivery further enhances student’s general knowledge and skills in several areas, including those articulated by the AACSB in Standard #15: “Communication abilities, ethical understanding and reasoning abilities, analytic skills, use of information technology, dynamics of the global economy, multicultural and diversity understanding and reflective thinking skills.”<sup>9</sup>

Instructors in traditional face-to-face Legal Studies courses can begin to enhance their courses with technology by first moving to a hybrid delivery and then to an online delivery. When deciding to investigate transitioning to hybrid and then online courses, the first question to be answered is - why? One approach, simply transferring a face-to-face environment to an online environment is neither effective, nor successful. Instructors who have taught hybrid/online courses know that recording a live lecture and posting to an online course alone, does not create an effective learning environment. Instructors must give a great deal of thought to the motives, foundations and learning goals upon which to create a hybrid/online-learning environment. This article will review the growth of hybrid and online delivery of courses, the rise in demand for such offerings and the resources available to support that process. We will recommend a step-by-step analysis for instructors to consider prior to making the transition to hybrid or online courses. Finally, we will discuss our experience with the transition from face-to-face to hybrid and online delivery of our courses, including an examination of digital platforms and possible assignments.

## **II. THE GROWTH OF HYBRID (BLENDED) AND ONLINE EDUCATION**

The 2011 survey by Sloan Consortium and the Babson survey research group, a collaborative effort between the Babson Survey Research Group and the College Board, is the leading barometer of online learning in the United States. Based on responses from over 2,800 academic leaders,<sup>10</sup> the 2011 survey reports that the number of students learning online exceeded 6 million in 2011. In fact, the number of students enrolled in at least one online course in 2002 was over 1.6 million; by 2011 it exceeded 6.7 million students.<sup>11</sup> The 2014 Babson survey reveals that as of 2013 “There are 412,000 more students online students in Fall 2012 than in Fall 2011, for a new total of 7.1 million students taking at least one online course.”<sup>12</sup> Even more telling is the increase in online enrollment as a percentage of the total enrollment. In 2002, it was less than 10% and by 2010 it exceeded 30% of total enrollment.<sup>13</sup> According to the latest numbers, “The proportion of higher education students taking at least one online course now stands at 33.5%. For comparison, this rate was 32.0% last year, and slightly less than 10% in the first year of this study (Fall, 2003).”<sup>14</sup>

The assessment of learning outcomes and the difference between the online and face-to-face experience is also important to understand. Interestingly, almost 14% of chief academic officers view online education as somewhat superior to face-to-face education while nearly 23%

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 620.

<sup>9</sup> *2003 Business Accreditation Standards: Standard 15*, THE ASS’N TO ADVANCE COLLEGIATE SCH. OF BUS., <http://www.aacsb.edu/accreditation/business/standards/aol/standard15.asp> (last visited Mar. 6, 2014).

<sup>10</sup> ALLEN & SEAMAN, *supra* note 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 17.

<sup>12</sup> I.E. Allen and J. Seaman, *Grade Change: Tracking Online Education in the United States*, Pearson, Sloan Consortium and Babson Survey Research Group, 7 (2014), <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/gradechange.pdf>, at 15.

<sup>13</sup> ALLEN & SEAMAN, *supra* note 2.

<sup>14</sup> ALLEN & SEAMAN, *supra* note 12, at 16.



of CAOs have an unfavorable view of online education. A bit more than 51% of those CAOs view the two delivery methodologies as the same.<sup>15</sup> In addition, 44.6% of chief academic officers now report that it required more faculty time and effort to teach an online course.<sup>16</sup> When beginning the process, one of the most important things that a faculty member must do is recognize the additional time commitment required to create a hybrid or online course. Armed with the above information, an instructor can begin to view the larger picture of trends in online higher education.

### III. WHERE DO STUDENTS FIT INTO THE PICTURE?

Instructors must take into account the impact of the development and delivery modes on the learners and the instructors. Contact with the professor and classmates may be less frequent, take different forms, and interaction may possibly be limited to text based delivery platforms. The introduction of multipoint videoconferencing can be useful in reducing the limitations of these platforms. The lack of a physical presence and the differences in form and function of assignments and feedback may, at least initially, prove to be very disruptive to both student and teacher. It is also important to note that most of our students have little or no experience with online education.<sup>17</sup>

Experience also tells instructors that success in any hybrid or online environment requires a level of organization and motivation on the part of the student that may not be the same as in a face-to-face environment. Most of our students have never formally assessed their learning style to help guide them through the potential for success using different learning environments. It is important, therefore, that we alert newcomer students that hybrid or online learning environments that will require them to work in a different manner.<sup>18</sup>

### V. DIGITAL PLATFORMS

The development of Web 2.0 platforms has transformed the potential to integrate digital platforms in our learning environments. As O'Reilly (2005) put it, users “add value” to the technologies<sup>19</sup> and in educational settings, it is student participation that adds value to the course. Web 2.0 tools allow the communication and collaboration of students at an unprecedented scale. In fact, Web 2.0 tools do not merely facilitate the participation of users but are actually inconceivable without it. The use of Web 2.0 tools such as blogs, wikis, RSS feeds, social bookmarking, etc. which require user participation led to the formation of new practices in the fields of communication, collaboration, business, and education.<sup>20</sup>

In recent years, we have switched to the use of online digital platforms for our assignments including blogs, journals and wikis. The use of these digital platforms by business customers is increasing.<sup>21</sup> So, like the use of non-LMS based collaborative tools mentioned

<sup>15</sup> ALLEN & SEAMAN, *supra* note 2, at 24.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 22.

<sup>17</sup> See Tanya Roscorla, *See What College Students Really Think About Online Courses*, Center For Digital Education (April 3, 2013), <http://www.centerdigitaled.com/news/College-Students-Online-Courses.html>.

<sup>18</sup> See Jared Keengwe and Terry T. Kidd, *Towards Best Practices in Online Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 6 J. OF ONLINE LEARNING AND TEACHING, no. 2, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Tim O'Reilly, *What is Web 2.0. Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software*, (Sept. 30, 2005), <http://oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Ilias Karasavvidis, *Wiki Uses In Higher Education: Exploring Barriers to Successful Implementation*, 18

INTERACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS 219, 220 (2010), available at

[http://www.academia.edu/348663/Wiki\\_uses\\_in\\_higher\\_education\\_exploring\\_barriers\\_to\\_successful\\_implementation](http://www.academia.edu/348663/Wiki_uses_in_higher_education_exploring_barriers_to_successful_implementation).

<sup>21</sup> Bertil Chappuis, Brendan Gaffey & Parviz Parvizi, *Are your customers becoming digital junkies?*, MCKINSEY Q., (2011), available at

[http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing\\_sales/are\\_your\\_customers\\_becoming\\_digital\\_junkies](http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/marketing_sales/are_your_customers_becoming_digital_junkies).

above, providing students with experience in the use of digital platforms is an important part of their education. These digital platforms allow instructors to expand the scope of assignments to include multimedia objects such as audio and video files. It also allows students to understand the power of the hyperlink. A five hundred word writing assignment can be expanded to thousands of words with the appropriate and judicious use of hyperlinks and multimedia objects.

