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Alice Comes to Law School: The Internet as a Teaching Tool

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TEACHING NOTE

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Introduction

Traditional university education is evolving to include the world wide web as a teaching partner. This is not an overnight revolution. Computer technology has been active on many different levels in the educator's tool box for a number of years – from the simple course homepage management and internet communication via email, right through to full internet delivery.

It is trite to observe that change is not always welcome in any organisation. With regard to the internet in legal education, there has been some reticence with regard to its inclusion. The key to the successful introduction of the internet into the educational process is to keep an open mind.[1] It is essential for all parties to avoid seeing the internet as necessarily an irritation, distraction, or threat.[2]

The benefits and, indeed, the necessity of the internet in legal education are now clear. A quick glance at legal practice will confirm this. In legal practice a shift is occurring in the legal paradigm[3] – from being surrounded by print media to a situation where the internet now plays an active role in the daily conduct of business in law firms. Hence, the student

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[1] See further R Widdison, "Computerising Legal Education: What's in Store?" (1993) 3 *Journal of Information, Law and Technology* 12, http://elj.warwick.ac.uk/jilt/99-3/widdison.html (viewed 25 March 2004).

[2] Widdison, note 1.

[3] For further consideration of this shift in paradigm, see M Perry, "Creating Cyberlawyers?" [1997] NZLJ 309. While large gaps still exist for past publications, there is little primary source material published today which is not available electronically.

who is sheltered from the internet and all that it entails whilst at law school will be disadvantaged when they graduate and move into a world where it is a part of everyday life.[4] Traditional modes of education also limit students to specified contact hours and opportunities. By adding internet learning to the equation we are providing an opportunity for students to interact with their peers outside allocated class times. With the demographics of the university student changing[5] it is becoming increasingly important that the limitations of time and place be relaxed. The internet provides flexibility in participation for those students who are combining part-time study with work commitments – they can log on whenever and wherever they are, post messages in common rooms or on discussion boards as issues arise, and become active participants in the class group.

It has been argued, too, that one of the most important outcomes of a legal education is the ability to learn by oneself and to understand and adapt to change.[6] Internet-based learning fosters these skills – at the same time as fostering student collaboration and interaction, it can present the student with individual tasks which must be completed in isolation before collaboration and interaction is possible. Change comes in many guises and it must be remembered that, in a few cases, simply being asked to turn a computer on is requiring a student to accept change; specifically, their expectations of learning and what it entails are required to shift and become more flexible. Being required to participate in varied educational processes means that the students themselves become more flexible and accepting of different research and learning paths. By providing a combination of

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4   For an in-depth consideration of this issue, see J Winship, "Exploiting Information Technology in Higher Education: An Issues Paper", a paper prepared for the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee, October 1996: http://www.avcc.edu.au/news/public_statements/publications   (viewed 24 March 2004). The paper also discusses the responsibility of universities to provide internet-based education alongside traditional classroom activities and notes that those who fail to do this will simply fall behind (para 184). The paper does, however, note that the computer will never substitute fully for human interaction (para 94).

5   Winship, note 4, paras 20 and 99 points to the changing age profile of the university student (increasingly over 25) and the economic pressures resulting in a higher percentage of students involved in part-time work.

6   J Goldring, "Coping with the Virtual Campus: Some Hints and Opportunities for Legal Education?" (1995) 6 Legal Educ Rev 91 at 106. Goldring supports this assertion, arguing that it has been endorsed by a Commissioned Report (number 29) for the National Board of Employment, Education and Training: P C Candy et al, *Developing Lifelong Learners Through Undergraduate Education* (Canberra: AGPS, 1994).

learning paths, the students are exposed to a wider range of activities and a more diverse collection of resources/styles.

As it is widely recognised and accepted that there is a place for the internet in university education, the main question now is at what level and in what form. The focus turns to how much reliance should be placed on internet-based learning – should it really be an all or nothing question or can a compromise be struck with traditional modes of learning? At Adelaide a balance has been struck – an on-line tutorial system (ALICE[7]) is available for the staff to use as a teaching tool as they wish.[8]

The remainder of this note will focus on the manner in which this system was introduced into the Law School at Adelaide, outlining both the development and implementation phases. This will be followed by an examination of student responses to a survey which highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of internet learning in general and the ALICE tutorial system in particular. The experience at Adelaide Law School has shown that, if care is taken in the introduction of web-based instruction, much of the general concern and mistrust of technology (on the part of both staff and students) will, if not entirely disappear, at least subside to a manageable level. The main lesson to be learnt from the Adelaide experience, though, is that care and planning in the implementation phase are crucial to the success of the inclusion of the internet in the legal education process.

