

weaknesses identified by the supervisor.

One of the major obstacles to effective supervision is the inherent tension in the supervisor's dual role as teacher and evaluator. Associates may not be candid in discussing problems in assignments or in critiquing themselves because they fear that self-disclosure may be used against them in promotion and compensation decisions. Moreover, two lawyers may approach the same matter differently. Supervisors must account for individual professional judgement. It is an invalid criticism for a supervisor to criticise an associate's performance on the basis that the supervisor would not have performed the task in the way the associate did. Attorneys who believe they have insufficient time to supervise tend to overestimate the time required and ignore the idea of supervision as an investment in the firm's future.

EVALUATION

The proliferation of law schools in Australia - should Australia adopt the American Bar Exam model?

S Garkawe

13 *J Prof Legal Educ* 1, June 1995, pp 23-43

The article examines the feasibility of an American style bar exam in Australia. This would require a law graduate to pass an exam administered by the legal profession as a prerequisite to practice, in order to ensure that graduates meet the appropriate standards before entering the profession. The recent

proliferation of law schools in Australia has brought this issue into focus. Whilst quality is the primary motivation for a bar exam, other considerations include the use of the exam as a method of limiting the number of people entering the profession and the associated issues of access to the profession and the effect that such an exam would have on the mutual recognition framework.

The article provides a detailed history of legal education in Australia. There are some essential differences between legal education in America and Australia, most importantly that American legal education is only open to graduates and law school graduates may proceed directly to admission on passing the bar exam. America has no requirement for articles or PLT.

In Australia the only requirement of an LLB degree is that the curriculum be approved by the relevant authorities as satisfying the academic criteria that will allow graduates to enter the profession after the requisite practical training. The academic criteria have now been consolidated into the Uniform Admission Rules which set out 11 subject areas and the topics within the subjects which are now required for admission to practice. The issue therefore is whether these requirements constitute sufficient control over the quality of law schools or law graduates so as to make the imposition of some form of external control by the profession superfluous.

The author is of the view that the Uniform Admission Rules are an insufficient control mechanism. It is not necessary for law schools to

teach all of the core subjects. What must be taught within a subject area does not constitute an important control over the quality of the teaching of the law school and there is no restraint over the academic content of the core subjects. In Australia, there are few barriers keeping inadequately trained graduates from being admitted to practice and so it would appear that there is a need for some form of control over law degrees to ensure the quality of graduates.

Despite the need for quality control, the imposition of an American style bar exam may not be appropriate. First, there is no evidence that those who pass the American bar exam are necessarily better lawyers than those who do not or have difficulty doing so. Secondly, the presumptions behind the justifications for the exam are based on the narrow professional viewpoint of quality. Thirdly, it has been shown in America that the bar exam has a negative affect on the quality of legal education by discouraging diversity and the use of greater critical and theoretical approaches to the law. On top of these considerations is the concern that exams are not the most effective way to assess competency.

In view of these considerations, a bar exam would not be an appropriate method to control the quality of legal education and graduate competency in Australia. However, some form of external review is necessary given the need for greater quality control of Australian law schools. A carefully considered accreditation system offers far greater scope for improvements to the quality of

Australian legal education than the institution of an American style bar exam, which would also have an adverse affect on equity and access to the profession and on mutual recognition issues.

The "Offices" project at Griffith University Law School and the use of video as a tool for evaluation

L Godden, D Lamb & M Le Brun
12 *J Prof Legal Educ* 2, December 1994, pp149-157

The central aim of the Offices project at Griffith University Law School in Australia is to begin the transition from the undergraduate student to the graduate professional. Hence, evaluation methods must assess the entire learning context by taking into account numerous objectives and varying needs beyond those of the immediate situation.

Griffith introduced teacher-less co-operative learning groups called Offices into its first year curriculum. Students meet weekly without the presence of a teacher. Offices provide an opportunity for students to work collectively on tasks set by a teacher, but without the direct control of the teacher. Offices were introduced to develop skills and attitudes associated with successful law practice. Despite the attraction of incorporating teacherless adult learning methods in law classes, little research has been done to assess their effectiveness.

While questionnaires had been used in the past to assess student attitudes towards the project, such research only generates quantitative information which does not convey the 'flavour' of the situation under investigation.

More broad ranging evaluations have been possible through the use of convergent interviews and video cameras. However, few educators and legal practitioners appear to use videos to evaluate the general effectiveness of particular aspects of their work on a regular basis.

Further, to assess student performance, 12 videos of the Offices were made with the purpose of determining how different Offices operated. Students were asked whether they would mind being filmed, and three days notice before filming was given. To minimise the bias created by the fact that the students know they are being filmed, several steps were taken, including videoing the same Office twice and assuring students that the videos were for research purposes only and would not be used for assessment.

From the video data, the authors tried to get an overall picture of how each different Office functioned and how the individuals within an office conducted themselves. Ratings were allocated for certain characteristics and for the way in which Offices handled conflict and dominance.

The results showed that a considerable amount of Office time was spent socialising and discussing personal matters. Most Offices created a supportive, relaxed and friendly environment for learning in which most students felt confident enough to speak out. Unfortunately, the results indicated that little co-operative learning occurred. However, most Offices were extremely task efficient, preferring

to adopt a divide and conquer approach to tasks rather than a co-operative approach. This was especially the case in the second year groups where the Offices were used as a place to socialise and discuss other studies.

The videos have also revealed that the broad aims of the Offices Project are being achieved because students are developing important skills which will assist them in their transition from undergraduate to professional. Teachers have also developed an insight into the effective management of small group learning environments.

The history, organisation, and accomplishments of the American Bar Association accreditation process

H Ramsey, Jr
30 *Wake Forest L Rev* 2, 1995, pp 267-281

Changes to the accreditation process would have a significant impact on law schools. When considering accreditation, law schools are not the most powerful or influential constituent within the accreditation process.

The ABA accreditation program was founded in 1893 with the formation of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. The present standards were adopted by the ABA House of Delegates in February 1973, and there has not been any major overhaul since. Two major efforts are underway at present that will have an impact on the existing Standards: the Commission to Review the Substance and Process of the American Bar Association's Accreditation of American Law Schools - The Wahl Commission;