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The Higher Education Academy UK Centre for Legal Education

directions in legal education

Snails in bottles and language cuckoos...

evolution in the law curriculum?

The snails and cuckoos of the title both featured in the keynote addresses given by Professors Avrom Sherr (Institute of Advanced Legal Studies) and Sally Kift (Queensland University of Technology) at the second Learning in Law Annual Conference (LILAC) held at the University of Warwick in January. The conference had taken as its theme '(Dis)integration…designs on the law curriculum', with underlying keywords - community, creativity, critique, engagement, evolution, experience, integration and value(s) - on which the keynotes and parallel sessions were based. As always at the conference (this year's was the tenth), the evolution taking place in legal education was evident, through both the keynotes and the diverse papers given. Avrom considered changes in Europe vis à vis language aspects of legal education, while Sally addressed 21st century curriculum design challenges and changes more generally, including a recent You Tube interpretation of Donoghue v Stevenson.

When I revisited the keynote presentations for this editorial, and how they addressed the conference key words, I was struck by a pattern into which those keywords seemed to fall. When considering evolution in the law curriculum and legal education, we examine our communities (of teachers and students alike) and the value(s) we espouse; we reflect on and critique our experience; we can be creative, but thoughtful, in our responses to that reflection and critique, and in how we attempt to integrate new content and ways of learning into the curriculum and engage ourselves and the learner. Evidence of all these elements can be seen at the Learning in Law conferences every year, and as illustrations I will highlight one or two of the issues Avrom and Sally raised. While the two keynotes addressed the law curriculum from different perspectives, they both considered aspects of evolution and change.

In 'Language cuckoos, cultural hegemony and legal education in the EU: the "commonisation" of European law', Avrom explored foreign language provision in law schools, prompted by an email he had received from the University of Rome III, asking him to consider, for another keynote address, if English is the 'lingua franca' of the lawyer, in the sense in which lawyers use English to communicate,

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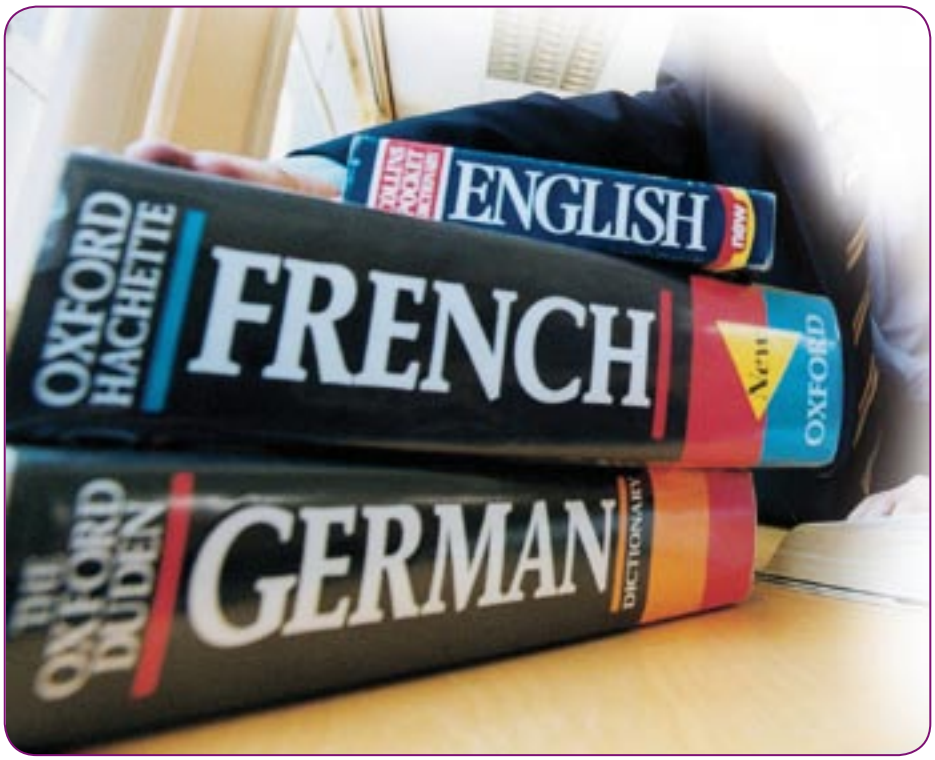

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study and write. Through 'mini-research', he had investigated language provision in law schools in Italy and Germany. In summary,

it is a requirement in Italy that every law school provides some foreign language education,

and it appears that 32 out of 43 law schools in Italy offer English language learning in some form. As for Germany, 'every student must pass one foreign law class taught in a foreign language, or a law-based foreign language class'. Approaches range from internships in an English speaking law environment to computer-based tests and input from visiting lecturers.

I would question whether such approaches do in fact make English the 'lingua franca' of lawyers,

...the cuckoo pushing everything else out of the nest, as English is merely one of several options, but clearly there is a perception of a need for broader training. It is worth noting that by comparison, much less is offered in the UK by way of language training in law schools, which is not necessarily surprising, of course, as the English are notoriously poor at encouraging foreign language learning.

What is not clear is precisely why such language training has been required. It may be a response to globalisation and an American influence. Consequently, as Avrom suggested, is it that there is less interest in the English language per se and in English common law, but rather a (worrying) tendency towards an acceptance of US (pre)dominance? Food for thought.

I was struck by another point that Avrom made: learning a language is of little real use unless it is accompanied by some knowledge or understanding of the cultural environment in which that language exists and develops. This I would endorse. Law itself has a language all of its own, which can present a challenge to many of our own first year law undergraduates. Law is also inseparably linked to society, culture and underlying values, and meaningful understanding of it cannot be achieved without knowing something of those. To consider this more broadly, we know of the benefits of contextual learning, and simulations such as those being developed in the SIMPLE project. Must it not therefore be even more challenging for Italian and German students to learn a different language of law in the language of a different country? Do they gain from such study if they are merely learning grammatical or legal rules without reference to the relevant cultural background?

Turning now to Sally's address, she had set herself the challenge of addressing each of the conference keywords under the heading of 'Curriculum design challenges for 21st century legal education'. Throughout Sally called for a more integrative approach to legal education and the design of the law curriculum. She drew on her experience at QUT, Australia, and the range of reports and consultations on legal education that have emerged from England and Wales, Scotland, the US and Australia, but with particular reference to the Carnegie Foundation 'Educating Lawyers' 2007 report. Sally focussed on the need for greater integration of skills, not just 'lawyering' skills, but more generic 'employability' skills, and a move away from the traditional split between theory and practice. With, for example, the changing agenda for legal services, and a need for a 'reality check' on what students require in terms of preparation, it is vital to examine if the current content of the law curriculum will be relevant for students by the time they get into practice. Granted Sally approached the issue from an Australian point of view, where there is a greater presumption of law students going into practice. It is nonetheless relevant to consider the issue in a wider context, with UK government emphasis on skills and 'workforce development'. In fact, the very same question was asked in the panel session at LILAC, referred to below, at which the law degree and its focus was debated.

Legal education is evolving in response to the many challenges it faces, whether globalisation, government policies, changes in legal services provision or student finance issues. Institutions may feel pressure to change as new law degrees emerge. As evolution is defined as involving gradual change, an element of progression, it is important that there is considered development of legal education, despite the fact that external factors and pressures change rapidly. Yes, legal education must keep pace with, to quote Sally, 'these dynamic changes', but the reaction must not be a knee-jerk one.

To echo Ann Holmes in the panel discussion session on the law degree at LILAC in January, institutions must think carefully about what is right for them. Further where possible, the progress of legal education needs to be viewed holistically. A single forum can assist in this, and I would support Susan Blake (also speaking in the panel discussion session) when she suggested that LILAC is one such forum.

Long may it continue.

