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## Teaching Business Law to Non-Law Students, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ('CaLD') Students, and Large Classes

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### Abstract

This paper is largely based on the experience of teaching law to students with non-legal background in business schools, with a focus on internationalisation and the large class lecture format. Business schools often consist of large classes which include a significant proportion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) students. Teaching a difficult and demanding subject to a large cohort of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds can be an onerous task. The existence of these conditions present different teaching challenges and requires a re-examination of teachers' approaches to student learning.

In this article, the experience of teaching law in business schools is approached through an examination of the challenges and problems arising from (a) teaching law to non-law students (b) teaching CaLD students (c) teaching large classes. At each stage, the writers explore effective solutions and strategies to deal with these issues.

### Keywords

Business Law, CaLD students, Large classes



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## **Teaching Business Law to Non-Law Students, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse ('CaLD') Students, and Large Classes**

### **Abstract**

This paper is largely based on the experience of teaching law to students with non-legal background in business schools, with a focus on internationalisation and the large class lecture format. Business schools often consist of large classes which include a significant proportion of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) students. Teaching a difficult and demanding subject to a large cohort of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds can be an onerous task. The existence of these conditions present different teaching challenges and requires a re-examination of teachers' approaches to student learning.

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## Introduction

Both graduate and undergraduate business schools in many Australian universities include mandatory law subjects in their programs, as required by various professional bodies such as CPA Australia (CPA Australia is one of three professional accounting bodies in Australia, the others being the Institute of Public Accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Australia). Clearly, students who choose to study law have a genuine interest in the subject. However, students who study law as incidental to their degree do not necessarily have the same intrinsic interest in it. (Ownes & Wex 2010). In fact, non-law students often find the obligatory study of law to be a daunting and perhaps unwelcome experience (Ownes & Wex 2010). They feel overwhelmed by the amount of reading required (Allen 2007) and often struggle to understand the broad legal principles and terminology.

The challenge is further magnified when the student cohort is large and diverse, as is often the case. Larger class sizes with mixed student cohorts present significant teaching challenges in terms of the quality of teaching, assessment of student learning, course administration and provision of timely and effective feedback on students' work. Like many other countries, Australia is becoming increasingly multicultural. It is the third-most popular study destination in the English-speaking world, and over 200,000 international students are enrolled in Australian institutions across the higher-education sector (Australian Education International Data 2009). For example, the more than 27,000 students at Griffith University in Queensland, one of Australia's leading universities, include 4,000 students from over 80 nations (Woods, Barker & Hibbins 2010). Universities with large numbers of international students face significant cross-cultural challenges, and must look closely at their teaching and learning strategies if they are to cope with increasing internationalisation (Muzychenko 2007). While having a large number of international students may appear to increase the cultural diversity within universities, it only does so if that diversity is valued and incorporated into the university curriculum (Das 2005). Otherwise, it simply adds to a range of problems for international students, who are trying to fit into an educational system that does not recognise their own culturally based ways of knowing, learning and expressing their knowledge (Goold, Craig & Coldwell 2007). In particular, students from diverse backgrounds must be initiated into the context in which they will be expected to learn. These students may have different expectations of teachers and of their own role as students. Teachers in culturally diverse institutions, therefore, must reexamine their approach to student learning.

This paper begins with a discussion of some of the challenges and obstacles encountered when teaching law to students from non-legal backgrounds. It suggests that non-legal students require a different legal curriculum, a variety of integrated formative assessment methods and different pedagogy from that offered to pure law students. Following this, the paper discusses the importance of adapting effective teaching methods to address the challenges encountered in larger classes comprised of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students. The views and ideas presented in this paper are based on the experience of teaching Introduction to Business Law and Company Law courses to undergraduate business students in the Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics, Griffith University.

## **Teaching Law to Business Students: The Challenges**

Legal educators teaching in business schools play an important role in preparing business students for the commercial world, but the task is not an easy one. Many of the challenges and problems go beyond those encountered by law lecturers in law schools. This section discusses the primary challenges arising in teaching law to non-law students.

