

forums for sharing ideas about teaching methodology as we enter the next millennium will assist in the process of making sure an appropriate balance is struck between the uses of different methods in various fields and in maximising the potential of each approach taken.

### **Learning interviewing with video: creating multi-media packages for skills teaching**

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Anecdotal evidence and current literature on teaching and learning suggest that the learning of any skill, such as that of conducting an initial lawyer-client interview, is enhanced when the skill is introduced and modelled, rehearsed and practised, reviewed, reflected on, evaluated and refined. Modelling of a skill, such as that provided by a video on interviewing, is central to the process of knowledge and skills acquisition. Although there are limitations associated with the use of multi-media packages to teach students lawyering skills, these packages can help situate learning better than lecture/tutorial-only approaches can offer.

The production of visual materials to teach interviewing skills was made possible with the award in 1998 of an Australian Federal Government grant from the Committee for University Teaching and Staff Development. The grant involved the development of a multi-media teaching/learning package that could be used to enhance the teaching and learning of effective legal interviewing skills.

The package comprises two videos and two guides: one for facilitators/teachers, and one for users/students/practitioners. The teaching package was designed, in part, to fill the gap that is created when one uses only print-based materials to teach interviewing skills. The videos provide examples of modelling of some of the skills involved in interviewing clients, act as triggers for discussion, and provide a basis for the assessment of learning about interviewing. The two

guides provide additional scaffolding and offer suggestions on how to use the videos.

The guide for users includes sample questions that can be answered by users working alone, in teams, or in groups. It includes prompts for discussion, additional interview scenarios and further references and resources. The guide for facilitators mirrors the guide for users. It outlines how the video can be employed in a variety of learning contexts, includes questions for discussion, explores how the skills that are learned can be transferred to different contexts, provides additional interview scenarios, and lists useful references and resources.

Ideas about the sorts of instructional packages that could be produced within the budget were gathered from a variety of sources. The content, film quality and educational value of the videos were discussed at length and members of the legal profession were consulted on content and on drafts of the scripts. Their comments proved invaluable; they provided an insight into current legal practice that was lacking otherwise. The original aims of the videos were to introduce students to the framework of an initial interview demonstrating exemplary practice; and in the second, to demonstrate an interview from start to finish, providing prompts for review, reflection, and discussion. The aims and design evolved, however, due to the appeal of showing a one-on-one interview and a team interview, and showing both sides of a story.

The first of the videos was designed to depict much of what would occur in an initial lawyer-client interview of a new client by a team of relatively experienced and effective lawyers. The second was structured to depict the handling of a new matter in an interview of a corporate client who had a long-standing business and social relationship with his lawyer.

The package was to be designed for specific use by law students — whatever their year of study — as well as for

legal studies students who might be interested in studying law.

Various instructional aims influenced the design and development of the guides. In particular, the responses made by student evaluators involved in the project directed in large part their design, layout, structuring and content. Facilitators may need to help students learn how to approach video as a learning tool. Methods for developing cognitive processing skills are suggested and ideas about how the videos and guides can be used are offered in the guide for facilitators. Students and practitioners are encouraged to find their own solutions to the questions asked.

Finally, students and practitioners are encouraged, first, to develop their own criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of an initial lawyer-client interview, and, second, to use these criteria to judge the effectiveness of an interview. These approaches help students and practitioners develop their self-questioning techniques and their abilities to work at a meta-cognitive level. Moreover, they encourage students and practitioners to adopt deep approaches to learning. The feedback from the student evaluators highlighted the importance of flexibility if the learning package were to succeed. The guides thus incorporate self-paced and self-directed learning opportunities. Students and practitioners are able to set their own learning outcomes and work at a rate at which they feel comfortable.

The design and production of non-traditional teaching resources for legal practitioners and for law students can be fulfilling — as well as demanding and exhausting. Although they can be costly to produce and may have limited appeal to a limited audience, their use in helping individuals learn about effective lawyering skills cannot be overlooked. If effectively designed and professionally produced, they can provide a learning experience that is adaptable and accessible for a range of learners, whether first-year students or third-year practitioners.