What is ALICE?

The ALICE system is an online tutorial system with a focus on participation and collaboration. It is characterised by a series of stages through which a student must move while exploring the answers to set questions. The first step is for the student to access the ALICE homepage and then follow the link to the tutorials. Only those students participating in ALICE tutorials can access them. Once a student successfully logs on they have their own personal "To Do" page from which they can enter the tutorials currently available to them.

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7   Adelaide Law School Intranet for Collaborative Education.
8   Staff have introduced the system for different purposes – as a component of the participation grade through to a compulsory preparation for face-to-face sessions and assessed tasks.

Session 1

Upon entering a tutorial, students are requested to register their name and write a brief introduction. They are then able to access the questions. An average tutorial consists of no more than four or five questions and these can be in whatever style the tutor deems appropriate.[9] Each answer has a word limit set by the tutor and the system will not accept an answer which exceeds this limit. During session 1 there is no interaction with other students online – the student simply works through the questions and submits their answers. At the end of the session they click on the "session end" button. This automatically queues them for session 2.

Session 2

This session is the main period for student collaboration. A student is queued for session 2 until there are another three students available or 24 hours has passed (whichever comes first). Once a student enters session 2 they are introduced to the other members of their tutorial group and then given access to the answers submitted by those students. They are then able to compare these answers with their own and, if they wish, amend their answers. Once they are satisfied with their answer they can access the teacher's answer and the tutorial is then over.

This is the design of the basic ALICE tutorial but it can be altered to suit the individual needs of the course. In computer science tutorials, for example, there has been a further step whereby students voted for the particular questions they wished to discuss further during the weekly face-to-face seminar, thus creating a strong relationship between the two modes of instruction. Legal Skills 1 saw a further development of the system with Legal Drafting being taught entirely through the ALICE system. To facilitate the learning process extra sessions were added and a single tutorial expanded to four sessions. This highlights one of the strengths of the ALICE system – its flexibility and adaptability to individual requirements and needs.

Common Room

An important part of the ALICE tutorial system is the common room, which is similar to a discussion board. Students are

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9   See Appendix A for an example of question styles.

encouraged to post questions, concerns, thoughts and so on, directed to other students and the ALICE Tutor. The common room is designed to ensure that students are able to interact with others as well as the staff – at any time and from any place.

News Bulletin

It is always necessary to update students on the current tutorial as well as to respond to common problems and provide advice. To this end a weekly news bulletin is published on the ALICE homepage. This has reduced the levels of confusion created by lack of information flow and firmly places the students in the communication loop.

ALICE Staff

An ALICE Tutor is employed by the Law School. The role of the tutor is to write and conduct the tutorials as required. Some academic staff prefer to write and run their own tutorials (as occurred in two subjects in 2000), and in that case the ALICE Tutor takes on an advisory role. The Law School has also employed an Electronic Resources Specialist who spends time developing the ALICE program, designing and maintaining the website and news bulletins, as well as helping the ALICE Tutor when necessary. These two staff members work closely together to develop the ALICE program as well as promoting it to both staff and students. In addition, there is also the ongoing technical support provided by computer science, without whom the ALICE tutorials program would not work.

ALICE – The Early Days

The ALICE tutorial system was developed in partnership between the Schools of Law and Computer Science. The original document which outlined the ALICE concept[10] highlighted perceived shortcomings of the traditional tutorial system, including: reluctance by students to participate (passive learning approaches); tutorials overly dominated by teachers; and a lack of remedial teaching for those who could not keep pace with the group as a whole. The collaborative ALICE program was designed to meet and overcome these

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10 H Detmold and M Detmold, "ALICE: How to Teach the Law Degree Better to More Students" (1998), unpublished background paper. Henry Detmold continues to be invaluable in the ALICE tutorial program as the technical developer and programmer.

concerns.[11] The foundation of the proposed system exists in eight basic principles:

(i)   communication preceded by thought;

(ii)   conciseness;

(iii)   active participation;

(iv)   thorough participation;

(v)   absence of "malign domination"(that is, teacher interference in, and domination of, the learning process);

(vi)   liberation from shyness;

(vii)   frequent iteration; and

(viii) guidance of interaction.[12]

Following this initial paper there was a development period which was characterised by three distinct phases. The first phase was a three-month feasibility study (completed in April 1997); stage two was a software trial and development stage; and stage three involved initial introduction into the curriculum of some core subjects. The system was not, however, greeted with unfettered enthusiasm and there was concern regarding the reliance on technology, which could go wrong, along with the perceived extra time and effort that would be required by staff and students.

