

**Using E-Learning as part of a blended learning approach  
within seminar teaching**



**Investigating the Graduate Teaching Assistant's (GTAs)  
experience within the University of Warwick.**

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IATL**

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## Executive summary

### 1 Overview

This project, financed by a small grant from the Institute of Advanced Studies in Warwick aimed to develop our understanding of the Graduate Teacher's Experience (GTAs) in higher education. We wanted to understand why and how postgraduate teachers in Warwick University use technology enhanced learning as part of a blended learning approach.

We also interested in finding how students perceived the use of technology within small group learning.

### 2 Major Findings

The findings indicated that using technology enhanced learning can help to mitigate some of the disadvantages caused by the ambiguous status of the GTAs both within their departments and also in the eyes of the students that they teach. The process of GTAs in deciding, planning and using ICT tools within their small group teaching can help them to improve their confidence and reclaim some of the 'ownership and authority' that they lose due to their ambiguous relationship within the department.

Secondly, the project found that students were generally enthusiastic about the use of technology as they felt it helped create more memorable and interactive learning experiences. Technology enhanced learning was deemed particularly useful for engaging students.

Through the use of student questionnaires we were able to find out that students were enthusiastic about open space learning which embraces the use of technology. Furthermore, their responses reflected the fact that technologies helped them to try things out for themselves thereby creating very active learning experiences for undergraduates. The findings also indicated that things that students traditionally find difficult like receiving feedback could be improved upon with technology due to the personalised sense that the students got either through electronic feedback or through peer moderation using smart boards that helped them to understand and internalise better the criteria that was used in assessing their work.

Coupled with this, was the expectation that Warwick, as a leading university should be a leader in teaching with technology and this should be an essential part of the undergraduate experience. Thus, encouraging Graduate teaching assistants to incorporate this technology in their teaching is essential in reaching student's expectations.

### 3 Proposed Suggestions

**Graduate Teaching Assistants** should be encouraged to use technology within small group teaching. As we will illustrate in this report, some of their colleagues have already tried it with considerable success.

Additionally, it would be beneficial if a part of the postgraduate teaching course could focus on how to use technology within small seminar groups as it can be a good tool of mitigating some of the problems that graduate teaching assistants face as young teachers.

**Undergraduate Students** should be given clear guidance about the possible variations of small group learning that may occur within seminars. This would make them more receptive to

different kinds of teaching. As the research indicated, many undergraduates were often puzzled by new teaching methods as they thought that all seminars would take place in exactly the same manner.

**Departmental Support:** There should be clear mentoring provided within departments for Graduate teaching assistants. As the research indicates, this type of support is invaluable in giving graduate teaching assistants confidence in attempting new teaching techniques.

**The University of Warwick University** should encourage more post graduate teachers to use technology within teaching as it is clear that they are enthusiastic and very innovative in thinking up ways to use technology within the classroom. The university must address the time implications that are necessary for this type of teaching and remunerate graduate teaching assistants accordingly.

At the moment, IT Services is on hand to give practical support to people using technology in the classroom. However, for many Graduate teaching assistants their website remains inaccessible due to settings that sometimes lock out temporary staff and students. IT Services should give enhanced support to Graduate teaching assistants when they use technology. They should put clear links on their departmental homepage.

### **Dissemination of Findings**

The results have been disseminated widely both within and outside the university. The findings that focused on the postgraduates experience have been written and submitted for the journal *Higher Education*. The article, titled 'Using e-learning as part of a blended learning approach within seminar teaching: The graduate teachers experience,' is currently under review. The findings were also presented at the Social Legal Studies Association Conference in Leicester in April this year.

Within Warwick, the findings have been disseminated even wider. The biggest even was the Teaching and Learning Showcase in June 2012 which brought together over 100 academics from different departments. The topic fit squarely within one of the major themes of teaching in Warwick this year which is 'Technology enhanced learning through Digital and learning environments.'

The report was also discussed at the Warwick Law School Teaching day in the session on strategies to create more effective small group teaching.

Some of the findings that focus on the postgraduates experience have also been discussed in the Early Career Researchers Forum in Warwick who gave invaluable feedback about their experiences.

Finally two separate reports have been submitted to the major open space used in the library. One of the reports concerned the benefits from the postgraduate perspective while the other dealt with the undergraduate perspective on the successes and challenges of using these technology in open learning spaces during small groups. All these activities have helped to ensure that the report has been circulated widely gaining a wide range of views from within and outside the university.

## About the authors

Dr. Sharifah Sekalala was a PhD student in the Law School. At the beginning of the project, she was an experienced seminar teacher having taught small seminar groups for 3 years. During the project, Sharifah taught both in the law school (law of torts and Globalisation and the environment) and in the Warwick Business School ( Critical Issues in Law and Management course).

Dr. James Harrison who was a co- applicant on the grant and gave supervisory support during both the project and for this report is the outgoing Director of Undergraduate Studies in the School of Law ( 2011-2012). Dr. Harrison has had experience of running successful projects in the past (Reinvention Centre Grant 2008-9) and of ensuring the dissemination of learning from projects to a wide audience . See <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/chrp/projectss/humanrightsimpactassessments/cwv/> He had considerable experience of using e-technology in his courses (e.g. turningpoint, e-quizzes etc.) Dr. Harrison, in his position as Director of Undergraduate research and as a senior lecturer within the Law School, provided Sharifah Sekalala with a mentoring role for the duration of this project.

## Acknowledgments

We are indebted to some individuals and departments who helped us in the conceptualisation and set up of this project. . Professor Paul Raffield the Deputy Head of Teaching and Learning for giving postgraduate teachers the freedom to try new things on the seminar courses which he convenes. This freedom allowed us to try new teaching techniques within seminar teaching.

We would also like to thank Professor Roger Leng, also gave us ideas about the project in its early stages. Further thanks must be go to Professor Leng for constantly making the time to give advice on pedagogy to young teachers in the law school.

Professor Grier Palmer (Assistant Dean of Warwick Business School) also gave us valuable assistance on the project especially in regards to using open spaces and active learning. Finally, we are grateful to Emma King from the Learning Development Centre who really gave us valuable insights about technology enhanced learning.

Several departments in Warwick also lent us their support. The Law School was very helpful in supporting our bid for funding as well giving us institutional support throughout this programme. We also got some support from the School of Education in thinking about some of the pedagogical considerations of this project.

The Learning Development Centre in the University of Warwick allowed us to use their blog to make contact with postgraduates who teach. Without, this we would have found it much harder. They also helped us disseminate our results with the Teaching and Learning Showcase and have created awareness through their various on-going projects.

Finally we are grateful to the Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) for financing the project.

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

This is a list of the common abbreviations and Acronyms used within this report.

ACHR	Arts and Humanities Research Council
CILM	Critical Issues in Law and Management
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GTA's	Graduate Teaching Assistant
IATL	Institute of Advanced Teaching and Learning
IAS	Institute of Advanced Studies
PCAP	The Postgraduate Certificate of Academic Practice
PCERT	Postgraduate Certificate in Career Education
UG's	Undergraduate
WBS	Warwick Business School
WLS	Warwick Law School

# Introduction

## 1. Background to the research

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are currently being asked to do more teaching within universities, partly due to the increase in undergraduate numbers in higher education (Park, 2002; National Postgraduate Committee, 2007). As universities are becoming increasingly research-led, full time academics become more preoccupied with research, GTAs can offer a comparatively cheap and often enthusiastic option, which allows more small-group teaching to take place especially on larger core courses within undergraduate degree programme.

