

CLEREG Technology Committee Report on WestLegalEd TrueOffice Lawyer Training Software

Summary:

In March of 2014 the CLEReg Technology Committee and members of the CLEReg Executive Committee coordinated a review of emerging distance learning software. The product reviewed is a new form of interactive educational software from WestLegalEd called TrueOffice. The TrueOffice program employs a gaming-theory approach to deliver subject matter to participants. The program is designed to offer training to an individual participant in an on-demand format. The design of the program requires the participant to assume the role of a character in a business/legal environment and work through specific tasks, conduct research, engage in virtual interactions and answer questions. The gaming theory approach places a certain level of control in the hands of the participant in relation to the linear flow and pace of the program. The program requires participants to complete certain tasks such as interviewing other “characters” or reviewing specific laws and policies. Participants are prompted with questions throughout the program and must respond in order to continue to the next section. While participants are afforded a certain amount of time to complete the program at their own pace, controls do exist that will time-out users after periods of inactivity and prevent users from “fast forwarding” to the finish. WestLegalEd conducted studies to determine that the average user completed the program in approximately one hour. This is the basis in quantifying an amount of CLE credit when requesting accreditation.

A demo of the software was provided by WestLegalEd to members of the CLEReg Technology Committee. The presentation was provided via conference call and online meeting so the program could be reviewed and discussed in real time. The format prompted engaging and thoughtful discussion about how this delivery method may fit into different rules and regulations for MCLE accreditation. In an effort to determine how this form of distance learning might be viewed by MCLE regulators, a survey was completed by members of the CLEReg Technology Committee. Feedback from a survey is attached along with more information on True Office.

The Technology Committee found this demonstration worthwhile because we feel it is likely that similar forms of online education will emerge in the CLE market and prompt regulatory decisions.

CLEreg Technology Committee Survey Results True Office – Training Software Demonstration

This feedback relates to a demonstration by West Legal Education of an emerging training technology called True Office. The program is delivered online to individual participants and employs “gaming theory” to offer interactive components, virtual engagement of hypothetical situations and quizzing. West is anticipating a roll out of this training software to the legal market this year.

More info: <http://westlegaledcenter.com/prm/prmJSFNoNav.jsf?id=69783854>

	QUESTION	(Responses)
#1	How would this delivery method be classified for CLE in your state?	(5) Self-Study (3) Distance Learning (1) Computer Assisted (1) Non-Traditional – Prerecorded
#2	Would you apply any secondary classification or label to this delivery method?	(4) No (1) Internet On-Demand (1) Not Sure (1) Possibly
#3	Does your state approve self-study?	(4) Yes (4) No Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-study (i.e. live webcast, on-demand and telephonic) • It’s called self-study, but it is not truly self-study. There must be an interactive component and tracking mechanism. • We allow up to 3 hours per year in self-study. Anything that the attorney deems appropriate for self-study can be claimed.
#3a	Would this program be considered self-study?	(5) Yes (2) No Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be considered Computer Assisted
#4	Could this program currently be approved for CLE in your state?	(2) Yes (6) Other Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure – Would need to address the time issue • Commission input required for how to determine amount of credit granted • Not Likely • Maybe • Not Currently
#5	If not, what areas of rules or policy would require review in order to grant accreditation?	Comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities must consist of at least a minimum of one 60-minute hour of substantive legal education • Our Rules do not include or preclude this type of program as it was not available at the time. It may just easily fall into our approved self-study category since it is interactive and the provider can verify attendance • Credit not allowed for reading material. Questions on the actual time of the presentation by each lawyer (under 30 minutes)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would need to address the time issue • A standardized method of awarding credit to participants would need to be established • MCLE Rules or Regulations that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State: “no examinations shall be required” (subject to interpretation) ○ Define: “accredited CLE” including “other means of electronic delivery as may be develop through advance technology” ○ Define: delivery methods and self-study and exclude text/reading form being accredited. ○ Accreditation Standards that define delivery methods
#6	<p>With regards to participant interaction this program was:</p> <p>(7) <input type="checkbox"/> More interactive that other distance learning courses we review. <input type="checkbox"/> About the same level of interaction as other distance learning programs we review. <input type="checkbox"/> Less interactive than other distance learning programs we review. <input type="checkbox"/> We do not review distance learning programs</p>	
#7	<p>Other comments or questions regarding this format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found the format very interesting and can see it being popular with Bar (especially the newer, younger attorneys). I will be interested to see an actual law-based CLE program and have our Commission Chair review as well. I can only see the possibility of approval of this format if we assign a set credit to the program and attorneys either receive that set credit (if completed) or 0 credits (if not completed). No partial option could be available. • Need to discuss in detail with my Committee to see if they agree that the current rules/regulations can be interpreted to allow this type of delivery method. • It won't work for everything, but it should be a good introductory course – Can't see it being used for heavy lifting yet. • The program appeared to be more engaging than “typical?” online programs that follow a click-to-continue video replay with minimal interactivity. • The way this program is delivered and the pace in which different attendees would complete the course could prompt questions about how much credit should be allocated. We would probably want to adopt policy that would allow a standard amount of credit (for all participants) to be earned for completing this program. In other words, participants could receive one (1) hour of credit weather it took them less than, or more than, 60 minutes to complete the program. • The gaming theory element of training might attract a different generation of learner and actually cater to their learning style. 	

Sample Policy for Distance Learning Accreditation

This policy is provided for sample purposes. It can, and should, be modified by regulators as needed in order to adapt to jurisdiction-specific rules, needs and benefits.

Background:

CLE providers are regularly developing new methods of content delivery and strategies to engage participants in distance learning activities. Specific programs have been reviewed in which participants are required to complete a variety of tasks which include virtual interaction, quizzing and material review. The training program is not considered “complete” until the participant finishes all tasks the software has communicated its subject matter in totality. The length of time it takes individual participants to complete the requisite steps or complete the training may vary by some margin depending on the learner’s technical proficiency, research of material, response time to quizzes, etc.

The provider of the training software conducted an analytical analysis of participant’s sessions and determined an average completion time for the program. The average completion time is used by the provider as the basis for specific CLE credit calculation. In other words, participants who complete the program would receive a fixed amount of credit even if the length of time it took them to complete the program contained slight variances.

Policy Statement:

In cases where a provider can effectively demonstrate a basis for awarding CLE credit established by typical completion rate or average amount of engagement time, the regulatory agency, at its discretion, may accept and accredit programs as determined.