A controlled trial of the ALICE tutorial system was conducted in Constitutional Law and Contract Law over a four-day period in August and September 1997. Twenty-five student participants volunteered in each subject. Following this trial a formal evaluation was conducted with the initial response from students being encouraging. Students were essentially positive about the system and liked the idea that they were "forced" to participate and could not sit back and simply gather information from other students. While the benefits of the ALICE tutorials were clear to participants, they did not support ALICE usurping the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching – they felt the two experiences could complement each other.

Once this trial phase was over, and further recommendations were made, a computer suite was established in the Law Library and the ALICE tutorial system was introduced into the Law School proper in 1999.

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11   Detmold, note 10, p 9.
12   Detmold, note 10, pp 12-13.

1999

The first semester of 1999 involved a steep learning curve for the ALICE staff with semester 2 providing an opportunity to rectify many of the problems associated with the system. ALICE was used in four subjects in Law (Legal Skills, Criminal Law/Law of Crime, Property Law, and Intellectual Property). The level of participation varied between subjects and reflected the level of integration in the mainstream course. If it was an integral component of the course with academic staff promoting and encouraging its use, more students were prepared to participate. If, however, it was simply conducted as a separate activity to the substantive course, and if it was not actively encouraged and simply acted as an extra opportunity to practise answering problem questions, the students viewed it as a waste of time and the participation levels were low as a result.

Semester 1

The initial implementation of ALICE lacked the structured framework and support system required for acceptance by students and staff. There was no strategy designed to make the system attractive, neither was there any form of up front orientation provided for staff and students. Introductory workshops were run for students in week 7 of first semester – after two tutorials had begun. The reality was that student resistance to the concept was already well entrenched and there was only a 10% attendance. It was unfortunate that the precision and care taken in the development of the system was not followed through as well as it could have been. As a result, ALICE was greeted with suspicion by the students and, because there was not a lot of information about the system available, this suspicion developed, in some cases, to outright hostility. The ALICE tutorial system became "The Phantom ALICE" – fodder for the Law Revue. The source of the problem was quickly identified, however, and steps were taken to rectify the situation: a user guide was written and distributed; a staff member was positioned adjacent to the computer suite in the library; a new webpage was created; and ALICE News was introduced.

The biggest issue in first semester was clearly one of dissemination of information. A further teething problem involved some technical glitches, which made the transition to web-based learning more disrupted than we would have wished. In an ideal world these issues would have been

identified prior to the implementation of the system, however the reality is that any program in its infancy is likely to experience difficulties. If the staff remain flexible and able to respond to difficulties as they arise, it is possible for any long-term negative effects to be averted.

Despite the teething problems experienced in the early part of semester 1, the participation levels reflected a general willingness by students to at least try ALICE. In Criminal Law/ Law of Crime (in which ALICE was voluntary), 348 students were enrolled and of these 148 students (43%) completed at least one tutorial, with 76 students (22%) completing three or more of the seven tutorials.[13] Whilst the participation could clearly have been higher, there were two positive aspects. First, the majority of students who attempted one tutorial went on to complete two or more. Second, those who did participate were supportive of the system. The first semester therefore ended with an air of optimism and a belief that the system would meet with wider acceptance in semester 2.

Semester 2

Semester 2 saw the introduction of the ALICE User Guide, ALICE News, a new homepage and a more coordinated approach. The result was reduced fear and concern amongst the students, culminating in less resistance and more participation.

The manner in which ALICE was utilised differed in each subject with the resulting participation levels reflecting the level of integration in the mainstream conduct of the course. In Property Law, ALICE was introduced as a revision tool and was not formally embedded into the course curriculum in any way. The result was a slightly disappointing participation level with 70 out of 324 students (22%) attempting at least one tutorial, and only 44 students (14%) completing three or more of the seven tutorials. Whilst this level of participation was disappointing, it must be remembered that this was simply an opportunity for students to revise and consolidate their learning. It is submitted that the provision of an alternate learning path is worthwhile even if only a relatively small percentage of students use it.

The Intellectual Property lecturer wrote and conducted his own ALICE tutorials with the ALICE Tutor acting in an

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13 J Richards (ALICE Tutor), "ALICE Report: The First Year in Review", unpublished report to Dean of Law, University of Adelaide (December 1999). All participation figures are taken from this report.

advisory capacity only. Participation was encouraged and the tutorials were discussed during the conduct of the course. The answers to the tutorials were, however, made available on the internet later in the semester and this meant that some students avoided participation, preferring to wait until the answers were posted. The participation level was consistent, the average being 22%.