We work primarily with three different digital platforms: blogs, journals and wikis. These platforms are the successors to earlier interactive forums such as Usenet, Bulletin Boards and Newsgroups#. Digital Platforms can help students master substantive topics, teach students how to have civilized debates and how to share opinions and viewpoints. They are also an effective way to enhance writing and critical thinking/analytical skills.<sup>22</sup>

We chose to introduce digital platforms to our students because we seek to combine technological innovation with course content. Digital platforms in learning environments encourage active learning by students. Instructors can also increase collaborative learning (student to student), increase learning across the curriculum, help students learn to work as individuals or as team, increase research skills including better citation skills (reduce plagiarism), and can encourage the value of perseverance.<sup>23</sup> The "...experience of collective knowledge generation can and should be applied to traditional educational environments."<sup>24</sup>

### A. Blogs

Blogs are "weblogs."<sup>25</sup> As a knowledge management tool, a blog provides relatively undifferentiated articles of information that can add value to a course as it aids students to generate "'knowledge' from mere 'information'."<sup>26</sup> More importantly, "... as Wrede (2003) observes, '... if professors want students to become autonomous, creative, helpful and cooperative, educational institutions must actually allow students to practice exactly these skills ... by designing curriculums and courses that really value these qualities.'"<sup>27</sup>

### B. Journals

Journals<sup>28</sup> are another digital platform that allow for a great deal of flexibility. Journal use can encourage students to reflect on how the course material relates to the real world of business. The use of journals also allows us to support one of our goals, i.e., the introduction and mastery of digital platforms for writing. The opportunity to provide guidance to our students over the course of a semester long writing assignment supports the development of better writers. The journal assignment that mimics the development of a more traditional writing assignment like a term paper can help students overcome their lack of familiarity with working in a new structure provided by a digital platform.

### C. Wikis

What is a wiki? According to wiki.org, a "... wiki is a piece of server software that allows users to freely create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. A wiki supports

<sup>22</sup> Oravec, *supra* at note 7.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.*

<sup>24</sup> Jeremy B Williams and Joanne Jacobs, *Exploring the use of blogs as learning spaces in the higher education sector*, 20 AUSTRALASIAN J. EDUC. TECHNOLOGY, no. 2, 232-247, 2004.

<sup>25</sup> URBAN DICTIONARY, <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=blog> (last visited Mar. 6, 2014).

<sup>26</sup> Williams and Jacobs, *supra* at note 24.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> Jenny Moon, *Using Learning Journals with students: some guidance materials for tutors or those writing journals*, [www.cemp.ac.uk/people/jennymoon/learningjournals.php](http://www.cemp.ac.uk/people/jennymoon/learningjournals.php) (last visited Aug. 4, 2013); *See also* Jenny Moon, *Resources for use with reflection or learning journals*, <http://www.cemp.ac.uk/people/jennymoon.php> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

hyperlinks and has simple text syntax for creating new pages and cross-links between internal pages on the fly.”<sup>29</sup> Wikis are unusual among group communication mechanisms in that they allow open editing. Like many simple concepts, "open editing" has some profound and subtle effects on Wiki usage. Allowing everyday users to create and edit any page in a Web site is exciting in that it encourages democratic use of the Web and promotes content composition by nontechnical users.”<sup>30</sup>

As noted by Karasavvidis:

“Wikis are popular for a number of reasons. First, wiki systems enable the collaborative creation of associative hypertexts. The lack of hierarchical structure enables users to choose which links to follow. Second, to use a wiki the user does not need any specific operating system or applications software: a simple-web browser would suffice. Third, the entry-level skills required for the creation of a web page in a wiki system are very low: the availability of wiki mark-up and built-in WYSIWYG editors considerably simplifies the process of creating a web page. Last, a wiki system provides several other functions such as: tracking of edits, comparison between different versions of edits, rollbacks to earlier versions, threaded discussions per wiki page, fully customizable access, read, and edit rights, other types of media (e.g. images, sounds, video), and protected pages.”<sup>31</sup>

Remarkably, according to Daspit and D’Souza, “... the adoption of this technology in business schools has only just begun.”<sup>32</sup> Notwithstanding this failure to broadly use wikis, the power and flexibility of a wiki make it a natural choice for assignments that require a digital platform.

Our experience is that a wiki is the remarkably versatile digital platform that the descriptions above suggest. It allows for any number of uses in technology infused learning environments. Wikis support individual or team-based assignments. Access to content can be limited to a single student, a group of students, or an entire class. Wikis are ideal platforms for either short-term assignments or those extending over the course of the semester.

## **VI. LET’S GET STARTED: TAKING LEGAL STUDIES COURSES TO HYBRID AND ONLINE MODES OF DELIVERY**

Hybrid (blended) and online courses are structured differently from traditional face-to-face delivered courses. These differences are driven by the need to address the expectations of the students, accommodate the differences in available technology and allow for the stylistic differences demanded by the two approaches. In either case, the tried-and-true methods that serve a face-to-face experience are generally not applicable in a hybrid/online experience.

### ***A. Step One: Ready to Make the Transition?***

- ✓ Ready to transition to a hybrid course?
- ✓ Ready to transition to a full online course?

How comfortable is the instructor with technology? This critical question must be answered at the front end of the transition process. In order to determine what level of course delivery is best for the instructor, an honest answer is essential. It is not necessary to have a high level of technological proficiency. In fact, for the most part, instructors will work with software that is quite intuitive. That said, an instructor should plan to develop a reasonable comfort level

<sup>29</sup> Wiki.org, <http://wiki.org/wiki.cgi?WhatIsWiki> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> Karasavvidis, *supra* note 20, at 221.

<sup>32</sup> Joshua J. Daspit and Derrick E. D’Souza, *Using the Community of Inquiry Framework to Introduce Wiki Environments in Blended-Learning Pedagogies: Evidence From a Business Capstone Course*, 11 ACADEMY OF MGMT LEARNING & EDUCATION, no. 4 (2012) at 667.

with the technology planned to be used in a course because situations may occasionally arise where there is no one else available to fix a problem. Uncertainty transitioning from face-to-face environments to hybrid or online courses will ease as an instructor's comfort level and technology expertise grow. It will be necessary for instructors to take their experience in a classroom environment and use it as the basis for developing new approaches that will be effective.

***B. Step Two: Is This Feasible?***

- ✓ Is the institution or school ready for the course to be delivered in hybrid or online mode?
- ✓ Are there resources available and will they be deployed to support the transition?
- ✓ What is the need for the course?
- ✓ Who are the student learners? Are they physically located near campus or are they remote learners?
- ✓ What is the quality of student's Internet connection, high-speed broadband or dial-up?
- ✓ Can a first face-to-face meeting be required?

While it is important to know why an instructor wants to make the investment in this new approach to content development and delivery, it is equally important to understand the process that instructors will go through when "making the leap". The instructor must answer the questions posed above, and doing so will help determine the optimal method of delivery for the course, i.e., hybrid or online. The instructor also needs to determine if the institution supports the chosen mode of delivery. We first took a course to a hybrid model and then, after several revisions, based upon our experiences and feedback from students, to the online mode.