### ***Differing Characteristics***

Law students often attend law schools with certain pre-existing attitudes, personalities, qualities, interest, values and ethics. In particular, law students typically come to law schools with well-developed linguistic skills, an aptitude for reading and writing and a disposition to work hard. These comments will appear rather commonsense when one considers the challenges and rigorous demands of law courses, including reading large volumes of text-based materials. Although many first-year law students, like students in business schools, have no prior experience of studying law, law students tend to be already equipped with the core skills to successfully learn law. Since law students and non-law students are different in various aspects, a law teacher who is delivering a legal education to business students should never assume that the required learning outcomes can be achieved by using the same course model, teaching styles and strategies as those adopted to teach law students. It has been argued that the characteristics of students should be taken into account in the design of teaching strategies (Johnstone 1996).

### ***Isolation and Detachment***

When non-law students are studying law for the first time, they usually feel nervous, perceive that law is an extremely difficult subject and doubt their abilities to successfully grasp the subject. Very often, even if they have studied a law course in previous semesters, they carry this perception into the next law course they study, as they may have felt disconnected from their teachers in the past. They may also fail to understand the relevance of the law they are studying to their future career in business. These elements create an environment that reduces teaching effectiveness. From the teacher's perspective, certain things could be done to put the non-law students at ease with the legal materials and foster a greater connection between these students and their teacher.

### ***Problems with Content, Learning Outcomes and Resources***

Studying a law course naturally involves a heavy workload; in the case of non-law students, this problem is more acute. Business students often complain about "too much law in too little time" – a common concern expressed by other law lecturers who teach non-law students (Owens & Wex 2010). Law lecturers teaching non-law students are faced with great difficulty in determining the right level of legal content to include in the course. For example, in the Bachelor of Commerce program offered by the Griffith Business School, one of the core modules is "Introduction to Business Law", which covers topics such as the Australian legal system, contract law, consumer-protection law, tort law and agency and partnerships over 13 weeks. However, some of these topics, such as contract law and tort law, are typically covered in an entire semester in law schools. On the one hand, there is a practical issue involved where the lecturer needs to limit the scope of these topics so that they can be taught over a short period of time. On the other hand, the lecturer has to ensure that the students in the course have a deep enough understanding of the law to benefit them in their future careers, and that the course content meets the standards and eligibility requirements of the relevant accreditation body (for accredited courses). Similarly, the law lecturer will find it challenging to set the learning outcomes of the course, since business graduates are not required to have the same professional legal skills as law graduates and do not "need to know" as much law.

In addition, the law lecturer will encounter difficulties in finding reading resources (particularly textbooks) appropriate for business students (Skwarok 1995). It is particularly important that non-law students find the reading materials enjoyable, stimulating and relevant to their chosen course of studies, and that the materials allow them to learn independently outside the classroom (Johnstone 1996). Although the availability of literature customised for the needs of non-law students is gradually increasing, a substantial number of textbooks are still designed specifically for law students, who require a more erudite understanding of the subject.

## **Some Solutions and Strategies**

### ***A Change in Teaching Methodology***

The black letter law approach (Cownie 2004) and the Socratic method (Dickinson 2009; Bradford 1999) are long-standing traditions in law schools. However, the general consensus in the literature is that these pedagogical methods do not meet the academic and professional needs of non-law students (Endeshaw 2002; Morris 2007; Gerber 2009). Most law lecturers teaching in business schools were trained in, and are experienced in teaching in, law schools and their characteristic pedagogical methods. The difficulties encountered by the law lecturer are succinctly expressed by one legal academic: “How does the faculty unlearn or modify its learning of the very process that made it what it is, and then replace it with something different with which to teach others the same subject outside the law school?” (Morris 2007). As a result, at the very outset, the authors of this study adopted the notion that we would not be teaching students to study the intricacies of lengthy law reports and expose them to esoteric legal arguments; instead, we would aim to implement innovative teaching methods that allow students to acquire a more practical understanding of the law for success in the corporate environment. This change of teaching methodology – which must also be made clear to the students –not only is in line with the learning objectives of non-law students, but offers the additional psychological benefit of reducing the pressure on and frustration of business students, who would most certainly be confused and overwhelmed with the difficulties involved with the traditional techniques, none of which would have been previously introduced to them in their discipline.