There are numerous advantages to using GTA's to teach small groups. Some students find GTAs more approachable and easier to engage with than staff members as they are often closer in age and in some cases have recently been undergraduates themselves. (Park, 2002; Muzaka, 2009). In some cases their research may also tie in with the seminars that they teach making them experts who can provide valuable insights to their undergraduate students. (Park 2002)

However, this reliance on GTAs has not been without its critics. There has been some media scrutiny about possible issues of value for money where students get fobbed off by postgraduates as opposed to qualified academic members of staff. (Attwood, 2008; Attwood, 2009; Newman, 2009; National Postgraduate Committee, 2007; Muzaka; 2009). These concerns have been shared by some students. (Muzaka; 2009).

Despite, these contentions, it is unlikely that universities will stop using GTA's in the near future. In the wake of higher fees in higher education, universities will be under pressure to provide more contact hours to students which would be unsustainable in many parts of academia without GTA's. The reduced teaching budgets, by about, a third this academic year 2012/13. HEFCE (2012/08) also raise serious financial concerns for universities make GTA's an integral part of department's small group teaching.

Since the use of GTAs is on the rise within the UK, it has become important to consider their experiences within academia. In North America, where the use of postgraduate teachers has been more widespread, this has been studied much more. A lot of the literature within the UK focuses on how GTAs manage their dual roles as student and teacher, and how this impacts on their pedagogical development (Mc Clough; 2002, Park; 2002, Park; 2004, Harland and Plangger; 2004, Muzaka; 2009).

Research in the UK context identified some common problems resulting from this dual identity. GTAs often felt that they lacked ownership of the courses they were teaching, they felt that they had no control over the way in which the courses they taught were delivered and they normally had heavy teaching loads which were repetitive. Furthermore, many of them felt that they had an uncertain status within departments. This was due to the lack of clarity of their status as part student part staff member. Many of them felt that they could not exercise as much authority over their students as they wished to, because of their perceived lower status. Added to this, their departments did not often give them full academic and administrative control making their position ambiguous. This duality of roles has been illustrated in the literature using several metaphors which try to communicate the precarious relationship GTAs have with their departments, students and in some instances even the university. Park and Ramos (2002) refer to them as the 'donkey in the department', (Park 2002) in later work describes the ambiguous relationship as be-



ing akin to ‘neither fish nor fowl’, while Harland and Plangger (2004) refer to the GTA as a chameleon.

This ambiguous relationship can fuel a lack of engagement with broader pedagogic and conceptual dimensions of the courses they teach which then increases the risk of uninspired teaching and a lower quality experience for those that they teach.’ (Park, 2002:59)

This project was aware of these concerns, however it felt that GTA’s had some strengths that were untapped and necessitated further investigation. Schon 1998 is a proponent of capitalising on the things that teachers do well in pursuit of their pedagogical development. One of these strengths it seemed was a familiarity with technology. Although universities are increasingly using technology in large groups, small group teaching remains a grey area in this regard.

It was hoped that this could tap into an examination of whether GTAs could be innovators in using ICT within small group teaching. Warwick University, like other universities, has already invested considerably in installing e-learning technology in seminar rooms all over the university. However like many universities, there is considerable evidence that there is still a real struggle to engage a significant percentage of students and staff in e-learning beyond projects by innovators. Salmon (2005) calls for research that will provide answers to this problem and the need for more models to demonstrate the transferability and scalability of using e-learning. This project aimed at engaging with factors which encouraged young teachers to use these technological interventions more widely within their teaching.

This was in order to enable what James Dalziel calls ‘open source teaching’ in order to create an environment in which ‘educators can freely and openly share best practice teaching. (Dalziel, 2005) Thus one of the aims of the project was that the GTAs experience would not only influence other postgraduates who teach but would also seep into the wider community of practice of academics through giving the GTA a collective academic voice of using these technologies.

Bates and Pool (2003) refer to technology enhanced learning as learning that uses e-learning to aid the students learning experience through creating a medium of interaction. Using technology interactively through engaging students in discussion, problem solving and questioning can enable blended learning. (Node 2001) The ultimate aim of blended learning is to, ‘provide realistic practical opportunities for learners and for teachers to make learning independent, useful, sustainable and ever growing.’ (Graham 2005)

Through examining technology enhanced learning, the project aimed to try and analyse whether in using e-learning in their teaching, GTAs could harness their familiarity with technology (Muzaka, 2009) as a means of embedding it within their teaching practice in ways that would have pedagogical benefits.

For the students, this would include increased engagement with the material that they were learning and an assimilation of new skills. The project also wanted to examine whether the use of technology enhanced learning could increase the confidence of newly qualified teachers and help them cope better with the general problems they face at this stage of their career.

IATL gave us some funding through its Strategic Project Grant. The grant paid for some supervision time for James Harrison and some buy out time for Sharifah Sekalala to do the primary research.

## Major Definitions

### 1 Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) also known as Postgraduate Student Teachers (PGT's) are defined as students who are engaged in doctoral research while conducting some part-time teaching for their departments. The teaching tends to be small-group seminars and tutorials (up to 14 students) in the social sciences. Ideally, this small group learning should enable cooperative and active learning to take place (Stenhouse 1972:18) Students are also encouraged to exchange ideas in order to promote deeper learning. (Griffiths 1999.95).

In the University of Warwick, there is no university policy on the use of postgraduates to teach and different departments use them to varying degrees. Some departments like

Economics rely primarily on postgraduates for small groups while others like the Law Department have stringent requirements on who exactly can act as a GTA and therefore have relatively smaller GTA teams.

Increasingly, however, funded programmes like the Arts and Humanities Research Council (ARHR) have inbuilt small group teaching as part of their funding requirement for PhD studentships. Therefore we can expect the number of GTA's to continue to rise within higher education.

### 2 E-learning

E-learning can be described in its widest sense as instruction delivered via electronic media including the internet, intranets, audio video and tape, interactive video, and CD Rom. (Bixler and Spotts (2000) Unlike other e-learning definitions this one very much focuses less on eventual automation and more on the postgraduate teachers management and of the e-learning technology for the benefit of the students.

### 3 Technology Enhanced learning

Bates and Pool (2003) refer to technology enhanced learning as learning that uses e-learning to aid the students learning experience through creating a medium of interaction. Thus although e-learning can be defined as the use of any of the new technologies or applications in the service of learning or learner support, the e-learning that we refer to in this research is that which helps in creating an interactive environment.

### 4 Blended learning

There is no uniform definition of blended learning. It has been referred to as integrative learning, hybrid learning and multi method learning at different times within education research. (Node 2001)The ultimate aim of blended learning is to, 'provide realistic practical opportunities for learners and for (emphasis added) teachers to make learning independent, useful, sustainable and ever growing' (Graham 2005)

## 5 Teaching Grid

This is a dedicated space within the university library which was established to provide accessible, collaborative support for all staff involved in teaching or training practice at the University of Warwick. Working in collaboration with key university partners - the [Learning Development Centre](#), [e-lab](#), the [Reinvention](#) and [CAPITAL Centres](#) (both now part of [IATL](#)), [Teaching Quality Unit](#), [skills services](#) and [Library](#) subject specialists - the Teaching Grid furthers the University strategy to develop outstanding and innovative teaching at Warwick.

## Research questions

The project aimed to develop the university's understanding of 'technology enhanced learning' amongst its postgraduate teachers in order to foster what Laurillard(2007: 8) refers to as the wider aim of an academic teaching community that acts like a learning system. The research examined how postgraduates who teach use technology enhanced learning as part of a blended learning approach. In doing so the research:

1. Asked whether the use of blended learning mitigates some of the problems of postgraduate teachers such as lack of course ownership, boredom and apathy caused by big teaching loads which leads to a constant repetition of the same content, disengagement of students, etc.
2. From the student perspective, the project wanted to monitor their views in order to try to analyse the impact of using technology enhanced learning in terms of understanding and accumulated transferable skills.