In a hybrid course, the class may meet face-to-face one or two times a week or on alternating weeks and the remainder of the semester will be delivered online. In other words, a hybrid environment may be among the most flexible to design and deliver and a natural first step in the transition. Assignments can be designed to take advantage of either face-to-face time or extend the classroom beyond its four walls by requiring online interaction with the instructor and/or classmates. The content can be modular and include in-class group activities and exams. Case study assignments, for instance, can be geared either for individual or group work online. These assignments can then be reviewed in some detail during in-class discussions. If designed properly, all of the assignments can be completed either on an individual basis or as part of a group.

An online course may or may not require a face-to-face first meeting, dependent upon the institution and what the instructor is trying to accomplish in the course. We have found that initial meetings, when possible, give our students and ourselves the opportunity to transition from a more traditional environment to an exclusively virtual learning environment. In the alternative, an instructor might want to consider a required videoconference with all students present to ask questions and learn answers to common questions and concerns.

***C. Step Three: Make Time to Create the Course***

- ✓ Is this a time consuming process?
- ✓ Can a course be transitioned in a week or two?

Developing and delivering hybrid/online courses is a time-consuming process if done well. It is critically important that an instructor prepare well in advance of the start of the course. Experienced teachers know that making adjustments on the fly in a face-to-face setting, while occasionally challenging, is relatively doable and can be reasonably successful. However, it is very difficult to adjust in an ad hoc manner in a hybrid or online environment. While preparing a well-planned course does not guarantee success, it increases the potential for success. Leave plenty of time to analyze content and plan delivery. We do not recommend creating a hybrid or online course two weeks before a semester begins or creating a course and planning to populate

it with content and assignments as the semester proceeds. This type of poor planning can lead to confusion and disorganization. Students will sense and dislike a poorly designed learning experience.

#### ***D. Step Four: Reach Out to Sources***

- ✓ Is there a potential colleague/mentor to support the transition?
- ✓ What are the Institution's instructional design resources? Are they sufficiently robust to support an instructor during the transition process?
- ✓ Does the institution offer professional development session on developing hybrid or online courses and new technology for course content delivery?
- ✓ Where is the help desk?

These sources will be an invaluable guide as an instructor begins the actual process of developing the content and delivery of the course. Colleagues are some of the best resources for transitioning to hybrid and online courses and can provide feedback that should not be overlooked. We are fortunate in that we can brainstorm ideas and create innovative assignments with each other. We strongly suggest joining forces with a colleague to do the same. For those who are not technologically literate, it is always a good idea to identify a technology savvy colleague willing to serve as a mentor while working through the challenges related to this learning experience. We also recommend meeting with colleagues who have previously taught hybrid or online courses. These individuals can be a significant source of assistance with this new approach. Plan to schedule regular consultations with mentor(s). Ask a colleague to critique the course site. Regular interaction with a "technology support group" will provide invaluable feedback. Departments investigating adding several hybrid and online courses may also want to form a "collaborative space" for discussions, recommendations and helpful hints.

In addition, meet with the experts at the institution's Teaching and Learning or Teaching, Learning and Technology Centers. They will be a key resource in your journey. The TLTC will provide access to instructional designers and digital media specialists, among other resources. Instructional designers will provide advice on the design of the content and delivery in either a hybrid or online environment. In addition, instructional designers may have prior experience in developing courses in a specific discipline with knowledge as to content sources, delivery methods and suggestions for tailoring the course to specific wants and needs. Instructors should also attend professional development opportunities related to hybrid and online learning.

When developing our legal studies courses, our instructional designers directed instructors to the Quality Matters Program<sup>33</sup> which is a nationally recognized company dedicated "to promoting and improving the quality of online education and student learning..."<sup>34</sup> Quality Matters uses an annotated rubric of eight general standards and forty-one specifically explained standards that can be used to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses.<sup>35</sup> These standards will help to focus and organize the development of the course.<sup>36</sup> Lucas Loafman and Barbara W. Altman discuss using the Quality Matters rubric in the *Journal of Legal Studies Education* when building an online course.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> THE QUALITY MATTERS PROGRAM, <https://www.qualitymatters.org/> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> *Our Mission*, THE QUALITY MATTERS PROGRAM, <https://www.qualitymatters.org/our-mission> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> THE QUALITY MATTERS PROGRAM, <https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

<sup>36</sup> Note: The Quality Matters rubric cannot be used without the permission of MarylandOnline, Inc. and use is reserved to those institutions with a paid subscription.

<sup>37</sup> Lucas Loafman and Barbara W. Altman, *Going Online: Building Your Business Law Course Using the Quality Matters Rubric*, 31 J. LEGAL STUD. EDUC. 21-54 (2014).

To the extent that one feels that working with technology is essentially a high wire act, mentors, colleagues and instructional design professionals are the nets. An instructor may not be able to help students with the technical aspects of the information technology supporting their online course. The help desk is available for those reasons. An important caveat for all of instructors to remember is that assistance with technical support can be an enormously time-consuming experience. This is especially important if using materials supplied by publishing companies to support the course. Fortunately, much of the material from publishing companies will integrate directly into the learning management system, creating a relatively seamless experience for both professor and student. Unfortunately, on those occasions when it does not work, it becomes an issue for the publisher's technical support to resolve. In either event, we have found that it is always better to defer to the appropriate tech support. All of the aforementioned resources can help an instructor cultivate that expertise or enhance developing skills.

#### ***E. Step Five: Set Up A "Sandbox"***

- ✓ What is a "Sandbox"?
- ✓ Where do sandboxes come from?
- ✓ What does one do in a sandbox? What is kept in the sandbox?
- ✓ Who will see the sandbox?

Part of the discussion with an institution's Teaching and Learning or Teaching, Learning and Technology Centers is how to set up a "sandbox" and what tools your institution can provide that will allow the instructor to "practice" before the course goes live. Remember that, as a child, playing in the sandbox was a wonderful time. It was a place to experiment, to try things, molding the sand or the toys in a way that brought a vision to life.

A digital sandbox performs the same function. It allows an instructor to "play" in a digital environment that is the same as the one that will ultimately support a hybrid or online course and, like a physical sandbox, permits one to work with little or no consequence. If a particular approach to an assignment is not effective then it is very easy to delete that work and start over. It may take time to get the content, assignments, evaluations, grade book, etc., to the instructor's liking.<sup>38</sup> A sandbox is also a place for to learn and test the functionality of the institution's learning management system. Remember, no one but the instructor and the instructional designer will have access to and see experiments, including those that do not work.

Instructors can also use the sandbox to store templates of successful experiments. If a particular approach or approaches to presenting materials, creating assignments or the use of administrative functions "work" and are effective, they can be stored in the sandbox for future use. This experimentation will also help build confidence in the ability to develop and implement online courses. The more often the technology is used, the more an instructor will become comfortable with the idea that the problem that has arisen can be addressed. When creation of the course is complete in the sandbox, it is time to establish the real course in the institution's Learning Management System.

#### ***F. Step Six: Going Live***

- ✓ How is a live course managed?
- ✓ Should auto-reminders be added?
- ✓ Videoconferencing?

Now that the course has been successfully designed, students have enrolled and the semester is about to begin, it is time to "go live" with the implementation of the course. There are a few things that an instructor can do to make life easier while teaching a hybrid or online

<sup>38</sup> Remember Step Three and allow time to create a final product that will be enjoyable to work with.

course. Remember that the course is no longer meeting face-to-face with students on a regular basis. If teaching a hybrid course, instructors may be alternating live with online meetings and, in an online course; the instructor will be “on” twenty-four-seven, with no traditional face-to-face meetings. That means that regular face-to-face interaction with students as a group and the resulting opportunities for reminders about assignments and exams will decrease. In order to counter this, we recommend several ways to manage a live hybrid or online course.