Amanda Fancourt was Vocational Educational Developer at the UKCLE and is now Senior Lecturer at City Law School.

The overall focus of the 2008 Conference was curriculum design. The sessions revolved around eight key themes.

Law Teacher of the Year 2008 Awards

This year's Law Teacher of the Year Award was picked up by two winners, Dr Fernando Barrio, London Metropolitan University and Professor Alastair Hudson, Queen Mary University of London. The prize was presented at the UKCLE's Learning in Law Annual Conference in January. Here, the winners offer a personal reflection on being Law Teacher of the Year.

Fernando (second left) and Alastair (second right) receiving the Award

"Lottie" - Alastair Hudson

The most pleasing part of being awarded "Law Teacher of the Year 2008" was the roar of excitement which ran round my first lecture of the new term when I told the students that this certified that what we were doing was as good as anywhere in the country. Their excitement has been palpable ever since.

The process of interviewing the shortlisted candidates for this award was extremely thorough. Some of my students were interviewed as part of the process, and one of my lectures was filmed. So, the students were involved from the outset. (I was also interviewed and recorded, as were two of my colleagues.)

At the evening dinner at the Learning in Law conference, when the award was made and Fernando and I shambled to the front of the room, I recalled my favourite Oscars award speech from a speechwriter of mature years who was winning his first award after a lifetime's toil. He leant into the microphone and said quite simply: 'Thank you. This is encouraging'. Being awarded Law Teacher of the Year is deeply encouraging. It is a remarkable validation of my involvement in something that I consider to be my vocation, in parallel with my research.

Indeed, it is particularly pleasing to have my teaching recognised at the end of the latest RAE period. I am deeply committed to my research, and I also consider my student textbooks to be an important part of my approach to teaching, but I do not consider my teaching nor my pastoral care of students to take second place to it.

The judging panel deserves great credit for the way in which the appraisal process was conducted because it celebrated teaching, rather than making the nominees feel like laboratory rats.

This award is a significant means of making us all think about what we consider to be excellent teaching. On receiving the award, I said that I did not really believe it. What I meant was that I did not believe that my teaching was better than anyone else, particularly as I looked out at a room full of people who had attended a conference precisely to share best practice in teaching.

The most that could be said was that I had perhaps realised my own vision of what constitutes the ideal teaching method for me. It is a process of connecting with every individual student in the room, and not resting until I have reached out to everyone individually. It is also about having a deep connection with the material I am teaching – hence my commitment to my research. And, quite simply, it is also that I care about the education to which I am contributing.

Fernando Barrio

The process of being nominated for, then short listed, and finally winning the UK Law Teacher of the Year Award was, overall, an exciting and fulfilling experience that allowed me to test where I was with my teaching and to know if my methods were on the right path. It had an array of meanings and generated more than one reaction from me, my colleagues and my students.

At the beginning I experienced the surprise and satisfaction of having a very good student and one of the finest teachers in the University nominating me for the award. This was followed by being short listed, a situation that gave me a renewed sense of pride and accomplishment, and helped me to face the rigorous process of evaluation by the awarding judges with enthusiasm.

I couldn't refer to the award without recognizing that I have been able to develop my teaching thanks to the collaboration and support of my colleagues, and the belief that we share in the core values that underpin what we do in our institution. They have helped me to capitalize my extensive and diverse formation and experience to become a teacher that enables students to apprehend the knowledge and skills for a better career and life. It was that commitment to the idea that our job implied working towards a better society by delivering education of excellence to a diverse student population, and the knowledge that I could always rely on my colleagues that encouraged me to explore more innovative techniques and topics.

I also think that receiving the award acknowledges the fact that in institutions like London Metropolitan University we are engaged in delivering first-class teaching to a group of students that need to be taught and not only be guided through libraries, and that it is teaching that builds bridges between the students' diverse non-academic backgrounds and their success as graduates and professionals.

I can probably summarize what the award means to me by saying that it gives me the incentive and confidence to keep facing students knowing that it is not only me who believes that I can make a difference.

Farewell to...

Helen, Amanda & Shakeel

Helen James and Amanda Fancourt both joined the UKCLE in March 2005; Helen as the Academic Developer and Amanda as the Vocational Education Developer.

Three years on they have both decided to return to teaching and have now left the UKCLE to take up new posts as Senior Lecturers: Helen in the Law School at the University of Winchester and Amanda on the Legal Practice Course at City Law School. Amanda and Helen have both brought tremendous enthusiasm and commitment to their work for UKCLE on enhancing legal education. Their new colleagues and students are fortunate indeed to have their expertise and experience to draw upon. We, on the other hand, are very sorry to see them go – they have both been great fun to work with and the place really isn't going to be the same without them. We wish them both well and look forward to seeing them on the conference circuit!

Amanda is the writer of the editorial in this issue of Directions and Helen has written a reflective piece, 'View from afar..', on page 8.

Helen James

Amanda Fancourt

More staff news...

As we go to press we have learned that Shakeel Suleman, our Information Manager since October 2006, is leaving us in March to take up a new post closer to home in Birmingham. Shakeel has overseen the re-design and production of Directions during his time with us, as well as managing the website. While he has not been with us long, Shakeel has made an important contribution to the work of the UKCLE and he will be missed. We wish him every success in his new role.

De-mystifying Shari'a and Islamic law and the Islamic law curriculum development project: *A timely initiative*

In February this year, Britain was in the grip of an intense controversy over the lecture of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams entitled, 'Islam and English Law'. The Archbishop has been accused of encouraging introduction of Shari'a into the English legal system undermining its Christian foundations and ethos.

Further, that such a possibility would inevitably lead Britain towards accepting a legal culture of flogging, stoning and chopping of limbs as part of its criminal justice system.

What is the *Shari'a*?

Does it imply a draconian set of laws, discriminating against women, non-Muslims and minorities, which would undermine coveted principles of the English legal system including the rule of law, justice, democracy and human rights? Or, are misunderstandings about *Shari'a*, Islam and Muslims simply apprehensions stemming from incomplete, or incoherent knowledge and misinformation on the subject? And finally, are these misconceptions the result of cultural articulations of Muslim immigrant communities rather than a religious tradition?

Irrespective of the contributory factors in this unfortunate situation, providing space for an informed discourse through courses, training, teaching and learning materials is imperative and critical to inter-community and inter-faith harmony. An important and challenging initiative to address some of the above issues is the Islamic Law Curriculum Development project launched in December 2006. For instance, what is the *Shari'a*, what is the difference between *Shari'a*, *Siyasa Shari'a* and Islamic law? What do we mean by Muslim sects and sub-sects; how does this reflect in law and jurisprudence and impact on lives of Muslims in Muslim and non-Muslim countries? Is there space within the Islamic legal tradition for British Muslims to comply with requirements of the *Shari'a* as well as the English legal system without compromising either set of norms? Is it 'Islamically' permissible for a Muslim to register marriage under the English laws? Are decrees of divorce handed down from an English court 'Islamic', without the husband pronouncing the *'talaq'?* In the materials developed for the Islamic Law project on 'Sources of Islamic law', the authors attempt to clarify and place some of these concepts in the wider context of the Islamic legal tradition.

***Shari'a* is the overarching umbrella of rules, regulations, values and normative framework covering all aspects and spheres of life for Muslims.**

It constitutes the Divine injunctions of God (the *Qur'an*), Divinely-inspired *Sunna* (words and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad) as well as the human articulation and understanding of these sources. As I have quoted elsewhere, Parwez brings out the true essence of the breadth and reach of *Shari'a* when he describes it thus: "The *Shari'a* refers to a straight and clear path and also a watering place where both humans and animals come to drink water, provided the source of water is a flowing stream or spring."[1] Stagnant, standing water is not and cannot be *Shari'a* which as we have seen, is not confined to the written law in the Western sense but goes much further encompassing the social, political, moral and ethical. More importantly, it possesses a dynamic and evolutionary nature and thus bodes well for Muslims seeking guidance when making non-Muslim countries their home.

