

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

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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

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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;