Legal Skills saw the highest participation level of all the subjects using ALICE with 196 out of 247 students (80%) participating. The main reason for this was that the legal drafting component of the course was taught through the conduct of the ALICE tutorials, thus participation was imperative if understanding of this component was to occur.

Lessons Learnt in 1999

It became evident during 1999 that confusion, poor communication and lack of general coordination are the natural enemies to the successful introduction of online learning to the law school. This is not a problem unique to the online environment, however, as it is generally a reality when implementing any radically different learning system. A major issue, in many cases, is fear and a lack of willingness on the part of students to take responsibility for their own learning. (This is also experienced in the traditional classroom with the shift from lecture-based to seminar-based courses.) There is therefore a need to progress slowly and carefully, and to remember that no major shift can occur overnight. The introduction of a new learning path such as the internet should be approached as an evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, process.

The experience in 1999 showed us that the students need to be adequately informed about the online tutorial system before they are presented with it. The User Guide as well as the webpage *must* be in place prior to the commencement of the course and staff must constantly liaise with each other to ensure that the introduction of the tutorials is smooth and the students are well informed.

As semester 1 progressed it became apparent that the most appropriate way to run the tutorials was to be flexible in the timing. Some students liked to participate in the tutorials as they proceeded through the course, others used them to revise during the semester, while still another group liked to sit down and do them just prior to the examinations as practice/ revision. With flexibility being one of the forecast advantages of this system, it was determined that the best approach was

to make a new tutorial available each week and not to remove them until after the examination in that subject.

The first set of tutorials had up to eight questions and these were greeted with dismay by the students who found that too much time was taken up in completing each session. It was decided that the shorter tutorial was more suited to this style of learning – the general length is now limited to no more than four or five questions. This change appears to be appropriate and matches the length of time students are prepared to spend online.

It became apparent as the year progressed that while high hopes were held for the use of the common room, reality did not match anticipation. This facility is designed to be an integral component of the tutorial system and is thought to be one of its strengths. Nevertheless, there were no more than 20 messages posted in any of the common rooms. This was despite the fact that the facility was being promoted by the ALICE staff and constant reminders were being given to students. There was, however, a real reticence on the part of the students to utilise email in any form during 1999 and, as the common room operates in the email environment, this could explain the lack of interest. It has been made increasingly clear to students that they must be active email users as the Law School policy has shifted to one of communication via email. This may help to attract students to the common room.[14] Once a student has successfully posted a message and received a reply, it is often the case that they will return and use the common room on other occasions. Therefore, like the tutorial system itself, the key is to get students to actually use the common room once. It is then likely they will return in greater numbers.

2000 and Beyond

The year 2000 began with a concerted effort to inform both staff and students in the Law School about the nature and advantages of the program. Prior to the beginning of the academic year, a staff seminar introducing ALICE and demonstrating the potential of the system was run. This was very well received and helped to increase staff interest. A further innovation

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14 Since the original draft of this paper was completed, several different approaches have been taken to the common room but students continue to avoid it. They are, however, keen to participate in online discussion forums in other areas but appear reluctant to consider the material in the ALICE tutorials in this way. Perhaps the exposure to responses of other students and academic staff meets the need for further interaction and collaboration.

was an introductory lecture for students during Orientation Week, which helped to demystify the whole procedure. In my experience, many of our students appear to be intimidated by technological systems which, at first glance, appear to take over the role of the teacher and leave the individual students to fend for themselves. By taking time to show them that the system is quite simple to operate, some of this fear and concern is addressed. The other important step taken with this introductory lecture was to put faces to the system. This helped to personalise the process and introduce the students to the staff who were available to help them.

The approach to implementation was also "slow and steady" with ALICE being used in only one subject in semester 1. The more methodical approach paid dividends with 58% of students in that subject utilising the facility. Semester 2 saw the tutorials introduced into four subjects in differing capacities – from entirely voluntary revision through to a component of the final assessment which is awarded for class participation. The more senior students, to whom ALICE is something new, continue to be suspicious and resistant to change. The first and second year students have come to expect an ALICE component, as it has always been there – and it is through these students that the paradigm shift will occur. Online learning is becoming a recognised and accepted component of the law degree – however, the key to success is clearly patience and a willingness to let the change gradually move through the school rather than expect an overnight "revolution".

