

at face-to-face lectures and visits to the library that would otherwise clash with work/domestic demands are available electronically on demand.

The authors have tried to deal with the argument that modules assessed purely by seen assignments produce higher grade profiles by reference to the medical law results. This was taught conventionally but was assessed by way of 100% coursework. The results, if anything, were worse than in more traditionally assessed modules.

A common early error of those jumping upon the C & IT bandwagon was that electronic delivery might well be a complete substitute for other forms of learning. This cannot be the case. The clear link between social interaction and deep learning has been recognised for some time. Indeed the author's own research revealed that one of the commonest student complaints about pure electronic delivery is the feeling of isolation.

Lecturing (and not lecturing) using the web: developing a teaching strategy for web-based lectures

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The new revolution is one of 'flexible delivery'. For many law teachers the move to flexible delivery is not a voluntary one. The continuing shift has been (and is still being) driven by two primary objectives, which apply at both institutional and departmental levels. First, there is constant pressure to reduce the cost of running programs and subjects – in short, there is a widespread need to do more with less. Secondly, the joint factors of budget and marketing necessities have required universities and departments to capture a greater share of the education 'market'. Where minimal or no attendance on campus is required, a program may attract students who would otherwise attend another institution.

Anecdotal evidence from the University of Western Sydney Macarthur (UWS) and other universities would suggest that many law staff are facing the requirement that they make use of the

Internet either to replace other modes of subject delivery or to complement them. The problems that arise centre not merely on technology issues but also on educational objectives: how does the web differ as a medium for subject delivery, and how should teachers deal with such differences. As a result of these changes, existing strategies for teaching and learning will need re-thinking if the educational dialogue is to be effectively (re)constituted in the unfamiliar and impersonal contexts which are dictated by institutional imperatives to deliver legal education in a flexible manner.

Introduction to Law is the foundation subject in the LLB degree at UWS. In autumn semester 1999, the project *Starting Out: An Introduction to Law and An Introduction to Flexible Delivery* set about replacing the weekly face-to-face one hour lecture with a weekly web-based lecture which could be accessed by students at the time and place of their choice. The rationale of the project was threefold, addressing: first the administrative pressures of timetabling and lecture/tutorial structure for the first year cohort; secondly fitting in with the university objectives for increasing flexibility in program and course delivery; and thirdly raising the possibility of significant developmental benefits, including an introduction to flexible learning in a foundation subject at the beginning of students' university education. The aim was not to remove the learning aspect of the lecture and leave only the seminar; rather, the aim was to re-define the learning process of the course as a whole.

The literature on web-based instruction in law, while not extensive, has gained some currency. The preference and pressure within most law schools appears to be not for total off-campus delivery but for a mixed mode of flexible and face-to-face delivery.

While the objective of deep learning permeates the literature on Internet-based teaching in other disciplines, this does not lead to uniformity in teaching methods. This is unsurprising – traditionally, most subjects are taught in classrooms, but the

approaches and activities which occur within those classrooms vary greatly. The use of the Internet can be broken down into two often overlapping approaches: teaching through the Internet, and teaching with the Internet. In the former approach, the technology is used as a vehicle for learning; students construct their knowledge through the use of the Internet as an interactive tool, working with discussion pages and web-based hypertext media in non-linear models of learning, taking control over the approach to and structure of their learning. The focus on interaction gives rise to substantial parallels with the theories and practice of problem based learning.

On the other hand, teaching with the Internet is characterised by the use of the Internet as a vehicle for more efficient course delivery, but in an essentially non-interactive and non-collaborative way. This approach would typically involve the delivery of course materials, and basic communication functions from lecturer to students, or student to lecturer. It is easily suited as a supplementary strategy for traditional teaching structures.

Is one of the two approaches to teaching better than the other? This depends on the teaching objectives, the resources available to students and staff, and other aspects of course structure and design.

The subject *Introduction to Law* is designed first to require students to engage in critical analysis of a selection of issues related to the nature and operation of law, legal institutions and the legal process; and, second, to equip students with basic skills to undertake deep learning in other subjects.

If students are to understand the materials and the point of the course, they need to read and comprehend those materials in a sophisticated manner. Simplified explanations in permanent form may detract from such a project. Hence there should be reluctance in the web-lectures to provide written explanations of the readings.