### 1. Methodology

The project used mixed methods. We conducted some interviews with GTA's, used questionnaires with the students, and an auto-ethnographic approach by the primary researcher. (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, Elias, 2004, Roth, 2005).

The project also involved interviewing 12 Graduate Teaching Assistants from 3 faculties. All of them had used technology within their teaching. They identified four criteria that enabled them to use technology enhanced teaching: institutional support, training, mentoring and a familiarity with technology. However, they also identified some limitations that made it difficult for them to use technology in their teaching: time constraints, remuneration and resistance from both their departments and students.

There were informal questionnaires given to the students throughout the course of the programme. This was general positive and tweaks were often made in order to incorporate their feedback on future technologies.

A final questionnaire was distributed to 60 students at the end of the academic year dealing specifically with their experiences with technology. Of these 58 questionnaires were usable. 19 of these were male students and 37 were female. All but one was within the 18-25 age group. The questionnaires gave us useful data on student experiences of using technology. The majority of them found it useful and gave us various in-depth comments about its use within their seminars and suggestions for future use.

The primary researcher used a self-reflective blog to create an online diary. The self-reflection was carried out with the assistance of the Institute of life-long learning that runs that PCAPP course who allowed me to contribute on-going reflections on the official website which runs a blog as a way of reaching other postgraduates who were interested in teaching with the aid of technology within small groups. This enabled us to get not only subjects for our interviews but on-going views and feedback about the use of technology within the classroom.

## **ICT tools that were used in the project**

1. Audio visual presentations which integrate theoretical aspects of the course into the presentation. Some good sources are the Supreme Court website, Harvard Law School website and Institute of Advanced Learning in terms of critical thinking.
2. Computer Assisted Learning will involve the use of computers as learning aids. This is very helpful for them in trying to find resources on line i.e. case law
3. Voting technology. This is supposed to enable the students to vote on a series of questions as a way in which to stimulate discussion.
4. Smart boards as a way to engage them in critical thinking as they can add to already established texts within the seminar question in a way that makes them challenge positions within the field.

## **2. Structure of the report**

This project is structured as follows. The first part deals with the postgraduate perspective.

### **Part 1: GTA Experience**

### **Part 2: Student Experience**

### **Part 3: Auto Ethnographic reflections**

## **3. Summary of findings**

The findings indicated that using technology enhanced learning can help to mitigate some of the disadvantages caused by the ambiguous status of the GTAs both within their departments and also in the eyes of the students that they teach. The process of GTAs in deciding, planning and using ICT tools within their small group teaching can help them to improve their confidence and reclaim some of the 'ownership and authority' that they lose due to their ambiguous relationship within the department.

The study found that there were four major reasons that GTA's used technology enhanced learning.

- Institutional support at both the departmental and institutional level.
- Training
- Mentoring
- Familiarity with the technology

## Dissemination of findings

### 1. Outside Warwick

The results have been disseminated outside Warwick University in two ways. The first occasion was a presentation to the Annual Social Legal Studies Conference held at the University of Leicester in April 2012.

Sharifah is also submitting journal article in the journal *Higher Education* based on the results. This is currently under review.

### 2. Within Warwick University

We have also presented our findings within the university on two different occasions: The first was the Teaching and Learning Showcase in Warwick on the 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 where we presented under the theme, 'Technology-enhanced learning: digital and virtual learning environments.' The session was fully subscribed and with a wide array of people from all over the university.

The findings were also disseminated in the Law School teaching day on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September during a session on small group teaching.

We have already prepared two mini reports, for the library's Teaching Grid: one on postgraduate teachers and the other on student experiences in using this open learning space. These have been well received and are now archived on the Teaching Grid's website thus giving broader access of the findings within the Warwick community.

### 3. Wider application within the Warwick community

Furthermore, the use of technology has also been incorporated in a program run by Warwick Business School in case teaching. Through this project, Sharifah has integrated technological aids that she successfully trialed within her small group teaching as part of the case note on the Bhopal disaster. Further information on this project can be found on the WBS website.

Sharifah has also used technology enhanced learning in her lectures the first ever WBS summer school's 'Integrated Business Project.' Feedback from these students was very positive about these lectures.

## Part 1: GTA Experiences

### 1. Introduction

During the project, we interviewed 10 GTA's. All of them were from the Social Sciences departments which use a similar type of small group teaching. This involves a GTA leading a group of undergraduate students through a series of tasks. Usually the tasks are predetermined by the course convener. Different conveners demonstrate different flexibility in allowing GTA's to adopt the tasks.

Six interviewees were from the law school, three from the English department and one from Politics. These interviews were coupled with the primary researcher's self-reflective diary which was used during the project.

### 2. Methodology: Interviews

The interview results demonstrated clearly that most GTA's believed that they were benefits in using technology enhanced learning. GTA's felt that technology enhanced learning improved their pedagogy. They also cited increased skills such as improvement of IT competencies, reflective innovation and time management for small group teaching.

The project acknowledges that the small sample size cannot allow it to make generalisations for GTA's as homogenous group. However, there are still some interesting results that are worthy of further enquiry.

Since the interview questionnaire was designed for a small number of subjects, it was designed to be more exploratory than quantitative. The questions were designed to explore how postgraduates teach particularly with technological aids as this was the major focus of the study. The questionnaire tried to explore several issues:

- Personal information giving their name department and the number of years that they had been teaching. This information would later be anonymised when the data was being analysed.
- Whether or not they used technology within teaching and if so what kind of technology and why.
- What they thought about students' perceptions of learning in this way and pedagogical considerations when using technology enhanced learning.
- Whether or not they felt adequately supported by the university and their departments
- Their general experiences of teaching as GTAs. This was a way of checking whether the general problems bore out the general problems identified in the literature.

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions in a semi-structured format. The questionnaire was followed by a short interview of about 30 to 45 minutes long.. They were always in a relaxed environment and each interviewee was recorded and the transcribed interview was sent back to the student to review. All participants were assured of anonymity in order to ensure candid responses.

The interview transcripts were read several times in order to become familiar with the content (Akerlind 2005). A more focused reading explored the similarities and differences in approaches

and made notes of illustrative paragraphs which were summarised and notarised. (Akerlind 2005 Bowden 2000) The responses were textual so the analysis was qualitative.

Through the responses I tried to analyse whether the GTAs who used technology enhanced learning could try and mitigate some of the problems that postgraduate teachers faced due to their duality of roles.

From the interview data, we found that GTA's identified 4 major elements that gave GTA's the freedom to use technology within their classrooms.

- **Institutional support at both the departmental and institutional level.**
- **Training**
- **Mentoring**
- **Familiarity with the technology**

### **3. Institutional support**

The interview cohort identified two particular mechanisms of institutional support. The first was the introduction of open spaces for learning and the second was the investment in technologies that supported innovative learning through ICT. The most successful of open learning spaces were those that managed to combine the two. Thus, many of the graduate teachers who were interviewed identified the Teaching Grid (which is a dedicated space within the library that encourages open space learning) as one of the major motivators that they had in using this space. The teaching grid (which provides accessible collaborative support for staff involved in teaching within the University of Warwick. It also has an open space which teachers can use for experimental teaching.)

Within the Teaching Grid, Many of the interviewees identified the excellent support that they were given both in terms of learning how to use various technological tools but also hands on support in case things went wrong during the process.