First, take the course calendar and add it to the instructor’s personal calendar, adding reminders that will automatically email or send text messages as updates and reminders. The instructor should be sure to monitor email so as to be as responsive as possible within the parameters that established for the course. Next, when working with students individually or in small groups use a videoconferencing platform, like Skype, Google+ or the platform available in the LMS. We both use videoconferencing in our online courses and schedule these conferences in our syllabi so students know when to join.

Another suggestion is to schedule weekly virtual office hours by way of videoconference. Also, alert students to the parameters of the instructor’s availability during times outside those regularly scheduled hours. Online students can exercise the virtual equivalent of raising their hand for additional assistance. Videoconferencing will allow them to do so in a group setting and is also a great tool for post-exam review or for discussions on research projects. Students also like to use these tools for group projects.

Now that the instructor has designed an excellent course, created a set of deliverables for the students and clearly stated the expectations for student performance through the development and publication of grading rubrics for various assignments, it is important to set up auto reminders for assignments, quizzes and tests. Remember to also use the Learning Management System’s calendar and reminder tools so students are reminded both within and without the institution’s system. The auto reminders and videoconferencing will only help the students, and the instructor, stay on top of course deliverables.

#### ***G. Step Seven: Be Flexible***

- ✓ Can an instructor remain/be flexible with students in a hybrid or online course?
- ✓ How much flexibility is needed?

It is very important to maintain a level of flexibility when responding to students in hybrid or online courses. That flexibility will be important when addressing situations involving a family emergency or unexpected employment demands. It goes without saying that a more significant disruption, such as a weather related event or other natural disaster, requires more of everything: more empathy, flexibility, responsiveness and creativity. Emergencies, for both students and instructors, may demand responses not anticipated in the initial course design. An instructor can be both creative and flexible when working in a hybrid/online environment. When transitioning to these new environments, ask students to also be flexible as you BOTH learn new tools. This gives students a sense of ownership and participation, while alleviating the fears of some of the digital immigrants.

Anticipating the need for flexibility suggests that an instructor prepare students for alternate communication platforms in case the institution’s system is unavailable for some reason or the student cannot access the system from a remote location. Collect their mobile numbers (for text messaging) and establish Skype and/or Google+ accounts. The introduction of Google+ hangouts<sup>39</sup> allows for multipoint videoconferencing, screen sharing and the integration of documents, spreadsheets and presentations while working in a videoconference. We also suggest

<sup>39</sup> *Google+ Hangouts*, <http://www.google.com/+/learnmore/hangouts/> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013).

that students locate, in advance, free Wi-Fi access points. That will allow students to be prepared in the event their Internet access at home, or at work, is disrupted. These kinds of preparations will help to minimize stress from unanticipated disruptions.

#### **H. Step Eight: Be Present**

- ✓ What is “presence” in a hybrid or online course?
- ✓ How can an instructor be present in a hybrid or online course?
- ✓ How can an instructor encourage students to be present in a hybrid or online course?

One of the key aspects of a well-designed hybrid or online course is the level of interaction among students in the course and between students and the instructor. Often this is described as “presence” in a hybrid or an online course. Presence, in an online course, can be defined as cognitive, social and teaching presences.<sup>40</sup> Cognitive presence is “the extent to which the participants in any particular configuration of a community of inquiry are able to construct meaning through sustained communication.”<sup>41</sup> Social presence is defined as “the ability of participants in the Community of Inquiry to project their personal characteristics into the community, thereby presenting themselves to the other participants as “real people”<sup>42</sup>.

Teaching presence includes:

“...the design of the educational experience. This includes the selection, organization, and primary presentation of course content, as well as the design and development of learning activities and assessment. A teacher or instructor typically performs this function. The second function, facilitation, is a responsibility that may be shared among the teacher and some or all of the other participants or students. This sharing of the facilitation function is appropriate in higher education and common in computer conferencing. In either case, the element of teaching presence is a means to an end to support and enhance social and cognitive presence for the purpose of realizing educational outcomes.”<sup>43</sup>

There are many opportunities for creating a vibrant instructor presence in a hybrid or online course<sup>44</sup> and in particular, in a hybrid or online course.<sup>45</sup> When we began to collaborate on the development of these new learning environments, we used tools like Google Docs, Skype, LMS platforms and email in order to keep in regular contact with our students. Over time, those tools have been enhanced and new tools have become available. Platforms like Google Docs and Google+ hangouts have become more sophisticated, easier to use and more intuitive.

It is also apparent that the effectiveness of cloud-based tools will only become more robust in the future. In addition, the use of these tools with colleagues to collaborate on projects also makes instructors more familiar with them and puts instructors in a much better position to introduce them to our students. While our learning management systems are both comprehensive

<sup>40</sup> D. Randy Garrison, Terry Anderson & Walter Archer, *Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education*, 2 THE INTERNET AND HIGHER EDUC. 81, 87-105 (2000).

<sup>41</sup> *Id.* at 89.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.* at 89.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.* at 90; *See also*: K. Swan, D. R Garrison and J.C. Richardson, *A Constructivist Approach to Online Learning: the Community of Inquiry Framework*. In Payne, C. R. (Ed.) *Information Technology and Constructivism in Higher Education: Progressive Learning Frameworks*, 43-57 (2009).

<sup>44</sup> Judith Boettcher, *Ten Best Practices for Teaching Online*, <http://www.designingforlearning.info/services/writing/ecoach/tenbest.html> (last modified May 20, 2013); *see also Library of eCoaching Tips*, <http://www.designingforlearning.info/services/writing/ecoach/inventory.htm> (last visited Aug. 4, 2013) (as of June 3, 2013 it had 99 tips on teaching in online environments).

<sup>45</sup> Ida M. Jones, *Can You See me Now? Defining Teaching Presence in the Online Classroom Through Building a Learning Community?* 28 J. LEGAL STUD. EDUC. 67, 67-116 (2011) (for a full discussion of the importance of creating instructor presence in an online course).



and reasonably well integrated, our students will not be living in a world where a learning management system remains available to them. The use of mainstream tools enables instructors to expand their presence in either a hybrid or online course and to encourage interaction and active learning among the students.

### ***I. Step Nine: Take Notes***

- ✓ How can an instructor remember issues that arise as the course proceeds?
- ✓ Is there any way to track student questions and concerns?

As the course progresses, an instructor should take notes on how issues and items can be handled differently the next time the course is offered. Review student questions on assignments for ways to improve communication. Consider creating a frequently asked question (FAQ) section in future courses in which students can submit questions, answer each other and communicate with the instructor. Also, be aware of time issues, i.e., was the length of time for an assignment too short or too long? Was additional time needed for grading and responding to assignments and evaluations? Should the email response policy be adjusted? The instructor might want to informally keep track of who attends video conferences (if they are not mandatory). Are student questions about the content (the instructor's area of expertise) or are they about the delivery or technology? Note when during the semester the student questions began to lessen as they became familiar with the content and the delivery methods. These notes will help an instructor tweak various aspects of the course so that it will run more efficiently the next time. An instructor can create a module in the LMS, not available to students, wherein comments and notes can be left for later review.