The second misconception of the Islamic religious and legal tradition is that it is monolithic and unitary. Nothing could be further from the truth as evidenced by the range of sources of the Islamic legal tradition and juristic techniques and schools of juristic thought in Islam. Primary sources of law comprise the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*; secondary sources including *Ijma* (consensus of opinion) and *Qiyas* (analogical deduction). In addition to these sources of law, there exist a range of juristic techniques such as *Ijtihad*, the literal meaning of which is striving hard, and strenuousness denotes exercising independent juristic reasoning to provide answers when the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* are silent on a particular issue, and *Taqlid* or duty to follow by accepting someone's intellectual authority. *Ikhtilaf* or the 'unity in diversity' doctrine enabling jurists of various schools of Muslim thought as well as practitioners to arrive at positions that were as varied as the 'colours of the rainbow.[2] One of the most dynamic concept in Islamic jurisprudence is *Takhayyur* meaning the process of selection. As a term of jurisprudence, it has been used to consider possible alternatives from a range of juristic opinions on a particular point of law and with the intention to seek less restrictive legal principles in application to issues arising. *Talfiq*, translated literally as a 'patchwork', implies the process whereby Muslim jurists constructed legal rules by the combination and fusion of opinions derived from different schools of thought on a particular issue. *Maslaha* (the public good or in the public interest) or *masalihu'l-mursala wa'listislah* is a doctrine propounded by Imam Malik. There is evidence that *qadis* and jurists in Muslim history have employed this concept to override problems arising out of adherence to strict doctrine

enshrined in the classical legal texts. *Darura*, (necessity/duress) is a technique applied where it becomes imperative to make prohibited things and situations, permissible. Last but certainly not least, is custom or '*urf* as a source of law also termed, *ta'amul* or '*adat*. At times controversial, this source of law and juristic technique plays an important role in the growth of the Islamic legal tradition as it speaks to the commonly held beliefs and convictions of communities.

The above discussion outlines some of the mechanisms employed by Muslim jurists to explore avenues of legal expression within an environment tolerant of divergence and difference. Muslim jurisprudence has the capacity to be inclusive and afford multiple spaces for divergent opinions, without appropriating a 'superior location' for any single school of thought and belief. It is this aspect of the Islamic legal tradition that authors of the manuals in the Islamic Law project aim to share with members of the legal profession, and law students with a view to transfer skills of understanding this important legal system and utilise this knowledge in their dealings with Muslim clients within Britain and elsewhere. Likewise, we hope that Departments of Social Services, Health, Education, the Home Office, as well as Communities and Local Government, will draw upon these materials to understand better Islamic legal norms, and the extent to which these are compatible with the English legal system.

References:
[1]G. A. Parwez, Lughat-ul-Quran (1960) Lahore at p. 941 cited in S. S. Ali, Gender and Human Rights in Islam and International Law Equal before Allah Unequal before Man (2000) The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

[2]Coulson, A History of Islamic Law (1994) edition, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, page 86.

Shaheen Ali is Professor of Law at the University of Warwick and Professor II at the University of Oslo, Norway. Formerly, Professor of Law, University of Peshawar, Pakistan.

For more details on the UKCLE's Islamic Law Curriculum project, including resources, see: www.ukcle.ac.uk/research/projects/ali.html

University mooting

Gary Watt, of the University of Warwick, and I undertook some research on how mooting is used by law schools within England and Wales (Gillespie and Watt, 2006). The results of this survey demonstrated that there had been a significant shift in the use of mooting and this short piece discusses some of the more important issues.

It is known that mooting has been used within legal education for many years...

and indeed some argue that it is the oldest form of legal education although other commentators are more sceptical and believe that a modern moot has little resemblance to its traditional cousin. Nevertheless it is beyond doubt that mooting has remained a healthy feature of most law schools, with many universities stressing the opportunity to moot when trying to encourage students.[1] However there continues to be some disagreement as to precisely what mooting should be used for.

It is perhaps not unsurprising that the debate exists since it is well known that the legal academe is constantly trying to grapple with the question of what a law degree is, with the tension existing between those who believe it is an introductory part of the qualification process and those who think it provides a liberal independent programme of study. Mooting, it may be thought, would be welcomed by those who believe in more 'professional skills' (meaning the skills required by those seeking to become solicitors or barristers) but in fact it is often criticised for being simply unrealistic.[2] Certainly such criticisms may have some validity because a moot is structured in a way that no appellate case in real life ever is.[3]

However it remains a popular activity and the research demonstrated that there is a widespread perception that it can assist in the development of academic skills including presentation and critical-thinking.[4]

One of the principal aims of the research was to track how mooting is used by institutions that teach law at undergraduate level. When conducting the research we had access to smaller-scale research conducted by two undergraduates at the University of Warwick ten-years previously which identified similar patterns. Perhaps the most notable shift has been the way that mooting has been brought within the curriculum. In 1995 only 20% of mooting operated within the curriculum yet by 2005 nearly 60% of mooting took place within the curriculum. Whilst this means that 40% of institutions continue to use it solely in an extra-curricular manner it is a significant shift. However our research demonstrated that the majority of mooting

takes place within the first-year of study, ordinarily in legal-skills modules or in the Law of Contract module. The latter appears most likely to be used where there is not a discrete skills module, with skills development being housed within the substantive modules.

The development of skills is seen as an important role of mooting, with Broadbent suggesting that rather than being a skill in its own right it was best conceived as a complex vehicle for the development of a number of skills. Certainly the research demonstrated that many people believed that the advantages of mooting were that it was a 'fun' way of developing quite complicated skills.

However it must be questioned whether the moot is necessarily the best mechanism for doing this? There are many other ways that, for example, presentation and critical-thinking skills can be developed and undoubtedly some will be more efficient in doing so than mooting. It would be unfortunate if alternative forms of development were forgotten because of a belief that mooting is the principal skills development vehicle for law.

Simply skills development?

Some institutions have begun to use mooting within the curriculum as a learning and assessment tool rather than simply as a developmental tool. In some institutions students are given the choice of undertaking a moot instead of a piece of written coursework. This idea is based on the premise that at the heart of a moot is a problem. A moot encourages students to think carefully about this problem and its possible solutions. In order to put forward a possible solution it is necessary to be aware of its limitations and possible counter-arguments, reinforcing the fact that there is no single answer to a legal problem. The use of problems in learning has, of course, a long-history with both Problem-Solving Learning (PSL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) increasingly playing a role within the curricula. The difference between PSL and PBL is arguably the emphasis of the problem. With PSL the problem tends to fit into traditional teaching methodologies, with the students creating solutions by rationalising their learning gained from their lecturer and reading. PBL differs in that it ordinarily encourages the students to learn through solving the problem rather than following the lead of their teacher. A moot can easily be used in either form of learning, especially where the topic is new to the student. It is perhaps unfortunate that the research demonstrated that the potential of mooting as a learning tool has not yet been fully recognised.

Mooting clearly remains a popular activity and its gradual shift into the curriculum shows its potential is starting to be recognised.

However it is important that it is not considered to be solely a professional skill but rather a way of encouraging students to think and apply the law. Keeping mooting in the first-year of an undergraduate programme really does not provide these opportunities but it is perhaps at the very least a start.

Alisdair A. Gillespie
Reader in Law,
De Montfort University.

References:
[1]Broadbent, G. (2001) Mooting: Big Event or Regular Occurrence? Paper presented to the ALT Annual Conference, Durham.

[2]Kozinski, A. (1997) In praise of moot court – Not! 97 Columbia Law Review 178.