The Student Survey[15]

If a full picture of the effect of any teaching and learning innovation is to be obtained, it is essential that student perceptions and experiences are systematically surveyed. To this end a study was conducted early in 2001 with the aim of providing a snapshot of student attitudes. The survey was divided into four sections headed as follows:

(i)   general questions (focusing on access to computers and the internet);

(ii)   ALICE (attitudes and experiences);

(iii)   websites (level of use and value); and

(iv)   general internet use (focusing on level of use and value).

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15   A sample of approximately 20% of current students responded to the survey. A copy of the survey is at Appendix B.

In response to the confusion during the initial implementation phase in 1999 the subjects of the survey were divided into two distinct groups: Group 1 and Group 2. Group 1 represented those students who were either in the first or second years of their degree (the "Junior Group"), while Group 2 represented the more senior students who experienced the year of "the Phantom ALICE" (the "Senior Group").[16]

The findings clearly reflect the need to implement any innovation with care and provide students with support and direction.[17] The most telling part of the survey was the section dealing with ALICE. The questions were designed to gain a broad overview of student perceptions of the system and gain some insight into how future developments might be received. There were four distinct areas of inquiry:

(i)   ALICE participation;
(ii)   student perceptions;
(iii) reasons for participation; and
(iv)   suggestions for improvement/general comments.

The first step in the collection of data was to determine the level of student participation in the ALICE tutorials. The response to this was extremely positive with 69% of those in the Junior Group and 73% of those in the Senior Group having participated.

The second step was to gain an overview of the student perceptions with each question focusing on different aspects of ALICE. Students were initially asked whether or not they found ALICE useful.

With a little over 50% of respondents finding ALICE to be either not useful at all or of limited use, this response, at first glance, does not appear to be supportive of ALICE. It is important to note, however, that only a small percentage (1% of the Junior Group and 20% of the Senior Group) felt that it was of no use at all. The majority of respondents admitted that it was of some use (albeit limited in some cases).

The differences in the experiences of the two groups began to have an impact on the data at this point. Those who have been informed and trained when they were first introduced to ALICE begin to diverge from the older group who had the often negative experience in the first year of ALICE. It is submitted that as ALICE represents a culture change it cannot be expected to be universally accepted in the short term. Over time, as students move through the school, the acceptance level will increase.

16 Group 1 constituted 52% of the respondents and Group 2 48%.
17 This paper will focus solely on the section of the survey dealing with ALICE.

Figure 1
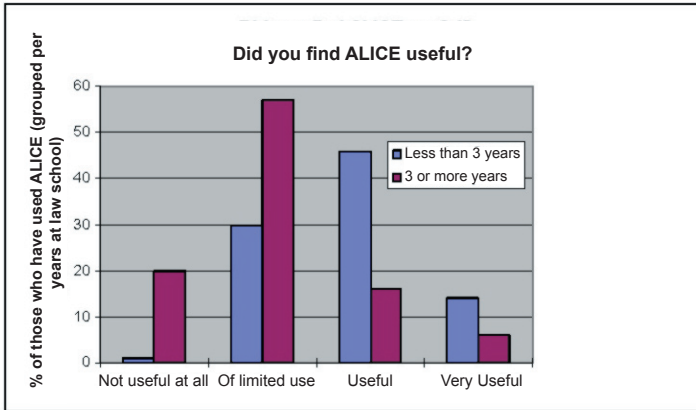
The second question was intended to probe a little deeper into the user experiences of ALICE. The program was designed to improve the learning of students at the School, so accordingly they were asked if they felt that it had achieved this aim.

Figure 2
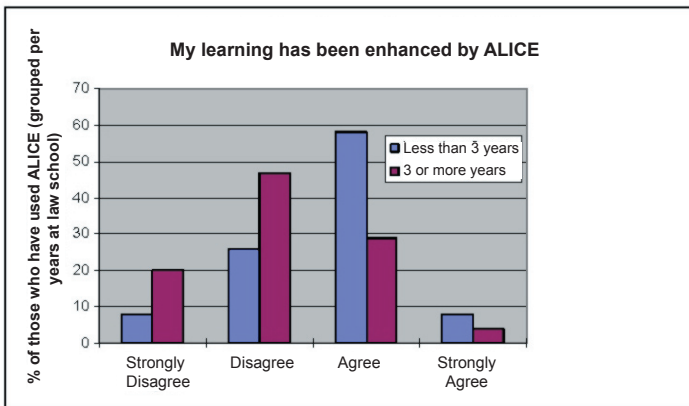
While it would be reasonable to assume that the usefulness of ALICE is directly analogous to its enhancement of the learning process, as is demonstrated in the student responses, this does not appear to be the case. The responses from the Senior Group indicate that 29% of respondents agree that it enhances learning, with 4% strongly agreeing, as opposed to only 16% who agree that it was useful and 6% agreeing that it was very useful. A similar result occurred with the Junior Group. There appears to be no sound explanation for this difference, though perhaps it lies in the fact that students do

not equate usefulness with the learning process. It may be that in some cases the latter (in student minds) is only referring to the obtaining of grades, and if no grades are obtained for the completion of certain activities, then no learning is perceived as having taken place.