### ***Innovative Lectures***

Despite the presence of studies that challenge the effectiveness of lectures and their role in the learning process (Gower 1950; Pirie 1987; Fritz 2008), this form of teaching is indispensable for courses with large groups of students because of their cost-benefit ratio. This method of teaching is even more important when transferring legal knowledge to business students, who generally perform better when the expertise and motivation provided by a professional lecturer is involved, as opposed to the process of self-study, where they will encounter many difficulties in understanding the law. Having established that lectures play a major educational role in the teaching of law to business students, it is important to design and deliver effective lectures. Certain strategies and techniques work particularly well with students from a non-legal background.

### ***Flowcharts/Framework***

A flowchart is a very useful visual aid to transform the learning experience of students in the lecture room. The current state of technology makes the process of creating flowcharts a quick and easy one, or they can be found in law textbooks. For students from a non-legal background, flowcharts can provide them with a quick and pragmatic way to study complex legal concepts and

cases. It is easy for students to feel disconnected and lost in voluminous written materials. No other teaching tool can provide a more concise way of communicating the law and overcoming feelings of being overwhelmed by the bigger picture. Moreover, flowcharts can illustrate the step-by-step process for analysing and answering legal problem questions. This helps students apply legal concepts and issues.

Based on student evaluations, flowcharts seem like every business student's dream. Nevertheless, it should be highlighted to students that flowcharts should not be used exclusively in learning any legal subject, as they do not contain all the information students need to know. To gain a proper understanding of the law and to optimise the benefit they gain from flowcharts, students have to supplement the use of flowcharts with other forms of written material.