[3]Gillespie, A.A. (2007) Mooting for Learning 5 Journal of Commonwealth Law and Legal Education 19.

[4]Gillespie, A.A. and Watt, G. (2006) Mooting for Learning (www.ukcle.ac.uk/research/projects/gillespie2.html).

View from afar.... a personal reflection

As many readers will know I worked with the UKCLE as Academic Developer from March 2005 until Christmas 2007 when I left to join the newly establishing Law School at the University of Winchester. I hadn't planned on leaving at this particular time but the right opportunity presented itself and I felt it had to be seized. When I first arrived at the Centre I had lots of enthusiasm for learning and teaching in legal education and from a law teacher's perspective hugely valued the work of the Centre in promoting good practice in the field. I still do. What I did not have however, was a true grasp on the bigger picture. I had been teaching law in HE for around five years within a single institution and had a fairly scant knowledge of what went on in other institutions and of the importance placed on teaching and learning in the wider HE environment or the mechanisms that existed at that time to support and promote their development. Working at the Centre was a hugely enriching experience enabling me not only to bridge these gaps in my knowledge but to further develop my own practice and beliefs in what is important in legal education. So today I find myself sitting in my office in Winchester reflecting on my time with the UKCLE and considering some of the factors that might influence the future priorities of the Centre, at least in terms of the provision of professional developmental resources for learning and teaching in law.

Approaches to developing and supporting good practice in learning and teaching in law vary widely across the sector. Many appear to rely solely on the in-house provision of educational development units (EDUs) through participation in accredited programmes and occasional professional development seminars and seek little external input from organisations such as the UKCLE, Higher Education Academy (HEA) or CETLs. Having talked to a number of educational developers over the last few years it seems to me that much of this provision is of extremely high quality but that it often struggles to deliver in a way that meets the subject specific needs of all participants. It is indeed quite a task to deliver a seminar looking, for instance, at innovative assessment techniques in a way that will meet the needs of mathematicians, psychologists and lawyers in a single session.

> The provision of discipline oriented staff development is becoming much more of an issue for both EDUs and law departments in light of the HEA's recently updated Professional Recognition Scheme. The Scheme introduces a significant subject specific element that must be met by those seeking professional recognition as Associates, Fellows or Senior Fellows of the HEA.

Whilst this is to be applauded in its attempt to address long standing concerns that much institutional staff development was too generic in nature it does have major resource implications for institutions. It is simply not possible in terms of time or cost for most to offer separate provision for individual disciplines and an increasingly creative approach is called for. Indeed, there are signs that, certainly in respect of law, institutions are looking to Subject Centres to assist in bridging the gap.

During my time at the Centre there was a definite increase in requests from individual law schools for professional development events and, for a time at least, a dip in attendance at larger themed seminars and workshops open to all, presumably as a reflection of departments seeking to address their own specific development needs. Latterly it became noticeable that attendees, especially at larger events, were requesting certificates of attendance providing confirmation of the subject specific skills developed in order to evidence their professional development in accordance with the criteria of the Scheme.

One of the most impressive characteristics of the UKCLE is its ability to respond quickly to the needs of its subject community, no doubt a reflection of the close links the Centre has established with that community over the years. One of the major difficulties faced by the Centre, given the lack of a bottomless money pit on which to draw, has been how to respond in the most effective way to these changing needs. The Centre exists for the benefit of law schools across the UK and therefore has a duty to disseminate resources as widely as possible. This is of even greater importance in light of the criteria of the Professional Recognition Scheme and has demanded a creative and thoughtful response from the Centre.

> The Toolkit for New Law Teachers project is the most obvious example of the way in which the Centre is responding to the subject-specific development needs of new law teachers.

This online and interactive resource will be developed and released in stages over a three year period and will address issues specifically highlighted as being of concern to new law teachers during a needs survey conducted late in 2006. The Toolkit will be available online free of charge to all law teachers, whether new or experienced, across the UK and beyond. Additional funding was sought and received from the City Solicitors Educational Trust to support the project. It is nonetheless an excellent example of effective resource dissemination that will assist law teachers in meeting the requirements of the Professional Recognition Scheme.

There is still a significant role to be played by the Centre in the provision of events, both one off

bespoke events for individual law schools and larger national or regional events. During the 2007/08 academic year a number of events will run. Patricia Mckellar, the Centre's E-Learning Advisor, has organised a series of four e-learning seminars that take place at various locations across the country and are open to all. There will also be a seminar on Creativity in Law teaching as well as an Assessment workshop. (For further details see: www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcle.html) Clearly not all law teachers will be able to attend but the events will give rise to valuable website resources and other publications that enable a wide distribution of the materials covered.

The HEA's Professional Recognition Scheme appears to have made something of an impact upon the approach to professional development taken by law schools. The Centre has been swift to respond to this in a variety of ways that will ensure maximum dissemination of information and support for law teachers in meeting the criteria of the Scheme, which, despite initial scepticism on my part, does indeed appear to be making a difference.

Finally, I would like to say how much I enjoyed my time at the Centre. Not only do I believe its work to be of huge value to the legal education community but I was fortunate to meet some wonderful people from the Centre itself as well as colleagues and friends I made along the way. I will keep in touch with many of you and would like to wish you all the very best and to thank you for the generous support you gave me.

Helen James left the UKCLE as Academic Developer in December 2007 to join the newly formed Law School at the University of Winchester.

Links:
UKCLE events: www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcle.html

Toolkit project: www.ukcle.ac.uk/research/projects/toolkitproject.html

Professional development and recognition: www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/professional

Teaching business students law by virtual means

Introduction

Virtual learning environments (VLE) have become an integral component in the delivery of many higher education courses. This development has been instrumental not only in supporting and facilitating teaching and learning but also in augmenting several innovative educational technologies. This contribution to Directions in Legal Education details my experience of introducing Articulate™ lectures to first-year business students studying the English legal system (ELS) as part of their business law pathway.

The motivation

Institutional squeeze finds resonance with all but the most fortunate working within higher education. Most academics acknowledge the limitations of traditional lecturing as an effective mechanism for promoting deep learning and reflective practice. The increasing diversity within the student population and the inclusion of an increasing number of key but not core skills into an already crowded curriculum frequently requires module leaders to make sacrifices.

The genesis of my decision to transfer substantive ELS lectures to video format as the primary mode of delivery was borne out of some of these concerns. Having previously experimented with several software options, it was evident that the medium and design of course material is one of the most crucial aspects of blended learning. (Blended learning or hybrid courses mix online and face-to-face components: Mason, R. & Rennie, F. (2006). E learning: the key concepts. Routledge. pp. 34–35.) As the move to video format was in essence an attempt to reclaim the lecture slot both in order to facilitate opportunities for the students to apply their emerging legal knowledge and to enable first-year students to garner legal scholarship skills, the correct medium for delivery was likely to be key to student progression. Previous pilots of software options had identified numerous problems. Articulate™ was ultimately selected as offering the potential to eliminate or mitigate most of these factors.

Articulate™: A primer

Articulate Presenter embeds into PowerPoint and allows nontechnical users to create engaging, and easily navigable MP3 and video lectures through the addition of narration and interactive slides. The end product is then converted into Flash format, which is installed on 98% of Web browsers. This conversion allows the file size to be condensed for a speedy download from the VLE and trouble-free viewing on PCs and Macs.

Key Articulate features

- The additional PowerPoint notes are automatically embedded into the final Flash presentation.
- All legal materials bear the burden of currency devaluation. Articulate™ enables slides to be narrated individually, allowing the author to drop and add individual slides as appropriate following legal developments. There is no need to re-record the lecture as a whole.
- Students are able to use the search facility to locate issues within the PowerPoint presentation and the notes.
- Articulate allows the author to embed interactive diagrams and charts.