### ***J. Step Ten: Evaluate the course: Self-Reflection***

- ✓ How can the course be improved?

It is always important to reflect upon the successes and challenges faced upon the completion of a new endeavor. Students, of course, will evaluate the course at the end of the semester. In many ways, student evaluations are an indicator of the extent to which they appreciate an instructor's teaching style. However, take the time to evaluate its success when the course is completed. We have used an evaluation rubric for online courses developed by the California State University at Chico.<sup>46</sup> The Chico framework provides a sense of what aspects of the course to examine when conducting a self-evaluation. It is very useful to undertake this process in conjunction with a review of the student evaluations. For example, if many of the students sought clarification of an assignment or some other course requirement, the instructor was alerted to the need to further develop the explanatory materials introducing that particular requirement. In this instance, conducting a self-evaluation of the course and cross-referencing student evaluations is an effective way to assess the intersection of the two evaluations. A critical self-evaluation will help the instructor identify what was learned through the process and what can be done better as part of the inevitable redesign of the course. It will also create a checklist that will be particularly informative when identifying and evaluating new online tools that might be of interest in the future.

## **VII. DIGITAL ASSIGNMENTS**

Once an instructor has completed a self-evaluation of where digital platforms fit within the scope of the instructor's capability, desire and learning goals of the course, the instructor can determine where to add the platforms. We do not recommend constructing an assignment simply to use any particular digital platform or Web 2.0 tool. Instead, we recommend that an instructor layer the tools and platforms into existing assignments, taking one step at a time. For instance, weekly writing assignments can be turned into a blog posting assignment. A research paper (or

<sup>46</sup> *Rubric for Online Instruction*, CAL. STATE UNIV. CHICO, [www.csuchico.edu/tlp/resources/rubric/rubric.pdf](http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/resources/rubric/rubric.pdf).

“Term” paper) can be converted into a research journal or discussions relative to current events can be converted into a weekly current event journal. Students that would be assigned some type of slide presentation can now use a Wiki to present their material and provide classmates with audio, visual and hyper links to additional material.

When infusing technology into our courses, our main initiatives are for students to: hone their critical thinking skills, enhance learning and retention of course material, practice professional and civil discourse, improve writing skills, recognize the importance of current events and business trends in their chosen fields of study allowing them to identify future occupational challenges and opportunities.<sup>47</sup> All of these are important for students to successfully transition to a changing business environment.

### **A. Blogs**

Blogs allow instructors to craft assignments that encourage an active discussion between and among all of students related to the events of the day and the course material. Our blog assignment (See Appendix A) uses the course blog<sup>48</sup> created specifically for use by our Legal Studies students to complement and enhance the learning goals of our courses. Although we are at two different universities, our graduate and undergraduate students share and contribute to this course blog.

We post multiple articles to the blog site during a typical week. Articles posted to the blog introduce business and global current events and are the basis for student comments. Students are required to make connections between the blog content and course material. Legal Studies courses incorporate blogs very easily as these courses utilize current events as examples of the impact of many laws and regulations on business and the broader environment. We both traditionally start our class meetings with a current events discussion; blogs are an effective way to efficiently share a broad range of current events sources in order to help students focus on course material, filter out extraneous information and make connections to real world events. Students also begin to make connections to materials covered in other courses.

In addition, blogs introduce students to new technologies that are used in business forums and help students understand proper “netiquette”.<sup>49</sup> Reading a variety of blogs can help students learn to decipher a blog and how bloggers engage on a particular site or subject. As instructors, the use of blogs is a personal/professional challenge to stay current with new technologies that enhance the students’ educational experience. An instructor may also choose to participate actively in the course blog assignment rather than serving only as a moderator. This will help the instructor understand the student perspective of the assignment while continuing to encourage dialogue with students and furthering instructor presence in the course.

Before deciding to use a blog in a course, it is important to evaluate the course to determine where you want to use the blog. When designing an assignment, its purpose and desired learning outcome, “... it is essential to carefully review learning objectives and learner’s needs to determine how blogs can amplify learning opportunities.”<sup>50</sup> The instructor must determine if an individual/group or public/private blog will be utilized. Instructions, expectations, criteria (number and frequency of posted comments, word count, links to other sites, whether to reply to other students’ comments, grading (grammar, style, spelling, quantity/quality of links, originality of insights) all must be clearly explained to the students in

<sup>47</sup> Liping Deng and Allan H K Yuen, *Blogs in Higher Education: Implementation and Issues*, 53 *TECHTRENDS*, no. 3 (May/June, 2009) at 95.

<sup>48</sup> [http://\\_\\_\\_\\_.net](http://____.net).

<sup>49</sup> *NETIQUETTE*, <http://www.networketiquette.net> (last visited Aug. 8, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Deng and Yuen, *supra* at note 47, at 96.

the syllabus and in the learning management system. In addition, in the beginning of the course, we review the requirements and purpose of the assignment, and explain the mechanics of commenting on a blog post.

The requirements of our blog assignment vary depending upon the course delivery mode (traditional face-to-face, hybrid or online) and the length of the course (6, 8, 10 or 14 weeks). In general, students are required to add comments at least two to three times per week on individual blog posts.

### **1. The Blog Assignment**

We have found over the years that very few of our students have ever posted to a blog. In order to clarify expectations, procedures and evaluation, students are introduced to the blog during the first week of class and are shown how to post comments to the site. Previous posts and comments are reviewed by students during this time and a “good” comment and a “poor” comment are identified and discussed. Deng and Yuen cite Xie and Sharma (2005) who “... noted that a structured and guided introduction to blogs might be conducive to a more fruitful blogging experience since most students initially feel somewhat lost and frustrated with regard to how to blog and what to blog about.”<sup>51</sup> Comments are regularly reviewed to ensure students understand the mechanics and requirements of the assignment.

In order to help students understand the assignment, the requirements for comments and the basis for assessment of their work are specified in the course syllabus and in the learning management system (LMS) for student review prior to posting. “Brownstein and Klein (2006) suggested that structure should be provided for student blogging in the form of rubrics, guidelines or explicitly stated expectations.”<sup>52</sup> (See Appendix A)

### **2. Assessment**

Students are assessed on their comments based upon the quality of writing, depth of critical analysis, topic comprehension, initiative, respect for other participants, citation to outside sources, and current event references. Students are given the grading rubric to guide their work (Appendix E). Most students recognized the additional writing required with this assignment and found the articles complemented the topics covered in the course. In the end, students successfully interacted on the blog and across both campuses. Students maintained professional decorum and attitude while posting and informal feedback from students was that they felt their critical analysis and writing skills were improved. The majority of students were pleased to have learned a new technology that lets them communicate and they also discovered that many companies have their own blogs.

## **B. Journals**

Journals can be used to support longer term, individually focused assignments and are more appropriate for reflective work. Journals provide significant opportunities for one-on-one interaction between instructor and student. An assignment using a digital journal will support four important goals: stages development of the assignment over time; provides a structure that allows students to be reasonably comfortable in a new delivery platform; allows flexibility and provides students latitude for experimentation; and instructors are able to provide timely feedback as the assignment progresses.