A further hint regarding the perception of what is useful (or not) can be found in the general student comments. They indicate a concern that the teacher's responses were not as detailed as they would have liked them to be, and that they have to actually answer questions and engage in the tutorial process before they are permitted access to these responses. It is apparent that in some students' minds usefulness clearly equates to not only gaining access to the teacher's response but also to being sure that it is as detailed as possible, covers all possible alternatives, and removes them from having to actually do any work to get these responses! This reflects a clear lack of understanding of the learning process and is a much broader issue than the scope of this paper. It suffices to say at this point that, along with the introduction of the internet into the teaching program, it is important that the very nature of teaching and learning be taken into account by those developing and implementing such programs.

The third question was aimed at determining the overall student perception of ALICE and willingness to use it again. The responses to this question clearly demonstrated that there is room for improvement in the area of educating students regarding the benefits of introducing electronic media into legal education.

It is clear that ALICE does not have universal acceptance – even amongst the Junior Group. However, it is encouraging to note that it is far from being the subject of universal rejection. There is once again a clear difference between the two groups, with the Junior Group being more open to the possibility of having ALICE in other subjects. The issues of usefulness, benefit and enhancement of learning are related to this question. If students are to voluntarily utilise an innovation in learning such as the ALICE program, then the benefits must be made clear to them, and their main question of "what's in it for me?" must be addressed. It is this factor which underlies the difference in responses between the two groups.

As a direct result of the early problems with the introduction of ALICE, it was apparent that there had been, to a significant extent, a culture of rejection of the program. The students were asked to compare their experience of using the program with their initial expectations.
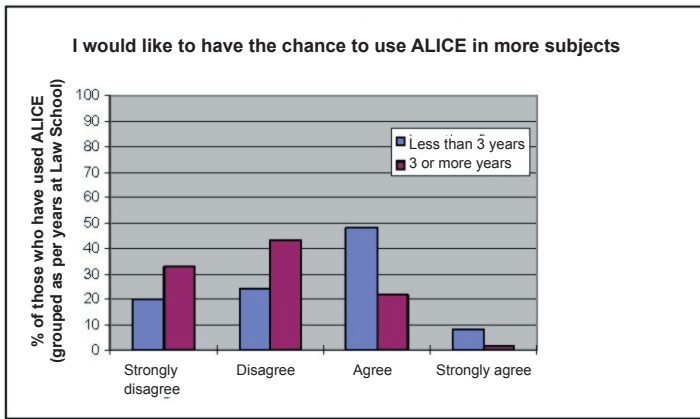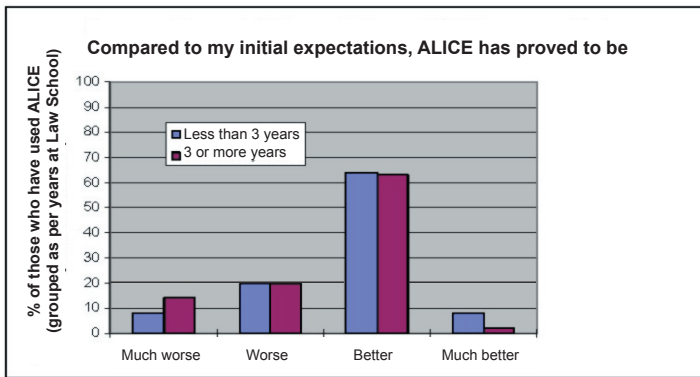
Figure 3

I would like to have the chance to use ALICE in more subjects

Figure 4

Compared to my initial expectations, ALICE has proved to be

The responses to this question supported the view that initial perceptions present a significant barrier to wider acceptance. There were of course students who determined that the program was "worse" or "much worse" than their expectations but, with over 60%[18] admitting that it is better than expected, there is clearly a benefit to be gained by positively advertising a program such as this, and spending time gradually introducing students to the new mode of learning and providing them with support.[19]

An important component of any survey is to give participants an opportunity to comment generally, to provide

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18 64% of Group 1 and 63% of Group 2.
19 For an interesting discussion regarding the importance of student perceptions and the need to support and even "indoctrinate" students in the adoption of new learning modes, see L P Dringus, "Towards Active Online Learning: A Dramatic Shift in Perspective for Learners" (1999) 2(1) *The Internet and Higher Education* 45.

them with a chance to clarify any of their responses or cover areas they feel were not sufficiently considered in the more restricted "tick a box" section. To this end, students were asked two general questions:

- How would you improve the ALICE tutorials?
- Please comment generally on ALICE.