Course design

A primary concern was the reduced opportunity for student participation and questions within this mode of delivery. As a result, the course was blended to enable students to identify core concerns arising from the substantive material through student participation in online forums. Lecturers reviewed submissions to the forums and used this information to construct bespoke activities, which addressed the students' learning needs.

Positive observations

This approach increased student autonomy and encouraged the students to take ownership of their learning experience. Students were given independence to learn at a comfortable speed. The embedded markers within the course, which required the students to have acquired a certain level of knowledge for contact sessions, curtailed this autonomy somewhat. However, this strategy was intended to mitigate the likelihood of students falling too far behind.

Anecdotal indications from one or two students within the group suggested that international students and students with disabilities seemed to benefit from the ability to pause the lecture and repeat important parts.

'Test Your Knowledge' slides, which included a variety of MCQ formats, were embedded into each lecture, the settings initially set to force the students to attempt each question. This decision was quickly reviewed following grumbles from students re-watching the lectures. The tests were posted separately at this point to enable the tracking of test attempts using the facilities on the VLE. Most students undertook these tests repeatedly until scoring 80% or above.

Negative observations

A very small group of students acknowledged that the ability to view the lectures at their leisure resulted in their leaving this task to the end of the course. As a result, their participation in group activities was limited. Of course, there will always be a number of students who leave things to the last moment. Whether this mode of delivery encourages this tendency is unclear.

This mode of delivery was founded on the premise that the students possess the necessary IT skills to access and utilize this material. A handful of comments from the students at the end of the module suggested that students attending this module would have benefited from more detailed information on how to make effective use of this technology.

Conclusions

This mode of delivery was based on the primary assumption that students actually want lectures delivered in this format and will embrace the technology when offered the opportunity. Despite the very positive feedback and comments received about this module and the mode of delivery, it is clear that video lecturing as an educational device needs more extensive and rigorous pedagogical research. Few studies exist on the students' learning experiences with the newest technologies. What literature does exist is limited to small projects of a similar vein to this article, consisting predominantly of positive accounts of informal user satisfaction. As emerging educational technologies, video and MP3 lectures have very relevant application in higher education, but they must be integrated carefully into curriculum design.

Odette Hutchinson is a lecturer at Birmingham City University.

Maintaining standards whilst increasing flexibility– changes to the qualification process for solicitors

After many years of discussion and several consultations the SRA is moving forward with its commitment to make qualification as a solicitor in England and Wales both more flexible and more focused on individuals' competence to practise.

An Information Pack has been published about Legal Practice Courses in the future. It sets out the requirements which will give new choices to providers and students and introduce a stronger role for external examiners.

Preparations are also underway for a pilot project to assess trainees' performance in practice. This is supported by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS).The pilot will assess trainees' work-based learning - paving the way to new opportunities for individuals currently unable to qualify.

Turning first to LPCs, a published suite of learning outcomes will underpin all courses. The outcomes set out the 'irreducible minimum' that all students must achieve to pass an LPC. However, there is scope to develop courses in different ways, eg to place more emphasis on, and allocate more time to, one or more of the three Core Practice Areas of Litigation, Property Law and Practice or Business Law and Practice and to determine the context in which the Core Practice Areas and the Course Skills are taught and assessed.

Courses will be divided into Stages 1 and 2. Stage 1 will cover the three Core Practice Areas, together with Professional Conduct and Regulation, Taxation, Wills & the Administration of Estates and Course Skills. Stage 2 will be made up of three Vocational Electives. Providers may decide to combine the stages, but it is anticipated that many providers will prefer to make them available separately to increase student choice. This could make the qualification more affordable for some students and enable students to choose the electives that will best prepare them for the type of practice in which they will be working. The opportunity to offer just one or more electives might encourage new providers to enter the LPC market – again opening up student choice and accessibility. Standard student assessment requirements will apply to all courses.

Also included in the information pack are the criteria against which organisations seeking authorisation to provide LPCs and individual courses put forward for validation will be judged. The SRA will enhance the current external examining scheme and require providers to submit an annual report, including the results of student feedback surveys.

The current system of monitoring visits resulting in grades and published reports will end. Providers will, however, need to publish common information about their courses to help inform student choice. At the authorisation stage providers will need to demonstrate that they understand and are committed to assuring the quality and standards of their courses. They will need to show in their annual reports that their commitment is translated into practice. This shift in approach to quality assurance is in line with developments in higher education and regulation generally.

How will these new requirements change the style and range of courses available? That is largely in the hands of providers. Some providers might opt to make only minor changes to existing provision. Others will wish to be more innovative. The entry of new providers into the LPC market could have a significant impact.

The distinction between full and part-time routes to qualification could become blurred if students decide to undertake Stage 1 on a full-time and Stage 2 on a part-time basis, for example.

E-learning developments might be incorporated into new courses; high street and commercially focused courses might expand. Perhaps more providers will explore whether Exempting Law Degrees or Integrated Courses that combine the academic stage of training, either a law degree or a GDL, and an LPC would meet student needs.

Providers can choose to offer new style courses from the start of the 2009/10 academic year. All courses starting in the academic year 2010/11 will have to comply with the new requirements.

A major concern over recent years has been the number of students who complete an LPC but who are not able to secure a training contract. Many such students do go on to work in legal practice, in a variety of roles. But unless they are eventually offered a training contract they will never qualify as a solicitor under the current regulations. The work-based learning project and a forthcoming pilot within the project are intended to address, in part, this problem.

Some firms prefer to employ LPC students as paralegals rather than as trainees. Feedback suggests that the regulatory framework within which the training contract requirements operate, including the need to commit to two years' of employment and training, can act as a deterrent. The pilot will explore how an external body could assess, against a new set of standards, evidence of a trainees' work in practice and how their knowledge and skills have developed. At the same time, firms that are comfortable with their obligations as a training establishment will pilot the use of the same standards when they decide whether to 'sign off' a trainee as ready for admission.

These two strands of work have common themes. Both emphasise that individuals' competence to practice, properly assessed against published standards, is more important than the way they have chosen to learn. Both pave the way to allow the qualification scheme to be tailored to meet the needs of different people who have a range of experiences, priorities and commitments. Both invite providers to be innovative in their approach.

Only the most resolute of optimists would expect implementation of either strand of work to be entirely problem free. But we look forward to working with known and new partners as we go forward.

Clare Gilligan,
Head of Education and Training Policy, Solicitors Regulation Authority.

Legal Wales

Since devolution started in 1999 Wales has increasingly been moving in the direction of acquiring a distinct identity as a separate jurisdiction from England.

In response to this Legal Wales was established in 2001 and is a representative body whose members are drawn from societies and specialist associations representing practising solicitors and barristers, as well as academic lawyers in Wales.

It held its annual symposium in September 2007 which was the first since the coming into force of the Government of Wales Act 2006. It consisted of a keynote address by Carwyn Jones AM, Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government, as well an address by Elwyn Llwyd MP on bilingual juries and a talk by Professor Sir David Williams on the challenges ahead for devolution.

Carwyn Jones explained the background to the creation of the post of Counsel General to the Welsh Assembly Government and some of the features of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The latter was summarised in Directions in Legal Education Autumn 2007 issue.

> One aspect of the Counsel General's role will be to act as a bridge between government and the profession in Wales.

Before the post was created there was no one the legal profession could talk to in Wales and it was felt that there was not enough of a bridge between the National Assembly and the legal profession.

Consequently, he proposed that there should be a forum meeting quarterly discussing matters of interest. The question of what lies within the Assembly's competence is complex. The Assembly does not have general legislative competence in its devolved areas which are known as "Fields". It will only acquire legislative competence when a specific "Matter" populates a "Field". It's a piecemeal approach to devolution and will inevitably lead to disputes as to whether matters are within or outwith the Assembly's jurisdiction. The Counsel General assesses whether an issue is within the Assembly's jurisdiction and can refer matters to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council or to the Supreme Court.