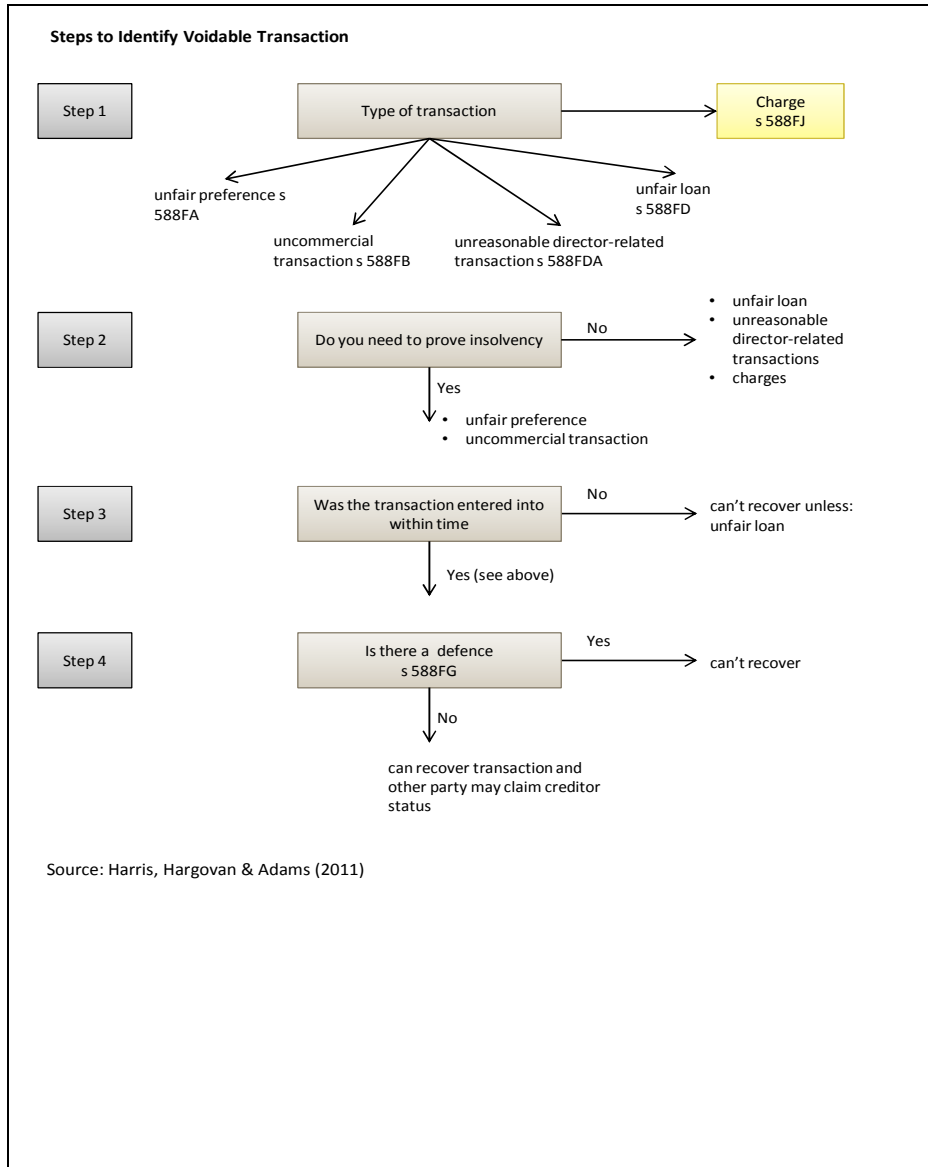


Figure 1: Example of a flowchart

### ***Incorporation of Problem Questions in Lectures***

Non-law students may encounter difficulties understanding the legal principles presented to them in lectures; even where they acquire a reasonable understanding of the law, they may not know how to apply it to factual scenarios. Thus it is good practice to allocate some time at the end of a lecture so that a hypothetical question can be discussed with students. Although not commonly employed in law schools, this technique is particularly useful for teaching difficult legal topics, since a discussion of a problem question at the end of the lecture can clarify difficult legal concepts and address any confusion on the part of students. The lecturer can obtain instant feedback from the students and observe how well they apply the information they just heard in the lecture.

### ***ILAC***

It is recognised that non-law students are legal writing novices and should have additional guidance in structuring their answers for solving legal problems. In law courses offered in our department, we adopt the ILAC approach where students are taught to go through four steps – Issue, Law, Application and Conclusion – to answer hypothetical questions. This format helps business students overcome some of their fears of legal analysis: they can see the subject as a step-by-step framework. Law students are aware of the ambiguity surrounding the law and are trained to see both sides of arguments. In contrast, business students are used to objective analysis in their discipline and often fail to understand the persuasive nature of legal writing. Hence, adopting the ILAC structure as an approach to problem-solving has a positive effect on them and keeps them focused. Whilst lawyers go through a similar process in legal analysis, they do not usually consciously adhere to the ILAC format. In fact, except in the US, where paradigms similar to ILAC are taught to first-year students, few law schools around the world use the ILAC format for answering legal-problem questions (Connell & Noyes 2008; Kleinhaus 2006). Whilst the use of ILAC has been criticised (Spanbauer 1999; Cohen & Iijima 1995), its benefits to non-law students are immense. In a research project investigating the usefulness of methods to solve legal problems for business students who took law courses, the survey results showed a positive response to the efficiency of ILAC-style methods (Richardson & Holm 2009). Most certainly ILAC is not instant “magic” for good legal writing, but it allows non-law students to gradually develop their skills. It is also a reliable organisational tool for answering hypothetical questions in exams where time constraints make it difficult for non-law students to cover all fundamental content in their answers.

### ***Design of Exam/Tutorial/Assessment Questions***

It is well established that examination and assessment methods have an important influence on the quality of students’ learning (Scouller 2000). Law faculties commonly employ assessment methods such as essay questions, which emphasise critical analysis and argumentation skills. However, the same assessment methods may not accomplish the aims of law courses taught in business schools. The students we teach in business schools are not required to have the same skills as lawyers – they will employ the services of a lawyer when they encounter legal problems in the commercial workforce (Corbin 2002).

For law courses offered in business schools, problem-based learning tutorials should be adopted because of their potential relevance to the professional practice of business graduates. Building on students’ interest and knowledge, the approach adopted is to design factual legal questions that are in some way linked to the students’ discipline. For example, one of the topics taught in the

Company Law course concerns the duty of a company director to prevent insolvent trading under Section 588G of the Corporations Act 2001. To ensure that the accompanying tutorial question is relevant to business graduates, a problem-based question could incorporate financial information, such as a balance sheet, which would be used to determine the company's solvency, and thus any potential breaches of s588G. Since a significant number of students in this course are undertaking an Accounting major, they are familiar with many aspects of the scenario and engage very well with the facts and problems presented in the question. The principle that assessment questions be designed so students can find the connection between the law and their chosen course of study should also be applied to examination questions.