Finally many GTA's felt that the location of the space was really helpful. This was because it is in close proximity with the Wolfson Exchange Centre (a dedicated space for postgraduate research) that also supports a lot of technological aids that can be used for teaching was an instrumental factor in giving GTAs a chance to practice with ICT tools that they could use. As such many interviewees felt that its location within the library had helped them to become more accessible.

They felt that the space was great for engaging the students. A few quotes below show that many GTA's felt that the open space and technology were very conducive to small group teaching.

*Students are out of their comfort zone so you can really engage with them about the subject more broadly. (GTA 2)*

*The open space element is great. It makes the seminars more relaxed. (GTA 9)*

*I used the teaching grid for a seminar. It useful because not only because of the open space but also for technology. I used it for a poem and the technology helped to create an interpretive and creative stimulus. They could look at it, hear it and this helped to bring it to life. (GTA 3)*



*Putting manuscripts up on the screen was really helpful. (GTA 3)*

*Using the smart boards really helped them to engage with what we think about when we mark. I think they can now identify the criteria for a good essay better. (Primary researcher)*

Secondly many of the interviewees thought that assistance in training was essential in enabling them to use technology enhanced learning. Within the Teaching Grid, many of the interviewees identified the excellent support that they were given both in terms of learning how to use various technological tools but also hands on support in case things went wrong during the process.

However some postgraduates felt that they had problems accessing the teaching Grid. Many of their problems focused on booking.

*There is too much focus on pre-booking. Sometimes you have to book up to a term in advance. This is really hard if you are just a seminar teacher. (GTA 1)*

#### **4. Normal seminar rooms**

Only a small minority had used technology in ordinary seminar rooms. Those who had identified availability of certain technologies in some rooms as being instrumental to what they used in particular sessions. This is particularly important because graduate teachers do not generally choose which seminar rooms they use and therefore have to adapt depending on the seminar room they are in.

*Some of my regular seminar rooms are so small i.e. a normal office that it is hard to use any technological tools apart from perhaps power point (GTA 7)*

#### **5. Time constraints**

Some GTAs were also afraid that using the space would take up too much time because of the extra amount of preparation that using the space would take and also the fact that they had to review the process afterwards which could be time consuming.

*I have not used the teaching grid because I am afraid that it will take too much time. I am paid minimally for preparation and marking so it becomes difficult to try new things. (GTA 1)*

On the whole, it is clear that the Teaching Grid has revolutionised GTAs teaching. It has given them the opportunity to use technology within open spaces but has also enabled them to try out new tools that engage with students.

## 6. Training

*When you use videos, audio clips and digital posters, you can effectively capture students' attention and provide a focus which helps to contextualise what they are studying. The seminar questions cease to be abstract. (GTA 3)*

*The technology gives better learning access to a wide range of students with different learning styles. Not all of them are auditive learners. Many of them are visual learners who would gain very little otherwise. (GTA 5)*

*Using technology enhanced learning can help students to engage with the module more broadly by thinking about the broader questions. (GTA8)*

Many of the interviewees indicated that they were taking part of the university's teacher training programs, Three interviewees in particular focused on this aspect as their motivation for engaging with technology enhanced learning as they were interested in using the e-learning for their portfolios. A portfolio of work (including teaching practice) is a key requirement for the successful completion of professional training for GTAs in Warwick.

GTA's clearly seem to be thinking about technology enhanced learning as a pedagogical tool to improve their teaching. Training programmes such as these heighten this by exposing GTAs to pedagogical issues about how students learn and tries to help them to think about ways in which they can teach better. Murray and MacDonald (1997)

In the University of Warwick, all new members who teach for more than 20 hours are obliged to do at least the core course over a full day (PCAP). A reflective piece is submitted in order to qualify for the second more rigorous part. The second part of the course known as the PG Cert is more rigorous and takes a year to complete. It is assessed through a portfolio of work. These courses are run by the Learning Development Centre and are aimed at providing a broad introduction to pedagogic issues and styles challenging the aspiring teacher to think through and articulate their educational philosophy and to reflect on how this informs their practice. They are given a mentor, usually from their own department, during this process.

While the rest of the interviewees did not specifically mention using technology enhanced teaching in order to satisfy training requirements, all but one of the interviewees indicated that they had used e-learning in small groups had successfully completed the PG Cert.

In the course of completing their training it was clear that GTA's were becoming more aware about the different technological tools that they can use when they want to improve their teaching. Gibbs and Coffey (2004) examined the impact of teacher training programs in higher education. One of their major findings was that, 'On the training programmes teaching was seen to be valued and the improvement of teaching through innovation and change was encouraged.' Post-graduates students who have finished these programmes are therefore more open to innovation.

This was illustrated within the data. For the GTAs interviewed, there was a sense that this programme is bringing about some sort of shift in the way in which they perceive their role in the learning process of students i.e. from producers of knowledge to facilitators of learning and using technology enhanced teaching might be a way of achieving student led learning. As Entwistle and Walker 2000; Kember and Kwan, 2000) argue good teaching development must bring about conceptual change. Genuine development can only come about by addressing how teachers conceptualise teaching and learning. One of the interviewees expressed this point succinctly when talking about why they use a tablet in order to provide an audio visual guide within seminar teaching.

## **7. Mentoring**

The interviewees identified the major form of departmental support as mentoring. All but one of the interviewees identified the essential role of mentoring by an established member of staff as being critical to their use of these experimental teaching technologies. The role of mentoring has been examined by Boyle and Boyce (1998) and Mathias (2005). From the literature, it is clear is that a mentoring relationship creates an increased interest and awareness in teaching and learning issues for both the mentor and the mentee. (Mathias 2005) This study illustrates that mentors can give GTA's the courage to experiment with teaching.

Mentors are important because they offer the GTA someone with whom they can discuss different pedagogic rationales for using technology within small group teaching. In some instances, mentor may have tried some of the tools before in lectures and this can be helpful for the mentee to avoid the common pitfalls.

There was also a sense that mentor may have the institutional clout that GTA's don't have and can offer this to them in navigating the institutional bureaucracy in order to use the technology.. Thus mentor can act as essential tools in helping me to, 'navigate the customs and practice within the local community of practice set within the broader context of their overall academic de-

velopment.’ (Mathias 2005: 104) Finally mentors were helped GTA’s to gain confidence. They were a useful resource when things didn’t work and gave reassurance when things didn’t work.

## 8. Digital Natives

Finally, the interviews showed that GTA’s used technology enhanced learning due to the close affinity and ease that many of them had with experimenting and trying out new technologies. Many of the GTAs interviewed identified themselves as digital natives (i.e. familiar with using technology in day to day life) (Bayne S, Ross, J. (2007) which they felt gave them a real edge over older established academics in using technology within their small group teaching.

Other studies have agreed with the idea that doctoral students who teach may be more familiar and comfortable with the use of technology. (Muzaka: 2009) This could be due to the fact that some of these postgraduates are currently using wider e-learning measures more within their research and this project taps into using these techniques that they are already conversant with for the benefit of their student audience. For instance all the postgraduates from the English department used blogs regularly as part of their doctoral research. Thus an extra blog for students was easy to integrate into their teaching.

Their self-identification as digital natives illustrates that in taking a creative lead role in their approach to teaching with technology enhanced learning, GTAs are beginning to own or control the courses they teach. This is really important given that most of the major studies on the problems of GTAs in their teaching have found that most of them felt that, ‘they had very little autonomy of freedom to experiment with their teaching.’(Parks; (2002), Muzaka;(2009) This is invariably because of the very prescriptive nature of seminar teaching in which a course convener has often selected the seminar reading, advised the students on the nature of the assignments within the course and in many cases they have also listed the questions that the students will be asked within the seminars. As one GTA commented, ‘My function is really a bit of a shepherd to ensure that they attend the meetings and that they participate in the discussion.’ Parks; (2002:51) One of the GTAs I interviewed concurred.