As devolution beds in, the laws of Wales and England are now diverging to some extent. This in turn has led to signs that Wales may be moving in the direction of a separate jurisdiction. Where the legal environment differs then there is a need for local courts so lawyers can explain local conditions to judges. Already the Court of Appeal (Civil Division) has started hearing judicial review cases in Wales when the case originated there. The current coalition partners in the Assembly have committed themselves to considering a separate criminal justice system during the term of the current Assembly.

The Government of Wales Act 2006 makes primary powers available to the Assembly if they are approved in a referendum which the coalition partners have committed themselves to on or before 2011. Carwyn Jones felt that this would inevitably lead to a separate jurisdiction as he could not think of any precedents for the existence of primary powers without a separate jurisdiction. He also talked of the need to develop a body of lawyers in Wales to do public law work.

Elwyn Llwyd explained that the issue of bi-lingual juries is under active consideration in Whitehall.

> He felt that trials purely in the Welsh language will be a rarity but there will be cases where trials will be better understood when the jury can speak Welsh.

He went on to say that as language is full of nuance and translation can therefore never be perfect.

The most frequently raised objection to bi-lingual juries is that it is contrary to the principle of random selection. Mr Llwyd felt that there are many historical precedents where jury selection has been limited. He also felt that other objections were now losing their force. The number of solicitors and barristers who can speak Welsh has increased, and Welsh language television has standardised terms

so that speakers of different dialects of the Welsh language in South and North Wales can now better understand one another.

Professor Sir David Williams said the problem in Wales is that, unlike Scotland, devolution is not based on a set of clear principles and, as a result, transfers of power occur on an ad hoc basis. He felt that the current system with the National Assembly's lack of a general legislative competence was unworkable. He held out the hope that the All-Wales Constitutional Convention which is being set up by the current Labour-Plaid Cymru coalition partners means that at last Wales will reach the position envisaged by the Kilbrandon Report which reported in 1973. He said that the alternative to primary law making powers for the National Assembly was to scrap the current system and go back to the pre-devolution era as the current system was unworkable. He suggested new sets of skills, for example in legislative drafting, needed to be developed quickly for devolution to work.

The appointment of nine Ministers for English regions and the prospect of nine accompanying parliamentary select committees means that providers of legal education and training in England have much to learn from the experience of devolution in Wales.

The Welsh experience suggests that executive devolution leads to pressure for legislative devolution and if this is of secondary law making powers pressure will continue for primary powers.

This in turn creates demands for a separate jurisdiction with demands for locally based lawyers with the appropriate specialised skills in public law. If primary law making powers devolve to Wales and the Welsh experience is replicated in England then the UK is headed in the direction of a federal legal system.

Richard Owen,
Associate Head, Law School
University of Glamorgan

The three most important characteristics of the English legal system:

Accidents of geography as much as history

Contemplating the essence of one's legal system is a daunting task. In the case of England it is particularly problematic.

Perhaps more than for those from elsewhere, the initial hesitation is one of stance. What is 'my country'? The question induces a mild crisis of identity afflicting all those in the UK or Great Britain or England. The United Kingdom as a unitary sovereign constitutional body is most evident in the composition of its Parliament and most absent in the football and rugby grounds during international competitions.

Common law inheritance

The single most distinctive characteristic of the English legal system is its common law heritage. Most of the features popularly associated with English law and its administration of justice are attributable to the early development within Western Europe of the civil and common law traditions. As Goodman observes "several characteristic consequences flow from the fact that law did not emanate from one centralised authority such as papacy, king or parliament."(Ellen Goodman, The Origins of the Western Legal Tradition, 1995, Federation Press, Sydney, Chap 8.)

The peculiar development of the common law in England evolved it seems from a happenstance congruence of the adoption after the Norman conquest by successive monarchs of indigenous customs as the basis for the administration of justice. Dispute adjudication, particularly relating to land title, was a primary function for justice.

Judges were appointed by the king to travel the country and resolve arguments assisted by a local jury incorporated by Normans into workings of royal courts. The trial assumed a pivotal role in the resolution of disputes.

In the wake of the courts came the growing significance of lawyers and with the lawyers emerged a distinctive approach to legal education. Roman and canon law was taught at Oxford and Cambridge, but neither judges nor lawyers had need of either. An emerging non-clerical profession in the 13th century developed its own education in the Inns of Court. The universities in England limited themselves to Roman Law.

Nowadays the universities have assumed the primary role for legal education. It has followed the rest of Europe in treating legal scholarship as a subject for intellectual and theoretical enquiry suitable for undergraduate study. In the UK law schools have traditionally concentrated on the substance and principles of its legal systems, focusing particularly on the decisions of its appellate courts and their reasoning. The nature of English scholarship was therefore peculiar to the common law.

Technical legal expertise is delivered in separate one year vocational programmes validated by the professions and taught by universities or by private providers. Change is an ongoing process, however, and recent years have brought major innovations into the established order. One provider has merged the technical, vocational stage with the undergraduate stage. Private providers have been allowed to grant degrees. The professions are investigating further reforms and mechanisms for introducing more work-based learning and alternative pathways for obtaining legal training. European Union responsibilities for harmonising the processes and educational standards for legal practice are affecting higher education at undergraduate and particularly postgraduate level.

European partnership

The participation of the UK in the European Union signals its second dominant characteristic. The impact of membership has refocused its legal system, introducing a new level of legal authority, fresh laws, novel approaches to regulation, and additional court systems. The implications are extensive and profound.

For the purposes of this article I shall concentrate upon the implications for legal education. Entry into the EU has resulted in new courses for the undergraduate curriculum, and revision to the subjects that the professions require students to take to qualify for entry. Wilson recognised the freedom that membership of the EU promised for legal scholarship:

"Everyone takes for granted the fact that law and legal systems differ in different countries. But it is also true of legal scholarship. One reason for this is the different responsibilities legal scholars have in different countries for the maintenance and

development of the local law. ….. One result is that legal scholars in different countries may have different agendas and this may affect the subject matter, scope and even the form and style of the local legal scholarship." (Enriching the study of law', Frontiers of Legal Scholarship, 1995, Geoffrey Wilson (ed.), Wiley, Chichester, note 14 p. 229.)

International dependency

It's a truism to remark that a national legal system is only comprehensible in the context of other systems. At the empirical level the English legal system has a specific international resonance. Most obviously this lurks in its imperialist interventions along with other European nations across the globe. The common law legacy of British rule is matched by civil law conquests.

One of the most powerful economic features of the English legal system in recent years which is illustrative of its dependence upon the wider international community is its success as a centre for international dispute resolution. Dominance of the legal services market along with New York has produced, along with the contributions to GDP for the UK, a strong dependency on international trade.

Concluding observations

A seemingly innocuous request to identify and prioritise within one's native legal system its 'most important' characteristics presented a big challenge. At the root of the quest lay an understanding of the notion that the processes and values underpinning different communities' experiences of law are capable of explanation by the idea of a legal system. I approached the task as one of describing the operation of law in one's society by reference to characteristics that are sufficiently widely shared but exclusively privileged as 'legal' to be ascribed a particular organisational form. The English experience, along with all others, only has meaning in an international context and can only be understood by reference to its international location both historically and geographically.

This particular account may hold some reflections for a wider discussion:

1. Features of legal systems are invaluable tools for a comparative appreciation.
2. The English legal system is illustrative of the variety and complexity of institutions, principles, processes and personnel involved in the governance and the administration of justice.
3. Legal systems are constantly changing and there is a strong obligation on scholars to investigate the process of change and the development of legal cultures in order that we can better understand how to change legal systems.
4. Legal systems are both culturally specific and mutually inter-dependent whatever their pedigree or longevity.
5. Whilst the concept of legal system can be a useful tool for comparative analysis and practical development, its ambiguities and uncertainties suggest the limits of its usefulness.

