

knowledge of formal meeting procedure and training for competent performance within meetings is vital for an understanding of the functions of a company and for performance in any organisational setting, whether it be business, government, administration or public office, this topic was nominated. Meeting procedure is a specific knowledge and skill which lawyers are expected to have and to utilise in dealing with corporations and organisations from multi-national companies to a voluntary association.

Due to the fact that the first steps in the formation of a corporation are common and in order to save time for the more contentious aspects that followed, students were divided into small groups to undertake the necessary processes for incorporation of the company and to become familiar with the forms. In the skills component, students were instructed on standard meeting procedure. Additionally, students were taught the skill of chairing, including the goals, powers and duties of chairs. There was a series of meetings: the first meeting (initial meeting); the second meeting (annual general meeting), where for each item on the agenda students were allocated roles, with students playing the roles of secretary, chair, minute taker, shareholders and directors; and the third meeting (extraordinary general meeting).

The skills component of the subject was assessed in the following manner. Ten percent of the marks available in the subject was for class participation based on the quantity and quality of contributions during the classes which specifically taught meeting procedure and during the initial meeting. A further ten percent was for performance in allocated roles and general contributions during the annual general meeting and the extraordinary general meeting.

Students embraced the practical nature of the course design and were engaged and participated fully in the activities. Apart from the development of the course, the initial delivery was very demanding on academic staff. They were required to prepare all materials for the skills component, to select the issues to form the substance of the meetings and to draft the documents, to conduct the meetings and subsequently to assess students in a dynamic meeting environment. The rewards in terms of learning outcomes for students greatly outweighed the initial staff time involved. This time was substantially reduced in the subsequent year of delivery.

The program was considered to be successful by both teaching staff and students, as reflected in student evaluations. Many legal educationalists have pondered ways to better teach Corporations Law. The University of Western Sydney with its requirement to include a substantial generic legal skills component in each core subject has created a unique Corporations Law course. The outstanding feature is the inclusion of the law and practice of meeting procedure which is the vehicle to illuminate the substantive course in Corporations Law.

Electronic lawyering and the academy

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This article is offered to enrich the dialogue about preparing law students for the technical realities of law practice. Some law teachers contend that we have been sluggish about responding to technological needs. The author believes that integrating teaching and technology is part of the law teacher's responsibility, because if we can teach students to think like lawyers, we can help them to perform like lawyers. That means helping students make the

transition into today's professional world, which already depends on tomorrow's technology.

After attending an American Law Schools Association annual meeting, the author established his first electronic classroom extension – an email discussion group, followed by the construction of his own academic website to launch a paperless law class. Only then did he appreciate the role that technology could play in augmenting the traditional classroom experience. The author considered how he might incorporate the World Wide Web into his classroom teaching (as well as future publications), so that his classroom materials might be as current as the date.

The most informative sources for quickly surveying the terrain of educational cyberspace are Bernard Hibbitts' *JURIST: The Law Professors' Network* website, collating worldwide teaching resources and law review literature on computers and legal education. There are a number of useful pages on the *Jurist* website, including *Course Pages* with alphabetised HTML links to various websites, *Resource Pages* collating web sites containing online resources from other sites, and *Home Pages* which provides an alphabetical listing of everyone who has a web page on *Jurist*.

A growing number of teachers are using the computer for classes that are no longer isolated by physical boundaries or even confined to a classroom. There is an emerging body of literature about who is doing what to promote e-lawyering, which can help us learn more about using technology in the educational environment. We can better serve our clients (students and the public at large) through teaching and library development. One does not have to be a computer guru to incorporate the World Wide Web into legal education.

Among the first questions to consider is whether to establish an e-mail discussion group for your course, or at least a bulletin-board-style question and answer forum. That is a minimal investment with a big return: all students benefit, both active participants and parasitic lurkers. But adding an e-mail component to your course is no radical venture. It would be a useful starting point for the faint-hearted. An e-mail discussion group can advance pedagogical objectives before, during, and after class. You can continue interesting discussions for which there was insufficient time in class, post hypotheticals for student discussion or review and also answer questions students may raise after class.

Regardless of which e-mail system you and your students have already selected, you should personally survey the extraordinary e-mail programs that simultaneously operate with any e-mail system from an Internet Service Provider. They are more attractive and more functional than the generic low-grade e-mail system. You can access multiple windows at once, automate routine tasks, and improve the likelihood of successfully sending and receiving attachments.

There are four choices for those who wish to construct an academic website: the .edu option, merely adding course content on your school's existing website; the TWEN (The West Educational Network) or Lexis WCB (Web Course in a Box) option; the .com option, free websites provided by large ISPs; and the arguable complex do-it-yourself option. These options are more fully analysed in the initial *Lessons from the Web* feature on *JURIST*.

There are many alternatives to the primary pedagogical objective in bringing technology into your course.

You may wish to augment your classroom experience with an e-mail group, webify the in-class experience, or avoid the confines of the traditional law school class with distance learning or a paperless e-class. However, a word of advice about what you ask your students to do electronically: never require them to do anything that you have not already done yourself (privately seek advice from students or staffers *before* you require task X to be done.) You can then put how-to-do-it advice on your website.

In terms of including administration information on your website, the author offers as examples the honor code requirements, the grading system, withdrawal options, a description of the instructor's role, e-mail addresses for submitting questions about the course, and *netiquette* requirements. From each of his course pages, the author's students can link to current reading assignments, prior exams, assigned problems not in the casebook and other useful websites.

On the question as to whether you should grade on a non-anonymous basis, the author recommends that anonymity is best, but it can present a host of problems in an electronic environment. Students must get a second e-mail account (student identity unknown to the instructor) to use for submitting their assigned problems. However, the second e-mail account may not be available to the student at the last moment before the deadline for submission. Also, you cannot really know whether the paper was submitted on time as many e-mail systems do not give you real-time posts based on your time zone.

You should archive your e-messages and/or e-class discussions, making a student think twice about sending rude or vulgar messages. Archiving allows the Johnny-come-lately to catch up, and creates a

safety-net to minimise the impact of system crashes. Also, if you have chosen either your school's .edu website or the do-it-yourself option, you might consider whether you need a so-called firewall to keep out students, or others, who might inject flames or viruses.

There are at least three arguments against e-casebooks and e-articles: the obsession with leather-bound products to display; the institutional resistance to self-publication, which lacks the imprimatur of a recognised commercial vendor or law review; and the ego-driven insistence on keeping track of citations to one's work. However, as we continue to explore this new technology, more of us will discover the value of an e-book or online article. You will make changes instantly, rather than waiting for the next edition. You will also be able to link to legal resources elsewhere on the Internet.

A class with an electronic component offers a new beginning. It presents exciting interactive opportunities for supplementing the traditional classroom experience. The author and his student's have found that their web course is very nearly the real thing. His students work from their home or office computers, just like real lawyers, without having to go to court/class everyday. They engage in collaborative learning via private and group e-mail messages about their pending assignments, just like real lawyers in practice. One may of course accomplish similar objectives in a more traditional classroom environment, but all the author's students emphatically assert that this is as real as it gets in law school without actually going to court.