The responses to the first general question ranged from "scrap them" to constructive suggestions on how to add to the value of the learning experience. In general, the students demonstrated an aversion to the tutorials being a compulsory component of any course as they perceive that, as such, they are either additional and unnecessary work for them, or an attempt by staff to reduce their workload. Students emphasised the importance of the teacher's response and there were many comments regarding the availability and content of these responses. This is a reflection of the student preoccupation with getting the "right" answer (they are loath to accept the reality that in law often there is not always one single "right" answer).

Another recommendation from the students is that the tutorials become more integrated into the conduct of the subject, to more directly reflect the subject matter of the weekly lectures, seminars and tutorials. This is a valid recommendation. In subjects where the course staff have actively participated in the conduct of the tutorials – either through in-depth consultation with the ALICE staff, by writing the questions and answers themselves, or actively encouraging participation – the students have been more open to the concept of online tutorials.

The second general question also drew a wide range of answers. There were some extremely positive comments, which included recognition that ALICE is a learning tool that supplements and enhances the face-to-face conduct of the course by providing the students with an opportunity to interact with each other outside of the classroom situation. The most disturbing comments were:

- participating in an ALICE tutorial is a waste of valuable reading time;
- ALICE cannot replace face-to-face teaching;
- the answers of other students are of a poor quality and ALICE doesn't offer any benefits over in-class tutorials.

These comments reflect a real lack of understanding on behalf of the students – for one thing, ALICE was never designed to replace face-to-face tutorials. The main aim of the ALICE

system was to enhance the face-to-face experience, and to underline and emphasise the themes considered in the central course activities. Participation in the ALICE tutorials should be in conjunction with the reading as they are designed to assist student comprehension of material and to reflect the reading program. It is clear from these student comments that there is still a gap in student understanding of the program; whilst this is a concern, it is one which can be addressed by educating the students regarding the overall aims of ALICE along with its benefits. To do so we simply address the key student question: "what's in it for me?"

Conclusion

The introduction of internet-based learning into the world of legal education is not something to be taken lightly. It will present a unique set of challenges and difficulties requiring dedication and planning. While the Adelaide experience clearly demonstrates some of the practical problems, it also suggests that, over time, perhaps even the most cynical student may come to realise that internet-based learning is not intended as a substitute for face-to-face teaching, but that technological innovations like ALICE have distinctive benefits for the teaching and learning process.

Postscript

Since the writing of this paper, the position at the law school has altered. We have integrated the ALICE tutorial program into a University-wide adoption of the Blackboard platform (we call it MyUni). Not only do we have online tutorials, we now also make all course materials available in electronic version (as well as hard copy). The positions of Electronic Resources Specialist and ALICE Tutor have now been amalgamated (both were originally part-time positions) and the position of Online Learning and Teaching Specialist has been created. The creation of this position is unique within the University and has been successful in providing assistance and specialist support in the integration of electronic media into the teaching program. Whilst the ALICE system as such now no longer exists, the valuable lessons learnt from its development and implementation have assisted in the establishment of the current position.

APPENDIX A

Sample ALICE Tutorial (Property Law)

Jenny Richards

Background Information

Kate became the registered proprietor of a house in Adelaide in 1998, having moved here to be closer to her grandchildren. Recently, following media reports of elderly people in her area being broken into, coupled with the fact that she has had a hip replacement, she decided to move into a nursing home and keep her valuables and documents in a safe deposit box. Having moved, she asked her grandson Jim to attend to arrangements for the deposit box, giving him the duplicate certificate of title and other documents. She plans to sell the house once she has settled into the nursing home.

Jim loves his grandma but loves the idea of the high life more, and decides to "get his inheritance now" by selling the house himself. He takes the deposit box paperwork to Kate and asks her to sign it, at the same time slipping in a memorandum of transfer of the fee simple.

He then takes the signed memorandum of transfer, advertises privately and later sells the property to Bruce for $130,000. He tells Bruce that he is handling the negotiations for Kate due to her hip replacement. Bruce duly searches the register, finds everything in order, signs the memorandum, and lodges his interest for registration. Jim takes the money and heads overseas.

Please answer the following questions, providing reasons for your answer and referring to appropriate sections of the *Real Property Act 1886* (SA) (RPA) as well as case law. Remember that answers such as "yes", "no", "I don't know", etc are unacceptable.