*You can be forced into a dynamic that might not suit the class depending on where the questions go.... It does not make for the best interactive seminars. Many times you also have no idea about the aim of the course convener when they set the questions and this makes it hard to have a useful discussion.*

Thus the use of technology enhanced learning in order to create engagement with the students creates a sense of ownership through exercising academic leadership and responsibility. Within this process the GTA decides which ICT tool to use, its appropriateness and how the tool would be used within the constraints of a one hour seminar. This seems to transcend the ‘unthinking shepherd’ described by Parks.

Through the use of technology enhanced it is easier to engage with students who already might have a natural affinity for technology in the respect that they too are ‘digital natives’ there is an element in which the process becomes ‘co-owned’ by the students as well (tautology!). Due to the fact that the ICT tools are in many cases interactive, there is an element of students owning their learning process through ‘doing’ which is an essential component of active learning. This participation is important because studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between student participation in classroom discussion and learning, motivation, and problem-solving ability. (McKeachie, 1970; Smith, 1980)

Another interviewee made the point that students are already immersed in a world that is filled with technology therefore good teaching should be relevant to them within this context and should not be abstract.

*Technology plays a role in students' lives whether we want it or not so it makes sense for us to use it in order to relate better with students. We cannot ask them to constantly use online academic resources for reading for instance journals and databases, for administration for instance in registering and submitting of assessed work and then expect them to learn in an environment that does not have any technology*

Furthermore, GTA's felt that the autonomy of using of technology enhanced learning helped to vary what could potentially be a very boring and repetitive process of teaching the same subject continuously. For instance one GTA who was interviewed taught 6 seminars in the same subject on one day of the week. The GTA felt that using e-learning tools helped to break up the day a bit because the novelty manifested differently within individual seminar groups.

There was also the view that in using technology enhanced learning you engage with the students more and so there were fewer seminars where students looked to the GTA for answers to the seminar questions. Some interviewees tried to explain how this engagement occurred.

*The technological tools change the dynamic. They engage those students who may lack confidence. This gets them talking and in many cases they realise how much they know ... this is usually the problem... they don't speak because they think they don't know the answers. (GTA 10)*

*When you use videos, audio clips and digital posters, you can effectively capture students' attention and provide a focus which helps to contextualise what they are studying. The seminar questions cease to be abstract. (GTA 3)*

There was also often the added incentive that GTAs were using technology enhanced learning in order to gain transferable skills that not only engaged the students but those that they could take away into the outside world. In the process of acquiring and passing on ICT skills to students, the GTA can regain some of the authority that is caused by their ambiguous existence of being neither a 'staff member nor a student.' For instance different ways of delivering information could make it more attractive/ accessible to students who might otherwise have been wary of what they perceive as the GTA's inexperience in the subject area. (Muzaka: 2009) Using technology enhanced learning can enable the GTA to gain an extra area of expertise which may be helpful in helping them to feel more valued both by the students and with their full time academic colleagues.

## **9. Limitations**

The interviewees in some instances felt that they would be using technology within their classrooms to a greater extent if it was not for these problems.

### **1.1 Time**

Many interviewees expressed concern about how long innovating teaching like technology enhanced learning took. They felt that the time allocated for them to prepare for seminars was minimal to begin with and trying to use e-learning was even more time consuming as it need to trial attempts in order to ensure that the technology worked. They were suggestions that the uni-

versity should create some sort of remuneration for smaller innovative classes that could be managed at departmental levels by institutes like IATL.

### 1.2 *Resistance from students*

Sometimes students were very resistant of using e-learning within small seminar groups. They had a preconceived idea of seminars and wanted them to be the same which made it difficult to try something new.

These were some quotes from the informal feedback from the students.

*“Using technology e.g. smart boards that don’t function properly- waste of time (especially where it is unnecessary and we could all have just used paper)”*

*“Technology often unreliable”*

*“Use too much technology often complicates things, wastes time”*

*“Stop the videos I find them a bit confusing and boring”*

The key lessons were that students were frustrated when technology didn’t work. Enhanced support in classrooms created a massive difference in the final questionnaire where the responses were more positive.

However, for GTA’s a fundamental lesson is not get disheartened as even in the same session, some students thought that the technology was amazing while others were not enthusiastic. GTA’s should be realistic as there will always be different kinds of students who react differently to different pedagogical interventions.

### 1.3 *Applicability*

Most GTAs, made it clear that they did not rely on technology enhanced learning for all the individual seminars. This is because ICT tools were not always relevant to all topics that will be covered. The GTAs therefore seemed to have recognition that in order to use technology within small group teaching there must be a pedagogical rationale beyond merely wanting to try something out.

Although many GTA’s though this was a limitation, it is a promising development as JISC (2007) study noted that the use of internet technology, particularly for 16-18 years olds, particularly for social networking, does not necessarily translate into a desire among this group for this particular medium to be used within university teaching. Thus the caution with which GTAs use social networking is to be commended as it would not work within a one size fits all approach. Lauriland: 2004 recognises this when she talks about the rationale of e-learning must be the teacher trying out ICT tools in order to engage in the promotion of active learning which ought to be the focus of the learning process.

## **Part 2: Technology Enhanced learning in small groups**

### **1. Introduction**

The project also aimed to promote the use of ICT within small groups as a means of engaging with undergraduate students. Studies of technology enhanced learning amongst the younger generation have shown that this engagement can enable them to think more critically and those e-learning technologies because of their speed and accessibility can enable them to share knowledge much more easily.

For the undergraduate student, the benefits of blended learning with ICT are twofold. Due to the fact that many students are engaged with technology from a much earlier age, higher education must address the changing expectations that this creates in view of their learning experiences. As (Kuh and Associates 2005) note, deep and meaningful learning experiences are best supported with actively engaged learners. This view is supported by research from Kuliks (1994), who found that on average students who used ICT based instruction learned more in less time and liked their classes more when ICT based instruction was included. Furthermore, many of the aids that will be relied on will be common technological aids that many learners will need to use in the workplace at the completion of their courses.

A research study carried out by the Joint Information Systems Committee came to the conclusion, 'that there was a real opportunity to for universities to be at the forefront of developing and evolving our conventions of learning through digital media as there is a sense of growing importance in the wider context of business, public life and academia' (JISC 2008). This wider engagement for students is very much in line with the Institute of Advanced Studies vision on teaching for the university.

Although using technology in higher education is common place, there are still problems with using it in small group teaching in most places of higher education. There are numerous reasons for this. On a university campus like Warwick, some rooms may not support some e-learning technologies, and there may also be time constraints as seminars usually run for about an hour.

We were aware of these limitations but wanted to find ways of dealing with them in order to develop best practice. One of the ways in which we managed to achieve this was through using open space learning for 50 percent of the time which had lots of training and support. The other 50 percent of the time we tried to document how we could transfer some of the technologies that we had used in the open space into ordinary seminar rooms. The results of this are shown in the next part of the report.

### **2. Methodology:**

The project was interdisciplinary in nature and used reflections from on-going teaching on a 3<sup>rd</sup> year UG module taught jointly by the law and business school called Critical Issues in Law and Management (CILM) and a core UG module in the law school on Tort law in order to see whether there any low cost easy e-learning techniques that can be adapted easily for postgraduate teachers.