The task of designing tutorial and exam questions for non-law students is itself very challenging. In this respect, using the skills of colleagues in business schools who teach non-law courses to review and obtain feedback on tutorial, assessment and exam questions would improve the quality and relevance of assessment questions (Ownes & Wex 2010).

### ***Providing Lecture Notes***

A useful strategy to achieve the appropriate depth of legal content delivered to non-law students, is to provide students with a set of notes for topics covered in lectures (De Silva 2008; Balmford 2001). Such notes can incorporate key legal principles, case summaries, a glossary of legal terms or practice questions.

Lecture notes can provide support to weaker students from non-law disciplines who struggle to understand key legal terms, concepts and principles. In this instance, a comprehensive textbook should still be used to enhance deeper learning and achieve high-quality learning outcomes. Generally speaking, higher performing students will use a combination of lecture notes and the textbook, while students who struggle with the content will rely heavily on the lecture notes. Hence, the use of lecture notes enables lecturers to cover the varying needs of different students with different levels of academic competencies.

It is important to limit the amount of legal content provided in lecture notes. Lecture notes should be designed to enable autonomous study whilst encouraging students to refer to their textbooks. In the context of teaching law to non-law students, lectures notes should be developed using plain English, avoiding legal jargon where possible (Asprey 2004; Balmford 2001; Miles 2002).

## **Challenges of teaching CALD students**

As is the case in many other countries, increasing multiculturalism and increasing numbers of international students in Australia has caused a shift in university class composition (Exley 2007). The result is that student populations often consist of students who do not come from communities that define the majority culture or language (Muzychenko 2007). In Australia, education is the third-largest service exporting industry, and the fifth-largest in the United States (Muzychenko 2007). In 2007, international students accounted for approximately 17.3% of the total population of Australian university students (Australian Education International 2002). This can be compared to the United Kingdom (15%), Canada (7%) and the United States (3.7%) (Australian Education International 2002). China is by far the leading source of international students. Asia will continue to be an important source of international students; it is estimated that, by 2025, Asia will represent approximately 70% of the global demand for international higher education (Böhm, Davis, Meares & Pearce 2002).

As discussed above, teaching law in an environment of diverse learners involves both opportunities and challenges. On the positive side, the diversity enables all students – both international and domestic – to interact with peers from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds (Arkoudis et al. 2010). A multicultural classroom can also help students understand and accept similarities and differences within and between groups, and embrace the values of equality and diversity. Students who study in a diverse environment may be better prepared for future workforce: they will develop skills in communicating with people from diverse backgrounds and form international business contacts in their future careers in a global marketplace.

However, on the negative side, one of the greatest difficulties associated with teaching CALD students is that such students have different styles of learning and preferences that are quite distinct from those encountered in Australian teaching settings. Some literature holds the view that students' learning styles are predetermined by their culture (Wong 2004). For example, the Anglo-Australian teaching system is believed to encourage independence of thought, questioning, critical analysis and consideration of a range of alternatives without necessarily accepting one particular idea (McCarthy et al. 1991). In contrast, the academic culture of most Asian institutions emphasises the ancient teaching methods of memorisation and rote-learning. In particular, Asian students usually employ a surface approach to learning, simply memorising material rather than understanding it (Wee 2010). For example, students from an individualistic culture (such as Australia) exhibit an "accommodator" learning style (Muzychenko 2007), which is primarily concerned with the practical application of ideas (Demirbas 2008). In comparison, students from a collectivist culture (such as Hong Kong and Taiwan) exhibit an "assimilator" learning style (Muzychenko 2007), being more interested in abstract ideas and theoretical concepts than concrete experiences (Demirbas 2008). In most Asian cultures, students see knowledge as something for the teacher to transmit, rather than for the learner to discover (Zhenhui 2001; Wang 2011).

