

dimensions in legal education also sits uncomfortably with the outcomes approach. Case studies show that outcome models do not always capture the richness of the learning experience.

The danger implicit in the widespread adoption of outcomes models is the suppression of debate about alternative approaches. One such alternative is the competencies approach, under which assessment tasks are set which use a certain competency and the outcomes of the task which demonstrate the use of the competency are then emphasised. Capability, reflection and experiential learning are complex but critical processes which enable intellectual and professional development. In comparison, most outcome models, which attempt to set criteria against which effective performance is measured, seem crude and superficial. Only by giving due weight to the affective and motivational dimensions to learning, as well as the cognitive, and by assessing process as well as outcome, can we construct a more holistic learning environment capable of evaluating a multiplicity of skills and attributes.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

[no material in this edition]

CURRICULUM

[no material in this edition]

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Coping with the virtual campus: some hints and opportunities for legal education

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The opportunities for part-time on-campus study are declining whilst the demand for places increases. Open learning and distance education are seen as the answer by some. However, the central question is whether these modes of learning can deliver the same outcomes as traditional full-time on-campus legal education. Distance education programs leading to degrees in law are professionally recognised and are offered by several institutions in Australia.

In the broad sense, 'distance education' covers any study where the student does not attend formal, institutional sessions on a regular basis. The student is required to learn independently, though some guidance and structure are given by the distance learning provider.

Distance education is of great value to disadvantaged groups who cannot afford the costs associated with full-time study, those living in isolated areas who cannot physically attend full-time study and postgraduates and professionals who, due to work pressures, cannot accommodate an attendance based course in their schedule. While the quality of the learning experience may vary, there may be an equal variation in the learning experience of on-campus students.

Some law teachers and lawyers argue that law can only be taught and learned in an intensive, full-time on-campus academic environment, because what must be

learnt includes competencies such as listening, oral presentation, advocacy, negotiation and rational argument. However, until the modern era, law in Australia was generally studied part-time, in isolation, and as an adjunct to apprenticeship, affording the opportunity to observe the law in action and relate that observation and experience to law in the books.

Unfortunately, there is an absence of knowledge in the area of distance learning and learning in situations other than the traditional full-time regimes. The challenge is to deliver a deep learning approach by way of distance education, which will in turn necessarily require an examination of the appropriateness of traditional approaches to the study of law. Of major importance in distance education is whether there is a need for face-to-face teaching. Cameron's study indicates that distance students value highly contact with teachers and other students in the course.

Macquarie University, Australia, established the Centre for Evening and External Studies and has developed considerable experience in the provision of distance education. The materials produced are also used by internal students. Staff found that lectures became superfluous as the students discovered it more worthwhile to spend lecture time discussing problems raised in the materials. As a result, Macquarie University students are in demand due to their ability to work and learn independently. Whilst there are no hard figures on whether distance education can deliver quality outcomes, anecdotal evidence suggests that it can deliver at least similar quality levels as traditional, on-campus education.