We distributed some informal questionnaires during the project. The students were given classic 'traffic light' forms. (this is where you have green to indicate things that they would like to see,

red to indicate things that they don't like and orange to indicate things that they particularly enjoy and therefore you ought to continue.) The second group I just gave blank sheets of paper.

The majority of them filled out these forms although a minority did not. Some students did not give any specific feedback towards the use of technology within seminars. In fact some of the feedback was things out of my control as a seminar teacher for instance, 'changes early morning seminars or a reduction on the amount of reading.'

**Some quotes from the feedback. Under the CONTINUE section, a cross-section of students showed that the technology helped their understanding of the subject.**

"Spurring and motivating us with quotes, thoughts and videos."

"the use of a number of materials in class e.g. videos..."

'use of various medias eg the videos..'

"Continue other activities such as mind mapping and watching relevant clips"

"Enjoyed the video clips from the BBC website because it showed what we had been learning on context. I think that by having both of these activities more frequently seminars would be even more useful and enjoyable."

"Interactive activities like marking essays was useful"

**Some of the feedback concentrated on the space in which technology was used**

'should instead have more seminars in the library'

"Interactive seminars in teaching grid were interesting"

**"Interactive"**

**However it was not all positive, under the STOP section some students had this to say:**

"Using technology eg smart boards that don't function properly- waste of time (especially where it is unnecessary and we could all have just used paper)"

"Technology often unreliable"

"Use too much technology often complicates things, wastes time"

"Stop the videos I find them a bit confusing and boring"

**Some students also did not like the open space learning**

"Sitting on chairs with no tables in the teaching grid find it difficult to write"



On the whole there was more positive feedback than negative feedback. Some things were particularly memorable like the smart boards and videos while power point presentations for instance do not seem to have registered as technology to the students. I found it difficult as a young teacher to deal with the negative feedback. In my reflective notes on the days I felt very discouraged because the use of technology takes up so much of your time you want the students to like it in order to justify the effort.

In retrospect you can also see the irony of some of the negative comments. For instance a student who wants to be a lawyer but yet finds a video clip of a judge speaking for 3-4 minutes boring.

Also, their comments also helped us to tweak the project and take the students concerns into account when continuing the project. As a result, the feedback from the questionnaires was much more positive.

We distributed 60 questionnaires. 4 of them were not usable. 96 percent of those who were surveyed felt that technology enhanced learning were of considerable benefit. They felt that it enabled them to engage better with the subject and enabled them to contextualise the subject that they were learning.

**Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?**

**Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

I think technology, if used appropriately, can have a stimulating impact on seminars making key information more memorable and different than the method of delivery in seminars. Videos, voting devices etc. are all a good example of active engagement which make information more easier to digest.

**Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?**

**Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

I think the use of videos to explain a point further are always helpful. I particularly like classes when we use the interactive devices - it's a good way to test yourself.

### **3. Student's use of technology**

Furthermore, the questionnaires also provide a useful snapshot of students use of technology within university settings. 27 identified themselves as using technology for more than 10 hours a day, 21 students said they used technology for up to 10 hours a day and 6 said that they used

technology for 5 or more hours a day. Such data can raise interesting questions about how students read and access information within universities today.

Furthermore, students reported that the use of some of the less common technologies provided an egalitarian function. This is one of Warwick's objectives in widening participation and this was achieved by enabling students from poorer educational backgrounds to take advantage of technology which students from more resourceful schools were accustomed to. i.e. smart boards, tablets, clickers etc.

## **Part 3: Developing Best Practice**

### **An auto ethnographic account of the project**

#### **1. Introduction**

As the primary researcher, I also used a self-reflective blog to document best practice which will be looked at in further detail at the end of this section.

The reflections contain a short description of particular e-learning tools that I used within the tort law seminars. Sohn (1983,1987) popularised the term the reflective practitioner to describe the expert who is awake to, aware of their practice and not just immersed in it. Mason, (2002) added the important concept of reflecting through action (becoming aware of one's practice through the act of engaging in that practice.)

In using reflections, I aimed to have reflexive critical ethnographic narrative which would help me to record my lived experiences in a diary while conducting the research. (Williams and Trondman 2000) Through this, I hoped to illuminate my experiences in ways that could add to the experiences of the other subjects of the project. (Williams and Trondman 2000, 12) As a researcher, I wanted to create objective accounts that are as rigorous as possible through my self-reflections. (Willis, 2000, pp 113, 116)

I drew on experiences from practice to examine the use of e-learning tools as an aid with my teaching. As Valli,(1993) notes the useful phrase scope of reflection to indicate that they are many possibilities.

The section is structured as follows. I try and reflect on the tool, go on to the pedagogical rationale for using that tool before reflecting on how easy it was easy for use and whether I would replicate it and under what circumstances. Thus some of the reflections are very descriptive while others are more critical as they try to understand how successful the tools were in enabling the students to understand the subject matter better.

#### **2. Videos**

##### **1.4 Short description**

Films and videos can be very powerful vehicles for teaching students conceptual flexibility and the ability to shift perspectives. (Gallos,1993) This can also be known as reframing issues. It is widely used to explore situations from multiple perspectives. Increasingly it has gained focus in the teaching of organisational and management education. (e.g., Bolman and Deal, 1984 and 1991; Frost et.al., 1991; Morgan, 1986)

I used three clips which involved judges in the Supreme Court giving short interviews on various matters : i) divided Judgements ii) human Rights iii) Lord Hope and Lord Phillip taking about emotion and legal reasoning. They are all approximately 3 minutes with the longest being 4 minutes.

## **1.5 Pedagogical rationale**

I used the videos in the first two seminars in order to present another approach to thinking about the new concepts that they were dealing with. While we were going to teach them a more theoretical approach to understanding of the law, I wanted them to ultimately understand that all the issues they were dealing with were not only real issues, they were replayed within court-rooms.

Initially in tort law we want the students to explore issues like, ‘what is tort law?’ What purpose does tort law serve? I also wanted to use the videos as a way of engaging the student’s minds on the idea of who decides the cases they would be seeing through the course?

The first 2 judgements are particularly relevant. I hoped that they would help the students to contextualise the law that they would be learning with events in the outside world. Furthermore I felt that it was important that the students see that even judges in the Supreme Court struggle with coming up with the right answer and that the law is not a static thing but something that changes so it must be looked at in context. With this, I hoped that this would illustrate the fallacy that we were looking for particular answers. Instead I wanted them to engage broadly with the law of tort and the underlying reasons that it exists, and continues to develop as a legal discipline.

I thought the videos would be a good tool to reinforce concepts being learnt in other courses like the Modern English Legal System which taught them about the hierarchy of courts. With this in mind, I wanted them to think about; what is the Supreme Court? How does it differ from other courts? What is a lead judgment? How do the judges make the decisions that they do?

I also wanted them to see that adversarial nature of courts with the hope that they would embrace the idea of defending their ideas as something normal within the law. (Looking at the feedback, I am still very far from achieving this objective)

Furthermore, I wanted them to think about the Human Rights Act and the impact it has had on various areas of the law. However this was more of a secondary objective and I showed the video only if I had time at the end.

At the back of my mind I also had the idea that using videos might create an informal atmosphere within the seminar group especially as this was their first term in university.

## **1.6 Ease of use**

I used two videos taken from the website of the BBC’s Justice Season. It is an easy website to navigate and very widely accessible. (This was a programme that aired on the BBC that allowed cameras to follow the 4 justices of the Supreme Court in the first year of operation) Unfortunately or fortunately you can’t access the entire programme even with the IPLAYER. You are therefore left with a choice of 3 clips

## **1.7 Impact**

Students seem to respond well to the videos and they certainly generated a significant amount of discussion both about the videos and how this tied in with the underlying aims of the module.