Another problem with teaching in a multicultural environment is the different levels of language proficiencies in the classroom (Woods, Barker & Hibbins 2011). Many students in multicultural classrooms do not have English as their first language. This can certainly lead to numerous problems, especially in areas such as writing lengthy essays and assignments and answering problem-based exam questions. In addition, local accents and the use of slang words create difficulties for students whose first language is not English, which can often lead them to feel like "outsiders" (Levett & Bourgeois 2007). These students require not only more attention and patience from the instructor, but also additional support and teaching aids, including a variety of language-bridging programs, to help them to achieve their full academic potential in their studies. Goodear (2001) wrote that "the development of a culturally sensitive learning environment should be viewed as a shared responsibility amongst teachers, developers, administrators and learners which involves consultation of participants to ensure a rich and purposeful model is being developed".

Additionally, working in a group can also be challenging, especially when the learners are culturally and linguistically diverse. Putting students in a diverse class together in groups to work on a task can lead to a variety of culture-related problems, including a lack of communication among different ethnic groups, cultural clashes and negative reactions to accents or pronunciations. In addition, a variety of competencies stemming from individuals being from different cultures can also have a negative impact on students' grades. When people speak with their team in a language other than their native one, it often affects their ability to interact with the group (Solomon, Charlene, Schell & Michael 2009). For example, team members who are fluent and proficient in the same language can contribute equally to conversation and articulate their views without being held back by language-processing delays (Behfar, Kern & Brett 2006).

However, most Asian students feel disoriented and isolated from others in a group setting, and usually have a negative reaction to peer-group assessments. Offsetting these drawbacks, group work develops cultural awareness amongst students by identifying and exploring attitudes that facilitate effective multicultural group work, allows students to develop intercultural skills by providing adequate time in class for group processes, develops student skills in effective group processes and aligns learning objectives with teaching methods and with assessment towards students achieving effective multicultural group work (Woods, Barker & Hibbins 2011). Group work can also be a source of friendship and support, leading to greater motivation and satisfaction levels, which may manifest in learning, student retention, progression, performance and affective outcomes (Kelly 2008). Group interactions in CaLD classes can certainly provide significant benefits; however, careful supervision and guidance are necessary to minimise the related challenges.

From a teacher's point of view, another problem associated with teaching culturally diverse students is that it is difficult to establish peer relationships among student groups; interaction among diverse peers can sometimes be scant. It has often been observed that culturally dissimilar groups do not spontaneously mix in English-speaking universities (Davies 2009); as a result, they usually create relatively weak relationships with each other, which can create decreased opportunities for students to learn from each other. For example, in the Australian context, student groups from different cultures display a strong tendency to study separately from each other, with research evidence showing that students prefer to work with group members from the same or similar cultural backgrounds (Nesdale & Todd 2010). Students must be manoeuvred to move outside their personal comfort zone, because those students who have close, positive and supportive relationships with their counterparts will attain higher levels of achievement than those students with more conflictual relationships (Rimm-Kaufman 2011).

## **Some Solutions and Strategies**

Creating a learning environment that acknowledges and supports cultural diversity will dramatically improve the quality of learning. The following factors can be considered in making teaching effective in a classroom of diverse learners.

### ***Become a culturally sensitive educator.***

There is no evidence to suggest that one culture is better than another; however, a culturally sensitive approach to learning can certainly influence students' focus on learning. As discussed above, students with different cultural backgrounds have different sets of expectations for learning that differ from those of Australian students. For example, non-western students expect teachers to establish a close and quasi-parental relationship. For them, a teacher is not only an educator but also a mentor. It is not suggested that western teachers should adopt this model; however, educators of culturally and linguistically diverse students have a responsibility to show respect, sensitivity and cross-cultural awareness as they work with students in their new academic environment (Bretag 2004). It is therefore imperative to develop a culturally sensitive learning environment where students feel valued and respected by their teachers.

### ***Prepare multiple examples to illustrate the points.***

Although many business students have trouble understanding legal concepts, they can easily grasp difficult concepts when the material is presented using real-world examples that students are likely

to encounter in their day-to-day lives. The examples can be based upon widely reported stories, current events, social issues or aspects of the students' lives such as shopping at a supermarket (which is particularly helpful when teaching legal concepts such as formation of contract, invitation to treat, offer and acceptance). On the other hand, it is recognised that most Asian students are visual learners, which means that lectures, conversations and oral directions without any visual backup can be confusing and a source of anxiety for them (Zhenhui 2001; Reid 1987). When a teacher brings real-world examples into the classroom, students develop a greater interest in the subject matter, which enables them to understand difficult legal concepts more efficiently.