### **1. The Research Project Journal (See Appendix B)**

The development and presentation of a research project structured over a period of weeks and reliant upon a digital platform allows students to incorporate digital materials, e.g., images, audio and video, while honing their research and writing skills. Such an assignment is effective

<sup>51</sup> Deng and Yuen, *supra* at note 47, at 96.

<sup>52</sup> *Id.*

when the production of a weekly word count is a manageable size. This approach is an alternative to an assignment that requires students to produce a substantial research paper on a date certain toward the end of the course. Some students may decide to write such an assignment a short time before it is due. The use of a regular assignment that requires the incremental development and addition of material to a research project encourages students to develop a major writing assignment in a more appropriate way.

One approach to this assignment requires the identification of a current issue examining a topic at the intersection of law and business. Students submit a proposal that includes a description of the topic with information adequate to make a well-developed analysis with sources sufficient to support the proposal. All aspects of the assignment, instructor or student are posted to the journal (See Appendix F). Students submit content on a weekly basis. Each submission must: identify the relevance of the content to topic, contain multimedia (audio and/or video), be appropriately sourced and use MLA format and live hyperlinks to each source. All submissions, including the proposal and Executive Summary, must include both live in-text hyperlinks (in lieu of footnotes or endnotes) and a Works Cited list (using MLA format and live hyperlinks to each source). The final submission is an Executive Summary of their weekly content. Students are given guidelines for the Executive Summary (See Appendix D).

### **C. Wikis**

A wiki platform provides for a wonderful level of flexibility. The collaborative nature of this particular platform allows for either individual or team-based projects. Students learn how to add visual and audio files to text material, in addition to hyperlinking to sources that expand the discussion beyond the four corners of the assignment by inviting readers to further investigate the hyperlinked sources. One version of such an assignment chose current events related to the course topics and analyzed the event's relationship to the course and summarized why they thought their classmates would be or should be interested in the issues raised (See Appendix C). Instructors can choose whether or not to have classmates comment on other's current events. In another assignment, the instructor required students to work on their individual wiki pages for the previously discussed Research Project journal. This use made it possible for the students to "see" their research project as it developed and facilitated the instructor's review of each student's progress.

We have also found that the flexibility of this platform is particularly effective for teams. An instructor can easily transition an assignment to one that is team based. For instance, in the assignment in Appendix C, teams could be assigned to particular topics and be responsible for updating their classmates on developments throughout the semester. Most wiki platforms provide a dashboard that allows instructors to evaluate user data, assessing individual contributions to the group work. This function helps alleviate student concern about team members who do not contribute. We have found that this information is very helpful when evaluating student performance.

### **VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The transition to more widespread use of hybrid (blended) and online learning environments is accelerating. The growth in demand for these alternative delivery methods is driven by students' need to gain more flexibility in their access to higher education by time and location shifts. Significantly, increased demand for faculty who are willing to invest in learning these new platforms is one clear outcome. Early faculty adopters are generally the driving force behind technology innovations and become the facilitators of the broader adoption of a particular innovation. We expect that development of blended and online learning environments will follow a similar process.

While hybrid and online courses are different, both are challenging and rewarding. They provide an instructor with the opportunity to examine their approach to the development of course materials and the delivery of same. An instructor comfortable with face-to-face delivery might experience disruption when delving into hybrid or online delivery. Given current trends in higher education that embrace and infuse technology in the classroom, we recommend legal studies professors begin to investigate the use of these tools to enhance their course content and delivery.

Instructors who use their Learning Management Systems as repositories for syllabi and documents should consider how Web 2.0 tools can be integrated into their courses, for their own benefit and for the benefit of the students. Instructors should use institutional resources such as teaching, learning and technology centers. Additionally, professional resources such as conferences and continuing learning seminars can be leveraged to learn how others are adapting new technology and learning tools. Colleagues are instrumental in building a network of instructors who are engaged and willing to share their knowledge and experiences.

We also recommend instructors consider when a course will be offered, the format (hybrid or full online), the semester length and the size of the class. A good way to “test the waters” is to experiment with portions of a current face-to-face course. A writing assignment, such as a case analysis, can be turned into a wiki assignment. Journals can be used to follow student performance on research papers. Blogs can be introduced to encourage students to connect course material to real world events and trends. Departments can foster the growth of technology in the classroom with continuing discussions and perhaps even a department blog for ideas, comments and questions.

#### **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

New opportunities for collaboration and experimentation with different content and delivery alternatives will lead to teaching and learning innovation. The challenges and rewards foster professional growth for both the instructor and the students. Innovative approaches to enlarging students’ circle of learning encompasses an analysis of the benefits of technology in the classroom and collaborative teaching and learning, an idea that is appropriate for the age that we live in. Making the leap to either a hybrid or an online course can be equal parts challenging and rewarding with positive outcomes for instructor and student.

## APPENDIX A Sample Blog Assignments

### *Sample 1:*

**Course Blog:** I maintain a blog for my courses. I post items of interest to <http://www.sampleurl.net> that are relevant to the material covered in my courses. The materials in the posts will be discussed over the course of the semester in class and on-line. All students will be responsible for keeping current on the posts to the blog and providing comments. I expect that students will post substantive comments on at least three (3) separate posts per week. **You must complete your comments no later than on Fridays at 9p.** My goal is to encourage an active discussion between and among all of my students related to the events of the day. And remember ... <http://www.sampleurl.net> is a public blog ... be certain that your comments comport with the etiquette requirements described above.

**Course Blog Assessment:** I will assess your blog comments as follows:

- a. Your blog comments should reflect a thoughtful, substantive and well-reasoned summary/response to the blog post you have chosen - approximately two (2) to four (4) paragraphs; and
- b. Evidence in your blog comments in that you have read and are specifically and thoughtfully responding to the points raised by the author and/or another commenter, if also responding to someone's prior blog comments.

**Course Blog Grading:** Your blog comments are valued at ten percent of your final grade. Failure to participate at all, or in a timely manner, will result in zero points and a grade of F. Students who only partially meet the requirements outlined above will earn a maximum grade of D. A student who meets the requirements above will be assessed subject to the Grade Ranges described below.

### *Sample 2:*

**Blog Posts:** We will be utilizing a blog created by Professor \_\_\_\_\_ who teaches at \_\_\_\_\_ University, located at <http://www.sampleurl.net>. This is a blog maintained for use by several courses. Professor \_\_\_\_\_ posts items of interest that are relevant to our course material. The materials in the posts will be discussed over the course of the semester in class and on-line. All students will be responsible for keeping current on the posts to the blog and providing comments. I expect that students will post substantive comments on at least two (2) separate posts per week. My goal is to encourage an active discussion between and among all of my students related to the events of the day. Students will observe professional etiquette when posting, including being respectful of others opinions and utilizing proper spelling and grammar. Students are responsible for posts from (insert date) through (insert date) for a total of \_\_\_\_\_ separate posts.

**Blog Post Etiquette:** Respect is essential in our various forms of communication. Participants in the Blog are to respond to each other with enthusiasm, but always with proper decorum. Slang, cursing, texting-style acronyms are inappropriate for this forum. Proper grammar and spelling are to be used at all times. Please also use correct English in emails, and specify the subject matter in the subject line, e.g., "Blog Post \_\_\_\_" or "Smith vs. Jones", NOT "Hey Bob". For further information on the University's code of conduct, please refer to the Student Handbook.