However, as with all technology, the seminar teacher has to be careful. In one class one student presented this intriguing view that was contrary to the view I hoped they would get from the video clips. 'There is still a right answer, only that the judges are the only ones who know it.'

The lesson for me was there is always the risk of 'unintended consequences' with technology. In the end it still created a fruitful discussion because even the more reticent students got engaged in the discussion. Did I convince the student? Perhaps not, but I hoped that I had sowed the seeds that there was room for healthy discussion within the seminar groups.

***Please turn over***

- 4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

I enjoy the use of videos that link to certain subjects in seminars - it helps me find certain contexts to do with the work.

***Please turn over***

- 4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

I think the use of videos to explain a point further are always helpful. I particularly like classes when we use the interactive clickers - it's a good way to test yourself.

**3.**

**Filming students**

**1.1 Short description**

The film industry depicts the legal world as a world of human drama: the courtroom as a theatre, and lawyers as heroes. Films featuring lawyers can generate emotional responses and evoke feelings of identification which can enable students to truly engage with the subject.

**1.8 Pedagogical Rationale**

By filming the students, I wanted them to envisage themselves as central players in this courtroom theatre. A study by Yazedijian and Kolkhurst (2008) discussed how anonymity is nurtured in typical lectures classes as students are not encouraged to interact and get to know each other as well as the instructor. Through active learning exercises, students can get to know each better

which can transform passive learners into active participants during the transmission of information in classrooms. As students develop, sharing their values and perspectives, they create “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1992). I saw the filming as a way of empowering learners to construct knowledge through active learning and the creation of learning communities. I hoped that they would seek to view their students as fellow learning resources that they could tap into in order to advance their sides case.

Students were therefore asked to work in groups representing the lawyers for either the claimant or the defendant in a High Court Case. Three students were also asked to be judges and each one would have to give reasons for their judgement based not only on the case but on the evidence that they had heard.

I also wanted to film the students so that they could engage with their soft skills. I wanted them to see how they looked like when presenting, these were things like how convincing they were, were they pitching it right, their posture, how well they expressed themselves etc.

### **1.9 Ease of use**

I filmed the students for a moot in week 10 of first term. It involves using flip cameras which have a USB attached to them so that you can easily download videos on desktops. However one of the important things is to think about the size of the images that you are filming as one hour of video is more than the capacity of most USB sticks.

I also had to use a tripod in order to have a still recording. I also asked the students to dress as they would if they were going to court in order to make the activity as authentic as possible.

I took the idea of filming students from the CILM course which I teach in WBS. This course takes place in the Teaching Grid where cameras are provided. I therefore had no idea where to get flip cameras from. I wrote to the teaching grid and they advised me to contact AV Services.

Unfortunately, AV services are not very well equipped to deal with postgraduate teachers who do not have staff accounts. I had to sign up for a different staff account in order to get easy access to their services. This is a potential problem for postgraduates who teach which underlines some of the small difficulties of teaching as a postgraduate teacher.

Although the cameras are very easy to use (you just press record), I found the tripod much more difficult to manage. I found it difficult to ensure that it was straight and level.

This is a very hard task to replicate. You need to keep charging the cameras. I run out of battery at different points which got complicated. It is one of the tasks for which I would recommend that you have back up from AV Services to help you with the filming.

Filming students also raises a whole range of legal and ethical dilemmas which makes it difficult to use. In retrospect, I didn't think about it more thoroughly when I began the activity. You need to think about the idea of giving students disclaimers. (I now have a copy of a standard disclaimer from IAS. This has been attached to the report.)

You need to think about how the students will perceive themselves when they see the videos. As responsible practitioners, we owe our students a duty of care. Seeing themselves back might be harmful to some students who are suffering from low esteem. How can you help them to im-

prove on their soft skills with videos without being critical about things that are just habitual behaviour to them? For instance, a student speaking in a monotone might not be persuasive but how do you get them to reflect on better intonation without being too critical? I was filled with self-doubt as to whether I was fully equipped for this. I was not a drama teacher after all.

In my feedback, I must confess that I had not prepared for that. I gave feedback in general terms. In order to be constructive, I concentrated on the people who had argued persuasively, or advanced their argument in a way that appealed to me. I however felt that I had not given enough feedback on individuals on how to improve their soft skills which was one of my objectives.

The other important thing that I had not considered was where the videos would be stored. I am afraid that even with my extensive knowledge of intellectual property; I was not able to identify who owned the intellectual property. At the moment I think it is IATL as a sponsor of this project but could it be the Law School that employs me? I think such issues could be problematic which makes the disclaimer all the more necessary as the students are aware at the beginning of the study.

Storage of data is important because as a good practitioner one of our major objectives is a safe space. In the CILM course, the students were allowed to download the videos onto their laptops. I have since spoken to several members of staff and opinion is divided amongst people who film students. Some people think we ought to give the students the videos as they are adults and we need to help them to learn to engage with images in a constructive way. Other people were a bit more sceptical, they argue that giving students such videos could cause 'unintended consequences' like these students being uploaded onto social networking sites like you tube which can have a destructive impact on the concept of seminars and higher education in general as a safe space.

### **1.10 Impact**

The cameras certainly had a huge impact. Usually in week 10, students generally don't turn up or if they do they don't do much work as they are preparing to go away. All but two students dressed up and many of them were very well prepared. This was especially evident in the joint moot where 2 seminar groups (mine and another tutors) went head to head. There was a stark difference with all of my students appearing as opposed to only 3 from the other group who were supposed to present. The other seminar teaching is every bit as experienced as me perhaps more so and I partly attribute to the higher levels of preparation partly to the expectation of being filmed. I have films of all eight events. The plan at the moment is to edit them into shorter segments that I could put on a blog that would only be accessible to students thus ensuring that they could not be misused.

I have filmed the students again this term but it was for a video diary of using smart boards as opposed to their use. It was also easier because it was done in the Teaching Grid where they help you with the filming. If I did it again, I would like to speak to AV Services about the possibility of them helping me to film a session.

A few things to explore are the possibility of the law school applying for a strategic grant from IATL in order to get a professional coach to help students with things like body language which is what they do in the business school. That would make the experience much more useful for them. Of course they would be time constraints but I think that it could potentially be done in the time for the seminar or as optional video feedback to the students who take part.

## **4. Smart Boards**

### **1.1 Short description**

Smart boards are interactive white boards within which students can write using coloured pens. Whiteboards utilize asynchronous transmission mode. Synchronous transmission modes provide two-way interaction between the teacher or student and the medium. This level of participation allows a wider range of participation by the student, leading to an increased state of engagement, and an enhanced learning environment (Bryant & Hunton, 2000). Whiteboards also have an asynchronous function, allowing captured material to be shared on paper or electronically and accessed for future reference.

It enables the seminar teacher to take a step back and leave students to own and lead the discussion. I used them by using them to help the students to grade two questions the first was an essay and the second was a problem question.

### **1.11 Pedagogical Rationale**

After giving instructions, the teacher takes a step back and leaves the students alone to get write and engage with the board. It also serves a useful function of taking the seminar teacher away from the front and giving the students a chance to figuratively lead the class.

Students from independent schools tend to be more familiar with this technology and so I was eager to try it out with our diverse students. I believe that routine using of such technology in higher education is useful equaliser because students who are from state schools can become proficient in this technology in a relatively short period of time.

I have used smart boards on two occasions. On both occasions students were trying to mark an assessment. The leading was therefore not only figurative that they were at the front but also literal so that they could imagine what we look for within assessments. The first one was an essay and the second one was a short problem question. They could write within the text as well as make comments about the structure at the bottom of the text.