The objectives of the faculty and the subject underpinned the web-lectures.

The web-based lectures were a guide to the readings (just as the face-to-face lectures were also a guide to the readings) with a great deal of specificity, premised upon student centred learning as the most effective way to achieve the subject and faculty objectives. The lectures sought to take students through the readings very closely, posing questions and directing them to those particular passages in the readings which best explained the article or extract at hand and drew their attention to the issues which were the focus of the questions.

Web-based lectures in this way still serve the explanatory purpose of lectures. Arguably, they enhance some aspects of the learning process because they allow students to work through the material at their own pace. They enable a lecturer to direct students comprehensively through an argument, focusing on the crucial issues, showing students how to read a complicated piece of work. Such instruction simply cannot be done in a face-to-face lecture.

How can processes of critical analysis be introduced and taught to students using web-based lectures? The strategy employed built on the question-based explanatory approach. Students were frequently asked to compare and contrast materials or particular arguments and themes from different readings. In doing this, they were often reminded expressly of the analytical objectives of the course.

The teaching strategy implemented in Introduction to Law was designed with the aim of achieving the objectives of the UWS LLB program and the objectives of the subject. The Introduction to Law web page and the web-lectures were characterised by the use of a closely directed guide to readings that posed questions to students. While there was a limited amount of explanation that enabled some overview, summaries and contextual material to be provided, students were required to complete the course readings in order to adequately grasp the arguments and themes addressed in the subject. The goals of critical and comparative analysis were similarly addressed by

posing questions to students, which required them to reflect on the merits of different readings and the implications of different arguments.

The development of the strategy thus represents not so much an excursion forward into the brave new world of Internet technology – the use of technology should not of itself be seen to represent ‘progress’ in teaching. Instead, it is a reflection on what we do, looking back to the rationales and objectives of teaching and learning in higher education. The use of the web was thus not conceived of as a step ‘beyond’ lecturing, but rather as a reconstitution of it in a different medium.

Why teaching matters and technology doesn't: an evaluation and review of web-based lectures

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This paper – a companion to the first – is an evaluation and review of the web-based lectures and the teaching strategy that was applied. The main evaluation mechanism was a survey completed by students in the last tutorial class of semester where 15 to 20 minutes were set aside specifically for this purpose.

The level of student satisfaction was on the whole quite high. Approximately one third of the respondents thought the web-based lecture delivery was very good or excellent, while 60.9% of students thought it was good. By way of comparison with other subjects using face-to-face lectures, the student feedback was very positive: of the 181 comparative comments offered, 72.4% were positive with regard to the web-based program in Introduction to Law in comparison to the face-to-face lectures in other subjects. Overall, the web-based lectures compared very favourably: 69.1% of the 55 respondents who made a direct comparison indicated the lectures were either good and compared well, or very good and better than face-to-face lectures in other subjects.

The positive comments overwhelmingly expressed a liking for the convenience of the web-based lecture, including the ability to work at one's own pace and the ability to access the lectures from home. The negative comments showed a substantial number of responses – 10% of the total negative comments – favouring face-to-face teaching and finding web-based delivery too impersonal.

The evaluation of the Starting Out project suggests that on the whole it was viewed by students as a very successful move into flexible web-based delivery of the lecture component of Introduction to Law with regard to technology as well as teaching and learning. It is also clear that the technology used for on-line delivery needs to be simple and straightforward, easily accessible and economically viable for students. For all this, the results of the student survey are frequently suggestive not of great shifts in student learning or a new-found enthusiasm for Internet-based teaching, but rather of a desire for little more than the convenience of accessing lectures at the time and place of one's own choosing. In this light, can it be said that the project was successful in terms of teaching and learning?

The measure of success to employ is whether students engaged in deep learning, or at least whether Introduction to Law impacted positively on students' approaches to learning which will develop further as they progress through their degrees. The evaluation suggests that the use of the web in no way detracts from that possibility and, more positively, the Internet appears to be a medium which holds the potential to impact significantly on student approaches to learning. But this impact will not be the result of technology. If the key themes of the evaluation were to be drawn together in one sentence, the Starting Out project points to the core conclusion that the most fundamental questions of web-based instruction concern not the technology but the practice of teaching.

A self-learning orientation needs to remain at the heart of any subject which