***Construct different kinds of assessment tasks without lowering standards.***

Given the enormous diversity found in many business schools, it is crucial to design assessment tasks that are inclusive and cognisant of all students' cultural and educational backgrounds, and enable all students to perform according to their strengths (Ho, Holmes & Cooper 2004). This means that different modes of assessment, from simple to complex, that consider differences among students, are better suited to a culturally sensitive learning environment. Particular activities or certain subject matters will inspire excellent performance in some students and frustrate others (Stiggins 1994; Valencia 1990). For example, long essay-type questions and lengthy oral presentations can be stressful for non-native students and may cause them to underperform. Most students are more likely to perform better in multiple-choice questions, but even a well-prepared student can make mistakes on a multiple-choice exam. These problems can be resolved by introducing a mixture of assessment tasks, including multiple-choice and true-or-false questions, group presentations, short-answer questions, spot checks, weekly hand-ins and problem-based questions with open-book exams.

***Provide suggested model answers for tutorial questions.***

As discussed above, most Asian students learn best when they see a demonstration. Therefore, the suggested model solutions to tutorial questions as well as exam-revision questions should provide these students with clear direction regarding how to answer a question and what students should include or not include in their answers. The suggested solutions can be used as a guide for students to organise their answers in a logical and coherent way before they progress through to the final exam. The first tutorial of the semester can also be used entirely to teach students how to adopt the ILAC format to prepare answers for the tutorial's hypothetical questions.

***Integrate repetition.***

There is some evidence that most Asian students usually appreciate repetition from lecturers and over-emphasis on the same facts, unlike their western counterparts. Repetitive learning may not necessarily be mechanical rote learning (Cooper 2004), but memorising things by repeating them over and over may help these students recap the main facts they have learned previously (Watkins & Biggs 1998), particularly when they read something several times, perhaps in different ways (Parker 2007). It is important to adjust the class to the students or provide more options based on the diversity of styles (McKinney 2004).

## **Challenges of Lecturing Large Classes**

Teaching in large classes is often challenging in terms of finding ways to engage all students, providing timely and effective feedback on students' work, and accomplishing the associated administrative tasks. In addition, "large class sizes have a significantly negative influence on student ratings of teaching, most notably on ratings of the instructor's effectiveness and facilitative

skills" (Feldman 1984). Large classes also present special challenges to learning because they create a "lost in the crowd" feeling that stifles students' active engagement, intimidating some students from asking questions and allowing others to hide and come to class unprepared (Hancock 2010). Some students see the size of the class and do not show up at all (Hancock 2010). It has been argued that:

*From the students' perspective, large classes are often seen as impersonal, rigidly structured with no opportunity for interaction, poorly organised, and noisy. Often students (particularly those new to the university environment) feel uncomfortable, confused, and overwhelmed by the sudden change in comparison to their high school experience. These kinds of problems are related to those experienced by teachers of large classes, such as difficulty in forming relationships with students and generating interactivity during class. (Herbert, Chalmers & Hannam, 2003).*

The next section discusses some of the challenges found in teaching large classes and explores some strategies that help in teaching large classes effectively.

### ***Providing Ongoing Feedback***

Feedback is a crucial factor in students' learning: it helps them find out how they are doing and identify any misunderstandings about the subject matter. The lack of feedback on students' work not only gives students limited opportunities to learn from their mistakes, but also presents difficulties for teachers to monitor their students' progress (Pisan et al. 2002). However, as discussed earlier, it can be difficult and time-consuming to provide ongoing and substantive individual feedback to a large class (Eapen 2010).

One way of addressing this problem is to provide generic feedback to students on their assessment tasks; for example, publishing on their subject website a general list of the most common errors students made in their assignments and/or exams. Lecturers can also provide a summary handout that explains common mistakes and misunderstandings in students' work and offers suggestions for future improvements. Additionally, rubric-style grading can also be adopted to provide assessment feedback in large classes. The authors use a five-point grading scale (excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory) with standard comments for each criterion. This type of systematic feedback is used to manage the task of marking large numbers of student submissions and reduce marking time. Extra drop-in sessions with sessional tutors can make it possible for students to check their answers and receive verbal guidance on the feedback they have received.