**Blog Post Assessment:** I will assess your total contributions to the Blog based upon three things:

- a. A thoughtful, substantive and well-reasoned summary/response of/to the article you have chosen –approximately two (2) to four (4) paragraphs;

- b. Evidence in your posts in that you have read and are specifically and thoughtfully responding to the points raised by the author and one of your blog mates, if also responding to someone's prior comments; and
- c. The presence, in your posts, of relevant content, high quality, substantive material, initiative in discussions, respect for blog mates, citation to outside sources, and current event references.

**Blog Post Grading:** Total Blog posts are valued at ten percent/points of your final grade. Failure to participate in the Blog at all, or in a timely manner, will result in a lower grade or no grade at all. Students who only partially meet the requirements outlined above will earn a maximum of 2 points. A student who meets the requirements outlined above will be assessed as follows: 4 points: fair; 7 points: good; 10 points: excellent - note that late submissions, such as posting several posts in one day, or within minutes of each other, will affect your final grade for this component.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Sample Research Project Journal Assignment**

**Journal.** Identify a current issue (topic) examining the intersection of law and business. Your proposal (a minimum of 500 words) should include a description of your topic with information adequate to make a well-developed argument in support of your topic. Your proposal should also include sources (a minimum of four) sufficient to support your argument.

**You must post your proposed topic to your Journal no later than** (insert date). Approval of your topic will be posted to your Journal.

On a weekly basis, you will post content appropriate to the approved topic. Each post will describe the relevance of the content to your topic (a minimum of 500 words per post) and contain multimedia (audio and/or video) content. Each post should be appropriately sourced with a minimum of four sources (not Wikipedia) using MLA format and live hyperlinks to each source supporting that post's content.

The final post in your journal will be an Executive Summary (a minimum of 1,000 words and multimedia content) summarizing your journal content. **Your Executive Summary must be posted no later than (date) at 11:56p to your Journal.**

Remember, all posts to your Journal, including your proposal and Executive Summary, must include both live in-text hyperlinks (in lieu of footnotes or endnotes) and a Works Cited list (using MLA format and live hyperlinks to each source).

**Journal Assessment:** My review of your journal posts will include the following:

- a. The presence of content relevant to your topic, i.e., high quality, substantive material, supported by your sources, and
- b. The extent to which you address the requirements of the assignment, i.e., you have met or exceeded the minimum word count, included multimedia content, live in-text hyperlinks (in lieu of footnotes or endnotes) and a Works Cited list (using MLA format and live hyperlinks to each source). **Please remember that Wikipedia, and other non-primary sources, are not an acceptable.**

**Journal Grading:** Your Weekly Journal is valued at twenty percent of your final grade. Failure to submit a journal post at all, or in a timely manner, will result in zero points and a grade of F. Students who only partially meet the requirements outlined above will earn a maximum grade of D. A student who meets the requirements outlined above will be assessed subject to the Grade Ranges below. You will find your grade

for each journal post in the Blackboard gradebook. **Please note that late submissions will not be accepted for credit.**

### APPENDIX C Sample Current Events Wiki Assignment

**Current Events Wiki:** In the LMS, each student will create a page in our course Current Events Wiki. Here, you are required to submit current event summaries of interest to you and related to our course material, to your current event page one times (1x) per week (date) for a total of 10 posts.

**Wiki Etiquette:** Wiki post etiquette will follow the guidelines posted above.

**Wiki Assessment:** I will assess your total contributions to the Current Event Journal based upon three things:

- a. A thoughtful, substantive and well-reasoned summary of the current event –approximately two (2) to four (4) paragraphs, and a link to your original source;
- b. Evidence in your response posts in a minimum of one (1) to two (2) paragraphs that you have read and are specifically and thoughtfully responding to the points raised by one of your classmates, and
- c. The presence, in your Current Events posts, of relevant content, high quality, substantive material, initiative in discussions, respect for classmates, citation to outside sources, and current event references.

**Wiki Grading:** Each Current Event Wiki is valued at ten percent/points of your final grade. Failure to participate in the current event wiki at all, or in a timely manner, will result in a lower grade or no grade at all. Students who only partially meet the requirements outlined above will earn a maximum of 2 points. A student who meets the requirements outlined above will be assessed as follows: 4 points: fair; 7 points: good; 10 points: excellent - note that late submissions will affect your final grade for this component.

### APPENDIX D Research Project Executive Summary

**Date Due:** April ?, 201? at 11:59pm

**Submit:** via digital platform

**Length:** 1,000 words (approx. 4 pages)

**Audience:** Your Professor, Employer or Client

**Purpose:** to summarize your research so your reader understands the materials you have developed

The Executive Summary will distill the entirety of your project into approximately four (4) pages. Approach this as if this were the only document your audience will review about your project. The reader should be able to understand the issue(s), research and analysis related to your project. Since you will be preparing and submitting your Executive Summary on your Digital Platform, you must include embedded live multimedia, with live in-text hyperlinks and live hyperlinks to your sources.

This document provides to you an outline of the MINIMUM required components of the Executive Summary. Note that executive summaries vary depending on what you are trying to accomplish (fundraising, new business, attract investors...). For the purposes of this course, we are using the Executive Summary to work on our writing, communication and technology skills. Since we are using the Digital Platform, remember your Executive Summary MUST include multimedia.

**Format:** (it is up to you WHERE you include multimedia in your executive summary – but you MUST include incorporate relevant embedded multimedia, live hyperlinks and hyperlinked sources)

**Title, Name and Date Prepared** (You should have all three)



**Overview** (This section briefly and succinctly describes your research project. Here you can, if you choose, restate your thesis statement or your revised thesis statement)

**Problem(s)/Issue(s)** (This section can be either a short summary or a handful of bullet points that concisely identifies the problems – legal, ethical, social and business – that you uncovered in your research. Tell the reader who, what, where and why these are problems. Try to distill each problem/issue into a clearly stated sentence)

**Analysis/Discussion/Findings** (This section will analyze the problems you have identified within the context of prevailing law, social norms, ethical theories and/or business conditions/trends etc. Describe the problems/issues you discovered in further detail. Remember to cite your sources with live hyperlinks)

**Conclusions** (Here you need to state your conclusions. What were/are the impacts of the identified legal, ethical, social, and business problems/issues)

**Recommendations** (In this section you will make specific recommendations to resolve/solve the legal, ethical, social and business problems/issues you identified)