Question 1

What interest does Bruce have? (Word limit: 50)

Answer

Bruce has a registered fee simple (s 67, RPA). He has immediate indefeasibility (s 69, *Breskvar v Wall*, *Palais Parking*), having completed the two-stage process of registration:

using a registrable instrument and lodgment (s 56). Anyone challenging Bruce's title must fit within an exception to immediate indefeasibility.

Question 2

Does Kate retain any interest in the property? (There is no need to consider her position at common law.) (Word limit: 50)

Answer

Yes. Jim has committed actual fraud, dishonestly obtaining title (*Wicks v Bennett*) using an act of moral turpitude (*Wicklow Enterprises v Doysal*). Kate has an equity arising out of the fraud to have the transaction set aside and be restored to the register (ss 69(I), 71(V), 249).

Question 3

Is Bruce bound by Kate's interest? (Word limit: 50)

Answer

No. Bruce falls within the exceptions to ss 69(I), 71(V), 249. On the facts, he is a bona fide purchaser for value of a registered interest. He thought the sale was above board and played no part in the fraud.

Background Information

Imagine Bruce heard that Kate accused Jim of cheating her *after* the memorandum was signed but *before* lodgment. On hearing this rumour, Bruce immediately lodges the memorandum for registration.

Question 4

In these circumstances would Bruce be bound by Kate's interest? (Word limit: 90)

Answer

Again, no. He is still a bona fide registered purchaser for value. Here all he has is knowledge of a prior unregistered interest, and this alone cannot constitute a lack of bona fides under the Torrens System (s 72). Bruce has already purchased the house; he is still not a part of Jim's fraud. In registering promptly, he is simply trying to safeguard his own interests, not to cheat Kate out of hers. (That has already occurred and was Jim's doing.)

APPENDIX B

Dear Law Student

We are interested to find out more about your experiences in using electronic resources whilst at the Law School. Please take the time to answer the following questions and to respond thoughtfully as your input may affect future developments.

Please complete the survey and then place it in the Assignment Box in the General Office by Friday 27th April

Thank-you

Bernadette Richards

Background Information:

How many years have you been at the Law School?	Years
Have you ever used the iMac Suite?	YES NO
Have you ever used the Computer Suite in Room 115?	YES NO
Do you have a computer at home?	YES NO
Do you have internet access at home?	YES NO

ALICE

Have you ever participated in an ALICE Tutorial	YES NO

(If no, please proceed to next section)

For which subjects?   _____

_____

_____

Please respond to the following:

Did you find ALICE useful?

Not useful at all
Of limited use
Useful
Very Useful

My learning has been enhanced by the
use of ALICE

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

I would like to have the chance to use
ALICE in more subjects

Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Agree
Strongly Agree

Compared to my initial expectations,
ALICE has proved to be

Much worse
Worse
Better
Much Better

For what purpose did you use ALICE? (You may tick more than one box)	It was compulsory	
	Interest	
	Revision	
	To learn the material	
	For the participation mark	
	To practice answering problems	
	Other (please specify)	

How would you improve the ALICE Tutorials?

Please comment generally on ALICE:

Websites

Have you ever used the Law School Web Site	YES
	NO

If yes, which of the following features have you utilised?	Discussion Forum
	Notices
	Course Materials
	Other Information

Please comment on any of these facilities you have used

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would you like to see on the Law School Site?

_____

_____

Have you ever used the Law Library Web Site?	YES
	NO

If yes, which of the following features have you utilised?	Past Exams
	Legal Research
	Reserve Items
	Library Guide
	Style Guide
	Citations
	Reports
	Statutes
	Journals

Please comment on the facilities you have used

_____

_____

_____

What would you like to see on the Law Library Site?

_____

_____

_____

Internet Research

How often have you used the internet for   Never
Research?   Occasionally
                                                 Often
                                                 Main Source of Research

What is the most common form of internet research for you?(ie Austlii,
Westlaw,other established research sites, subject research, case retrieval
etc)

_____

Have you ever used Westlaw?   YES
                                                 NO

If yes, please comment (ie is it a useful research tool, has the training been
useful etc.)

_____

On-Line Library/Research Tutorial

Have you ever used the on-line Library   YES
Tutorial? (if so, please comment)   NO

_____

_____

Email

Are you confident using email?   NO
                                                 MOSTLY
                                                 YES

Would you like more training in the use of   YES
email?   NO

General Comments

Do you think that the internet/electronic resources have added to your learn-
ing? (please explain your answer)

_____

_____

_____