### ***Keeping Interaction and Student Engagement***

Active engagement and interaction are two important aspects of promoting deep approaches to learning, which are essential for achieving quality outcomes (Ramsden 2003). However, these aspects are more difficult to achieve in large classes (Freeman & Blayney 2005). Interaction between students and teachers is certainly limited in large classes, which can severely affect students' overall performance. Large class sizes make it increasingly challenging for lecturers to connect with students and keep their attention. Likewise, students may also feel reluctant to

express their opinion in a large class, for a number of reasons (Mathews 1998). For example, they might feel that they are taking up the time of a large class, that they need to have something worthwhile to say in front of a large audience or that they are afraid of making a fool of themselves in front of a large and intimidating group (Davis & McLeod 1996). The lecturer can compensate for this by incorporating written quizzes, speaking activities through storytelling and small-group discussions into the lectures. Students can also be engaged in group settings by asking questions that allow them to become participants in classes rather than passive information recipients. In fact, questions are one of the simplest forms of interactive teaching, particularly in large classes (Davis 1993).

### ***Ensuring Consistency of Marking***

Maintaining marking standards and consistency is one of the major challenges in large classes. To lessen the marking load, it is necessary to increase the number of markers, but this can undermine quality control by making it more difficult to maintain marking consistency or identify plagiarism, as markers only mark a certain number of exam papers (University of Queensland Report 2001). However, some of these problems can be overcome by ensuring communication between markers, and that the marking scheme is universally applied with strategies such as cross-marking (University of Queensland Report 2001). In addition to this, the head tutor can also be employed to work out the average marks given by each tutor and moderate the students' marks up or down, to ensure that there is consistency between tutors' marks.

### ***Monitoring Cheating and Plagiarism***

Plagiarism, whereby students copy other students work, copy similar work or assignments that have been placed online or, in the worse case, pay others to write assignments for them, is another challenge in large classes. The likelihood of plagiarism and academic misconduct has increased in large classes in recent years. One reason why students deliberately cheat in a large class is because they may feel somewhat anonymous and "lost in the crowd", which makes them believe they are less likely to be caught (Richard, McInnis & Devlin 2002). Cheating and plagiarism cannot be completely eliminated from large classes, so it is important for instructors to clearly outline their expectations, including the importance of citing references (Campbell-Evans & Leggett 2007). Students can also be provided with an option to submit their assessment pieces through SafeAssign (plagiarism-prevention software currently being used at Griffith University) multiple times until satisfied with the similarity index recorded. Education is the key to dealing with plagiarism and academic misconduct in large classes.

### ***Motivating Students***

In a large class, it can become very easy for students to feel estranged. Motivation is one of the key ingredients to engaging students in large classes. Many academics and researchers (Waugh & Waugh 1999) maintain that large classes can effectively inspire and motivate students (Richard, McInnis & Devlin 2002). For example, when an instructor is more enthusiastic about a topic, students will be more inclined to believe that the topic has value for them (Williams 2011). In fact, the instructor's level of enthusiasm about the subject has a direct impact on student learning. Law, in particular, can be quite an intimidating subject for some students, so there needs to be enough motivation for students to do well in the classes despite the class size.

### ***Developing Multiple Learning Resources***

To retain the attention of students in large classes, academics should use a variety of teaching strategies, including (but not limited to) problem-based case studies, group exercise activities, role-play, simulations, discussion software, online quizzes, hypotheticals and team learning (Stanley & Porter 2003). It is also important to create an extensive range of online and electronic



resources for students in large classes to increase efficiency in learning. These resources can include online discussion boards, course FAQs including exam FAQs, links to key business-law websites and videos and online subject resources including glossaries of legal terms.

## **Conclusion**

Teaching law to non-law students in business schools with a large and diverse student cohort can be both challenging and rewarding. This paper has shown that certain strategies work particularly well for such student cohorts. The solutions and strategies it recommends are a wide-ranging combination of teaching techniques, learning resources, flexible curricula, assessment tasks, type of feedback, organisation and control of the learning environment. Adoption of the ideas presented in this article will create a better student-teacher relationship, motivate students and maximise student learning.

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