**Bibliography (MLA format)** You must list your sources with live hyperlinks in MLA – alphabetical order.

**APPENDIX E**  
**Blog Assignment Grading Rubric**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Total</b>
	0 To 2	3 To 4	5 To 7	8 To 10	
<b>Length (2 - 4 pps)</b>	Length Is Less Than Required By A Substantial Amount	Length Is Close To The Required Amount	Met The Required Amount Of 2 to 4 pps	Exceeded The Required Amount In A Well Written Comment	
<b>Weekly Submissions</b>	No Submissions	Submissions Were Late Or Did Not Meet Total	Submissions On Time And Met Total	Submissions On Time And Met/Exceeded Total; Very Well Written	
<b>Writing Mechanics</b>	Numerous Mechanical Errors Severely Distract From Meaning Of Paper (Grammar, Usage, Spelling, Citations)	Some Mechanical Errors Distract The Reader At Various Points Throughout The Paper	A Few Mechanical Errors, But Does Not Distract The Reader Too Greatly	Grammar, Punctuation, Usage And Spelling Enhance Paper Quality; Well Written	
<b>Analysis</b>	Presentation Unclear And Disorganized Throughout	Some Arguments Tied To Central Idea; Presentation Sometimes Unorganized	Majority Of Comments Thoughtful, Substantive And Well Reasoned Responses To Main Concepts In Articles And Other Blog Comments; Organized In Logical Fashion	All Arguments Tied To Central Idea And Organized In Logical Fashion	
<b>Professional Etiquette</b>	Professional Etiquette Lacking In All Comments; Respect For Fellow Commenters Missing In All Comments	Professional Etiquette Lacking In Several Comments; Respect For Fellow Commenters Missing In Several Comments	Professional Etiquette Always Displayed In Most Comments; Exhibited Respect For Fellow Commenters	Professional Etiquette Always Displayed In All Comments; Always Exhibited Respect For Fellow Commenters	
<b>Total</b>					<b>50</b>

**APPENDIX F**  
**Research Project Proposal Grading Rubric**

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total
	0-1	2	3 To 4	5	
<b>Length (Min 500 Words)</b>	Length Is Less Than Required By A Substantial Amount	Length Is Close To The Required Amount	Met The Required Amount Of 500 Words Minimum	Exceeded The Required Amount In A Well Developed Proposal	5
<b>Submission On Time?</b>	No Submission	Submission Late	Submission On Time	Submission On Time	5
<b>Thesis Statement</b>	Thesis Statement Missing; Legal Issue(s) Not Identified	Thesis Statement Present But Unclear As To What Legal Issue(s)/Subject The Author Will Examine	Thesis Statement Present; Author Needs To Strengthen Issue(s)/Subject Identification For Reader To Follow Proposed Analysis	Strong Thesis Statement, Clearly Identifies The Legal Issue(s)/Subject And Analysis Proposed	15
<b>Introduction</b>	Unclear, Vague Introduction; Reader Is Not Clear As To What This Paper Will Be About	Aim Of Paper Is Vague; Reader Is Unsure As To What Aspect Of The General Topic Will Be Covered Or What Specifics Of The Topic Will Be Analyzed And Discussed	Introduction Is Clear; Author Generally Identifies Topic But Partially Identifies Specifics To Be Analyzed And Discussed	Clearly Stated Introduction That Identifies The Specifics Of The Topic To Be Analyzed And Discussed	15
<b>Description</b>	Presentation Unclear And Disorganized Throughout	Some Arguments Tied To Central Idea; Presentation Sometimes Unorganized	Majority Of Arguments Tied To Central Idea And Organized In Logical Fashion	All Arguments Tied To Central Idea And Organized In Logical Fashion	15
<b>Writing Mechanics</b>	Numerous Mechanical Errors Severely Distract From Meaning Of Paper (Grammar, Usage, Spelling)	Some Mechanical Errors Distract The Reader At Various Points Throughout The Paper	A Few Mechanical Errors, But Does Not Distract The Reader Too Greatly	Grammar, Punctuation, Usage And Spelling Enhance Paper Quality; Well Written.	15
<b>Relevance</b>	Does Not Identify The Relevance Of The Issues To The Course Material	Identifies The Issues But Does Not Entirely Connect To Or Explain The Relevance To The Course Material	The Issue(s) Are Connected But Needs Additional Clarification As To Relevance To The Course Material	The Issue(s) Are Clearly Identified And Connected To The Course Material	15
<b>Research Citations, In-Text Research Support And Format Of Bibliography</b>	References Improperly Cited And Formatted Incorrectly; Did Not Provide 4 Primary Sources Properly Formatted; Some Inappropriate Sources; Missing Hyperlinks	References Not Properly Cited In Text But Formatted Correctly; Some Inappropriate Sources; Provided 4 Or Less Primary Sources Correctly Formatted; Some Hyperlinks	Some References Missing In Text But Formatted Correctly; Provided 4 Primary Sources; Correctly Formatted All Appropriate Sources; Hyperlinks Live And Correct	All References Are Cited Properly, Support The Text And Are Formatted Correctly; All Appropriate Sources; Provided At Least 4 Primary Sources Correctly Formatted With Hyperlinks	15
<b>Total</b>					<b>100</b>

**APPENDIX G**  
**Research Project Weekly Submission Grading Rubric**

Criteria	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Total
	0 To 1	2	3	4 To 5	
<b>Length (Min. 500 Words)</b>	Length Is Less Than Required By A Substantial Amount	Length Is Close To The Required Amount	Met The Required Amount Of 500 Words Minimum	Exceeded The Required Amount In A Well Developed Proposal	5
<b>Submission On Time?</b>	No Submission	Submission Late	Submission On Time	Submission On Time	5
<b>Digital Platform</b>	Did Not Use Digital Platform At All	Used Digital Platform But Did Not Include Sources And Or Weekly Summary	Digital Platform Used And Organized; Sources Included; Weekly Summary Identified And Included	Excellent Use Of Digital Platform For Organization; Weekly Summary; Sources And Media	15
<b>Analysis</b>	Presentation Unclear And Disorganized Throughout	Some Arguments Tied To Central Idea; Presentation Sometimes Unorganized	Majority Of Arguments Tied To Central Idea And Organized In Logical Fashion	All Arguments Tied To Central Idea And Organized In Logical Fashion	15
<b>Multimedia (Pics/Graphs/Video/Audio)</b>	No Multimedia Included	Multimedia Referenced, But Not Embedded In Digital Platform; Sources For Multimedia Missing	Multimedia Embedded But Not Seamlessly Incorporated Into Weekly Summary; Included Sources For Multimedia	Multimedia Embedded And Seamlessly Incorporated Into Weekly Summary; Included Sources For Multimedia	15
<b>Writing Mechanics</b>	Numerous Mechanical Errors Severely Distract From Meaning Of Paper (Grammar, Usage, Spelling)	Some Mechanical Errors Distract The Reader At Various Points Throughout The Paper	A Few Mechanical Errors, But Does Not Distract The Reader Too Greatly	Grammar, Punctuation, Usage And Spelling Enhance Paper Quality; Well Written	15
<b>Relevance</b>	Does Not Identify The Relevance Of The Issues To The Course Material	Identifies The Issues But Does Not Entirely Connect To Or Explain The Relevance To The Course Material	The Issues Are Connected But Needs Additional Clarification As To Relevance To The Course Material	The Issues Are Clearly Identified And Connected To The Course Material	15
<b>Research Citations, In-Text Research Support And Format Of Bibliography</b>	References Improperly Cited And Formatted Incorrectly; Did Not Provide 4 Primary Sources Properly Formatted; Some Inappropriate Sources; Missing Hyperlinks	References Not Properly Cited In Text But Formatted Correctly; Some Inappropriate Sources; Provided 4 Or Less Primary Sources Correctly Formatted; Some Hyperlinks	Some References Missing In Text But Formatted Correctly; Provided 4 Primary Sources; Correctly Formatted All Appropriate Sources; Hyperlinks Live And Correct	All References Are Cited Properly, Support The Text And Are Formatted Correctly; All Appropriate Sources; Provided At Least 4 Primary Sources Correctly Formatted With Live Hyperlinks	15
<b>Total</b>					<b>100</b>