This paper is a summary of a paper presented at the International Association of Law Schools Conference at Soochow University, Suzhou, China in October 2007. Participants were asked to write a short paper on "The most important characteristics of my country's legal system". A fuller version of this article is available on the UKCLE website at: www.ukcle.ac.uk/resources/burridge2008.html

Professor Roger Burridge,
Chair of Warwick Law School
University of Warwick

The 2007 Australasian Law Teachers Association

Membership survey report

The Australian tertiary sector is experiencing a time of change and academics are being faced with many challenges. For this reason, the Australasian Law Teachers Association Executive decided to undertake a survey of its 1000 members in August 2007 in order to provide planning information so as to ensure the association retained its relevance in the current environment.

A report was delivered during the AGM and at the Publisher's Plenary at the 2007 ALTA Conference 23rd – 26th September 2007 which was held at the University of Western Australia, Perth, WA.

The questionnaire survey, which was distributed via email using the Survey Monkey web software, included four main sections including the standard demographic information section. Initially, the survey asked our members for an overall comment regarding the policy directions they wished the Association to take in the next 12 months.

Most of the options provided in the question emanated from the new ALTA Mission Statement. The next group of questions was directed towards investigating legal academic relationships with the publishers. The law publishers have always been incredibly supportive of ALTA and our members and we have all benefited from this relationship. However, the Australian Research Quality Framework has ushered in new research agendas, and given heightened importance to peer review and quality assurance of research. It seemed worthwhile to open a dialogue regarding new ways of interacting so that both authors and publishers receive maximum benefits in this climate. A final set of questions explored the need to once more introduce Teaching Workshops for ALTA members.

1. A snapshot of our members

Approximately 22% (221) of our members responded to the online survey, but only 206 answered the demographic questions. Of these, the majority (52.4%) were female and 34.5% (71) had been ALTA members for less than 3 years. In terms of seniority, 29.1% (60) had been academics for less than 5 years, and 19.9% (41) for more than 20 years. Over a third of our respondents came from New South Wales and the majority (128) were lecturers or senior lecturers. Most respondents had attended at least one ALTA conference but disappointingly, there were 31.6% (65) members who had never attended an ALTA conference.

2. Future directions

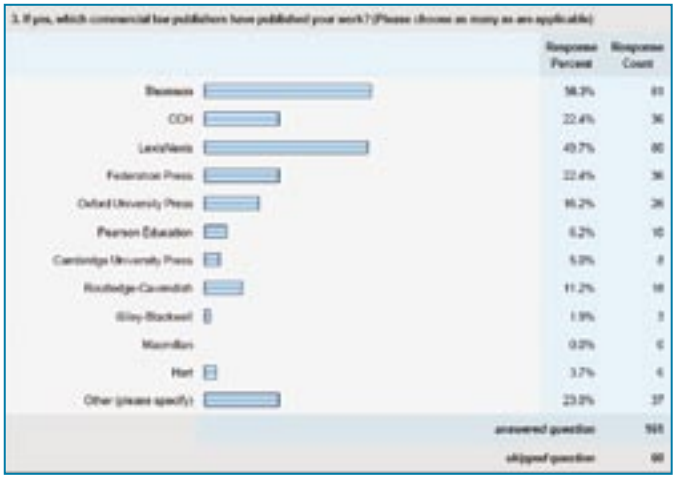
When asked about the policy issues members were interested in the ALTA Executive addressing in the next 12 months, most respondents (129) noted their concern and interest in the Research Quality Framework (RQF). Another 29 members voiced concerns regarding the New Zealand equivalent, and 60 were concerned with the measurement of citation metrics. The academic / publisher relationship (61) is also related to the RQF, and communications between these groups was explored within the later questions in the survey. The RQF has been on the Executive agenda and reports have been published in previous ALTA Newsletters about our actions in this regard. Four members of the ALTA Executive attended RQF Law Panel feedback sessions during 2007. Certainly the final version of the Law Panel requirements largely reflected the advice and policies we had put forward.

Concern was voiced by 101 members about workloads (and another 58 were probably suggesting that salaries were not keeping up with expectations). This no doubt reflects the pressures on law academics to deal with ever increasing student numbers while at the same time produce quality research and publications within tight budget constraints in the law schools. This, I am sure will be an agenda item for our next Executive Meeting, though it would seem a difficult policy to pursue given the fragmentation and competition between the schools. Perhaps a future survey might examine attrition and movement in the academic legal workplace as market forces provide their own solutions to these issues. Thus it is not surprising that 54 respondents were asking ALTA to provide more information about job opportunities. The Executive is examining ways of providing this – either through member emails or via the ALTA website.

Apart from the ever-present need for academic mentoring and guidance that ALTA has been so successful in providing in the past, many academics of course voiced an interest in the Carrick Institute and keeping up-to-date with teaching developments such as technology advances and skills teaching.

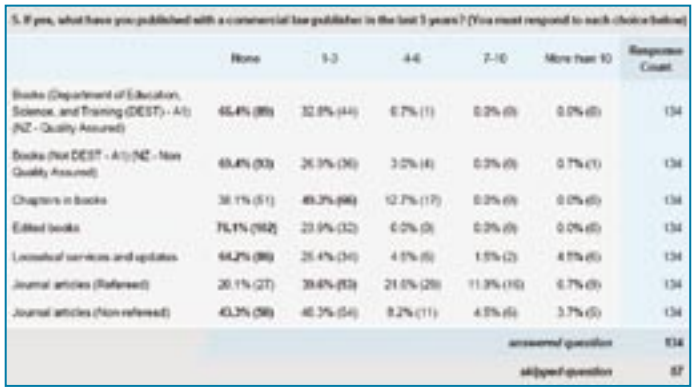
3. Relations with the legal publishers

Over 72% (160) of our respondents had published with a commercial publisher during their careers. Thomson and LexisNexis laid claim to 81 and 80 respectively. There was a long list of other publishers not specifically listed in the question including Kluwer, Ashgate and Cavendish.

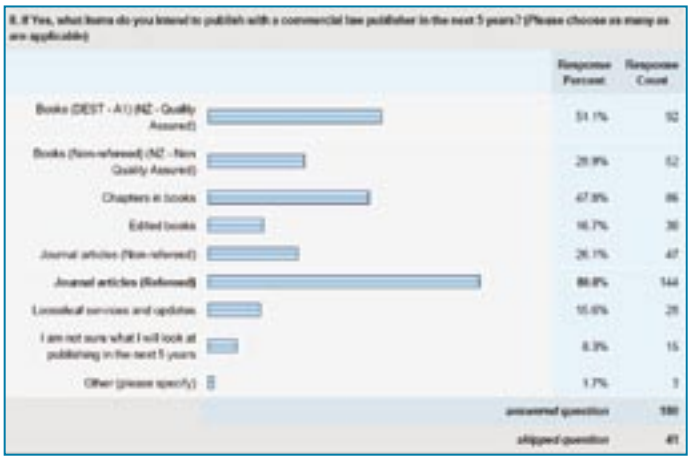


Sixty respondents had not published with a commercial publisher at all.

Recent publishing activity demonstrated a preponderance of refereed and non-refereed journal articles, with chapters in books and looseleaf services and updates being the next most popular form of publications.

