

# Course Reserve Improvements Support Classroom Success

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**H**elping to create new learning experiences for students, Course Reserve makes materials ranging from common to unusual available for student use. The service provides access to full-text articles, DVDs, and student work as well as unique items like a box of rocks or 3-D human skeletons. These items are available either in-person or electronically for student use.

Faculty like Hospitality and Tourism Management Assistant Professor Mark Gleason can use Course Reserve to support the flipped-classroom model. Gleason assigns students to watch a video or read an article before class to create more time for discussion. Students are able to consume the materials at their own pace and apply what they learned in dialogue with the professor.

Gleason said he utilizes Course Reserve in all of his hospitality and tourism classes.

“I am able to add to students’ education by having a range of videos, book chapters, and magazine articles that they may access in their own time. By using Course Reserve, I can control which article or chapter they are reading. For example, if I assign an article from *National Geographic* I want to make sure the whole class is reviewing the same material,” Gleason said.

In addition, online access to learning materials allows distance learners and nontraditional students to have the same availability as those on campus. From teachers who work full-time and are going back for their master’s in education, to an online student taking a class virtually from the Traverse City Regional Center, Course

Reserve enables professors to assign a wide variety of materials that are easily accessible and legally free to students.

“I have often heard students say ‘what a life-saver’ it is having a book [on Course Reserve] for them to use, especially if they forgot their book and wanted to get a reading assignment or homework done in-between classes,” says Patty Kishman, Library Specialist at the Frey Foundation Learning Center.

Striving to deliver the best services and resources possible, Grand Valley State University Libraries examined the Course Reserve service to improve turn around and thus access.

During Spring/Summer 2017, Todd Miranda, Library Specialist for Course Support, led a collaborative effort to

improve the Course Reserve service and implemented new changes. This collaboration improved communication between the University Libraries' staff who support Course Reserve, faculty members making requests, and students who need assistance troubleshooting problems. The process of reserving materials was streamlined, creating faster access to materials.

Miranda and his team worked with Matthew Reidsma, Web Services Librarian, to improve the request process and make the website more user friendly. Now faculty members can more easily add items to their courses themselves. A Course Reserve help button is available on every page, making it possible to contact support if needed.

In order to gain insight on the Course Reserve system, Reidsma worked with professors to test the usability from their perspective. The tasks ranged from having them add a class, to moving a class from one

semester to the next. Through these tests, Reidsma was able to gain insight on how to make these processes more user-friendly for both faculty and students.

"Thankful" is the word that comes to mind when staff think of how students react to having this service available to them. Miranda said, "I love seeing the joy, or maybe determination, students have when I tell them what they are looking for is on Course Reserve; that 'I got my book and I am going to get this assignment done!' attitude." This attitude has fueled the improvement process, which has kept students and access in mind every step of the way.

**BELOW:** Thousands of items are processed for Course Reserve each semester. Data illustrate Fall 2017 use.