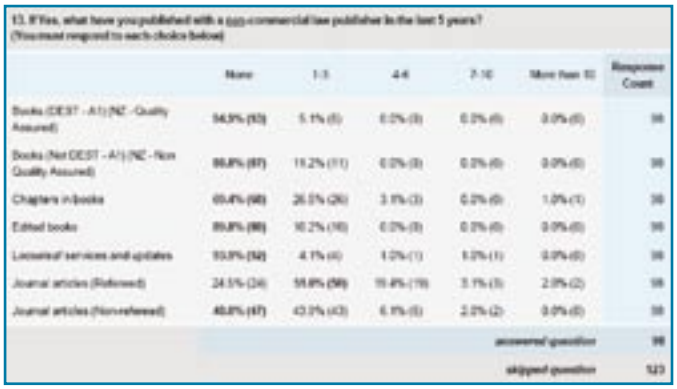


In terms of future intentions, the respondents are looking to publish A1 refereed books and refereed journal articles in the next five years.



Over 60% of respondents gave the reason for publishing non-refereed books as being that 'books enhance your professional reputation'. Time was a major factor in dissuading academics from taking part in these activities. Now that can mean that they would prefer to allocate their time to more worthwhile 'academic' activities but it might also mean that the publishers might look at streamlining the production processes to aid time-poor academics. Academics were asking for enhanced refereeing procedures prior to publication so as to ensure their work better fitted within the RQF framework.

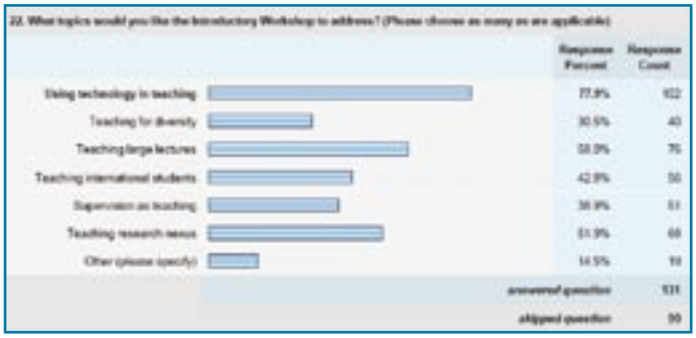
The next Table demonstrates the types of materials being published with non-commercial publishers. Refereed journal articles seem to be the most popular option.



ALTA has been offering an option for presenters to have their papers refereed at the last two conferences. The majority of respondents (77.7%, N=160) were enthusiastic about this initiative and looked forward to preparing a paper for refereeing for this scheme. Those who were less enthusiastic about these pointed to the fact that there was less Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) recognition of refereed conference papers than refereed journal articles and that therefore the latter was a preferable way to distribute research. The ALTA Executive is examining ways of optimising the research publication status of the refereed conference papers as a result.

4. ALTA teaching workshops

The final bank of questions in the survey examined the support for the re-introduction of the ALTA Teaching Workshops that were offered during the 1990s. These one week residential workshops were very popular with the law schools at that time. About a quarter of respondents had attended these workshops in the past, and over 63% (131) of respondents were interested in ALTA again organising these for the members. The most popular option was for the workshops to be offered before or after the conference and in the same venue. Most support for topics to be included are 'using technology in teaching', 'teaching large lectures' and optimising the 'teaching research nexus'.



Over half the respondents (58.3%) expressed an interest in an Advanced Workshop – probably based on the cohort who had a number of years of experience.

5. In conclusion

This was the first survey that ALTA has carried out for its members. The results and the number of respondents have been very encouraging and resources permitting it is hoped to follow up some of the issues in future surveys. The ALTA Executive is endeavouring to ensure that the association remains relevant to its membership and to pursue policies most directed to this objective.

Terry Hutchinson is Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Law QUT and ALTA Executive member.

If you have any queries about this survey please email the ALTA Secretariat: admin@alta.edu.au

UKCLE E-learning seminar series

UKCLE are currently running four one day workshops on e-learning which deliver stimulating and challenging presentations and encourage dialogue on four key themes.

It's aimed at law school academics, IT support staff and e-learning developers and we are seeking to provide participants with practical ideas they can take back to their law schools. The focus is on emerging technologies and how e-learning can be embedded and integrated into modules within the law curriculum. Each one day seminar has up to six 45 minute presentations including one Principal speaker. Although the remaining speakers are drawn mainly from law we are encouraging participation from other disciplines where practices in certain areas are more developed. Contributors are being encouraged to provide materials and teaching resource templates from their sessions which are available on the website.

The first seminar was in UCL in November where the theme was Collaborative and Distributive Learning and the second, on e-assessment, was at University of Bristol in January. There is a report on the London event in the Digital Directions blog at http://ukcle.typepad.com/digital_directions/2007/11/ukcles-1st-e-le.html#more. We also used the Camtasia software to record the session on discussion forums by Michael Bromby of Glasgow Caledonian University and this has been uploaded with the event materials on the website. Have a look at this to experience the technology as well as to enjoy a most informative talk. Sessions over the first two events have included a podcasting workshop where participants created their own audio file (again available on the website) and the use of an electronic voting system (EVS) handset. We've also discussed wikis, blogs, plagiarism issues, accessibility, mcqs and e-portfolios. One of the most attractive features of the seminars has been the chance to network with likeminded others and the wide variety of participant backgrounds has been a definite strength.

The next seminar is in Glasgow on 26th March and is on the exciting theme of mobile learning. The Principal Speaker is John Mayer of the Centre for Computer Aided Legal Instruction (CALI) in Chicago. John is an excellent speaker and has a wealth of experience in his field. Other sessions range from a 'hands on' session with mobile phone technology, which will allow participants to discover just how effective this mode of delivery can be, to an innovative podcasting project in a law module. This e-learning seminar will be run alongside the BILETA conference at the same venue and special rates are available for delegates attending both events.

The last event will be in Warwick on 18th September 2008 and the theme is Simulation Learning. With the SIMPLE project UKCLE has been involved in developing simulation learning in law and this event will showcase the project as well as drawing on other examples from within and outwith our sector. The full programme for this event will be finalised soon with full details on the website.

Details of the full programme and the materials from these events can be found on the website at: www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcleevent.html?event=480

Please contact Patricia Mckellar on: patricia.mckellar@warwick.ac.uk for any further information.

events

The UKCLE events diary covers events with a legal education or general learning and teaching focus, as well as links to other law focused and learning and teaching listings – access it at: www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/diary.html
To add your event, contact: ukcle@warwick.ac.uk

UKCLE events

24 April 2008
Making assessment work
Kingston University, London
For more details, see:
www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcleevent.html?event=493

23 June 2008
Creativity and the Law Curriculum
Aston University, Birmingham
For more details, see:
www.ukcle.ac.uk/newsevents/ukcleevent.html?event=492

STOP PRESS!
The next Learning in Law Annual Conference will be held at the University of Warwick on **Friday 23 January** and **Saturday 24 January 2009.**

Further information about the conference will be available at: **www.ukcle.ac.uk**

Other events

10 April 2008
Annual Conference for Teachers of A Level Law
Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge
For more details, see:
www.cont-ed.cam.ac.uk/courses/coursedetails.php?id=1521

12-14 June 2008
BIALL Conference 2008:
Planning for the Next Information Generation
RDS Dublin
For more details, see: www.biall.org.uk/Home.asp?id=n144

1-3 July 2008
Higher Education Academy Annual Conference 2008
Harrogate International Centre, Harrogate
For more details, see:
www.heacademy.ac.uk/news/detail/annual_conference_2008_news

15-18 September 2008
Society of Legal Scholars Annual Conference 2008:
Impact of Legal Scholarship
London School of Economics
For more details, see:
www.legalscholars.ac.uk/conference/index.cfm

If you would like to contribute an article to Directions, contact ukcle@warwick.ac.uk
The deadline for submitting articles for the Autumn 2008 issue is 4 August 2008.

UK Centre for Legal Education
The University of Warwick,
Coventry CV4 7AL
Tel: 024 7652 3117 Fax: 024 7652 3290
e-mail: ukcle@warwick.ac.uk web: www.ukcle.ac.uk

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