### **1.12 Impact**

The first attempt to use a smart board saw the students engaging with an essay question. Because of the length we dealt with the introduction and the conclusion. A lot of them were very critical of the writing and thought that the essay should be a fail. In fact I had given it 52% so they were much harsher than I was.

However, the major problem with this was that the technology failed. When they made their comments for some reason, they were not being captured and so it was not saving the comments. I found this hard to deal with. Hannah who is the expert on the smart boards was not in the teaching grid. She tried to help when she came in and it worked for a little while and then it stopped. At some point, half of the class were waiting for her to fix it and so could not engage with the task. Subsequently this also meant that we struggled to finish dealing with the seminar questions. I was really sceptical about repeating the experience.

James, my mentor, persuaded me to try using the smart boards again. I decided to test the boards out before the class used them. I also felt that it was important to give the students time to read



through the question before the session as was the case with the essay. I sent the question the previous week so that they would be familiar with it.

Furthermore, because it was a shorter question, the students could easily scroll up and down and so got much more from the experience

On the day in question, I put the question on the smart board and asked them to take some time to think about legal issues in particular as opposed to other types of issues. They could circle those in the text and then write them down. Each student had a different colour of pen. There were 2 smart boards and an average of 4-5 people per board. After identifying the issues I wanted them to think about a rule that could apply to the issue in order to help us to solve the problem.

Students were generally enthusiastic. They thought it was cool and they were quite keen to have a go. Some students especially those from the private sector had already had used smart boards in their secondary schools and so these acted as an available resource to help other students.

At the end of the exercise, the entire class moved from one board to another and compared the two responses.

We then talked about approach. One of the advantages of this for me was I could interact with the screen in order to compare the initial perceptions with the discussion. I hoped that this would help the students compare their initial views to their new realisation of what they ought to have done.

I have copied two examples used in one class. I received some good oral feedback about the advantages of this approach in helping them to visualise a question. Some were also keen to have the images and since this was all their work, I emailed the jpegs to them after the seminar group.

Tilda is a pupil at St Anne's School. Dexter is the headmaster of the school. For a number of weeks Tilda has been subject to severe bullying from Bob, a fellow pupil. Dexter, the headmaster, is aware that the bullying is taking place but takes no steps to remonstrate with, or punish, Bob. Bob continues to bully Tilda. Eventually, Tilda can take no more and swallows some bleach in an attempt to kill herself. Monica discovers Tilda foaming at the mouth and goes into shock. Charles rings for an ambulance. The ambulance takes one hour to arrive when the normal response time would be twenty minutes. By the time the ambulance arrives Tilda is dead. It is determined that had the ambulance arrived twenty minutes after Charles's call, Tilda would probably have died anyway but there was a 20% chance that with proper treatment she would have pulled through. Monica now suffers from severe depression.

Legal issues → Rules (App → Law)

- Bradford-Smart v West Sussex County Council → DC for Pupils

- Mullin v Richard (1998)

- Ambulance not liable based on Gregg v Scott → probability was too low. *fact v negligence*

- Alcock and Bourhill v

Young → Responsible for Monica *Public body* *Capital Centre v Kay*

- Caporn v Dickmann →

a child exception school should be liable  
 School vicariously - Caparo  
 D of C  
 Tilda is a pupil at St Anne's School. Dexter is the headmaster of the school. For a number of weeks Tilda has been subject to severe bullying from Bob, a fellow pupil. Dexter, the headmaster, is aware that the bullying is taking place but takes no steps to remonstrate with, or punish, Bob. Bob continues to bully Tilda. Eventually, Tilda can take no more and swallows some bleach in an attempt to kill herself. Monica discovers Tilda foaming at the mouth and goes into shock. Charles rings for an ambulance. The ambulance takes one hour to arrive when the normal response time would be twenty minutes. By the time the ambulance arrives Tilda is dead. It is determined that had the ambulance arrived twenty minutes after Charles's call, Tilda would probably have died anyway but there was a 20% chance that with proper treatment she would have pulled through. Monica now suffers from severe depression.

Monica  
 witness  
 but  
 still  
 a duty  
 of care

Legal Issues Rules  
 McLaughlin v O'Brien  
 2nd vic test

Area of shock  
 Bonehill v Young

Lord Wilberforce  
 50% ch

Legal Issues

Whether Dexter was negligent to Tilda

Rule Neg D of C (test)

Breach

Dickman

Causation

Foreseeability

Proximity

Fairness (reasonable)

Caparo  
 ✓  
 Dickman

But in exceptions

Damage occurring Dexter

- **Ease of use**
- **Impact**

Reflection

I am still not sure why it is so hard to save the first time. I think it was to do with not being familiar with the software. Some students were really annoyed by it and this was reflected in their feedback.

I tried this again on the advice of my mentor with formative assessments. I have two essays from previous years of varying ability. Each group got to grade one and score it. From previous years, I have felt that many students don't really understand how we award marks and they are too close to their individual assessments in order to appreciate why they get the mark that they do. I am hoping that the distance of another script could help them to overcome this.

This was really popular with the students as is indicated in the feedback.

*Please turn over*

- 4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

For assessing problem questions the smart boards were very good

*Please turn over*

- 4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

the smart board was quite useful,  
So perhaps more of that.

I tried to transfer this technology to use outside the teaching grid as smart boards tend to be restricted to only a few seminar rooms within the university.

**Short Description**

## **Using A3 sheets as opposed to smart boards.**

This is very easy to set up. You need to make a photocopy of the document that you need onto A3 paper. This is relatively easy when you know how. You might want to ask for some administrative support for the first one.

### **Pedagogic rationale**

From a pedagogic point of view, there is an advantage of using these tools in order to engage in active learning.

### **Ease of use**

It was relatively easy to use. I distributed one sheet between 2-3 people. This largely depends on the size of the seminar group as well as the room lay out of the group. I gave the groups 2 pens each so it was not as interactive as the white board exercise where they had a choice of five pens.

### **Impact**

The task generally worked well. The task also remains firmly in their comfort zone as they are seated in their normal seminar places. However, because the groups were smaller there was much less interaction amongst the students. Initially I thought I could attach the A3 sheets to the wall but because the relative size is still small, the whole class would not be able to see what is on the boards. Furthermore,

In terms of content though there was not a substantial difference between the students who used the smart boards so the alternative seems to work as well. Its failures are in engagement.

In the A3 task it was much harder to keep the entire class moving at the same pace as invariably there were groups of 2 which read faster than others or groups that are less deliberative than others. It seems like the technology creates an 'event' for the students or a 'sense of community' that does not exist to the same extent when they are using the A3 paper. However, there was clearly some engagement with the task and the idea of them being in control was clearly an attractive one thus enabling them in their learning outcomes.



Some negligence principles  
HASN'T MENTIONED  
LOCAL AUTHORITY

(48)

No cases.  
Unclear structure.

Spring Formative Assessment

Joe was abiding the law by taking his car for an MOT test, an action which would be carried out by the "reasonable man on a Clapham omnibus". Joe left the responsibility of the car to those at the garage, who passed the cars MOT, two days later Joe's car was in an accident. The failure to identify such a fault with the steering was the negligence of the car garage and so Joe is not liable for causing the accident with the tree. After the accident occurred, Joe exited the vehicle and the car was left covering half the left side of the road which went onto cause a more serious accident. This under normal circumstances, for example the car breaking down, would be of a negligent act on behalf of Joe. However Joe was experiencing emotional shock and a broken arm both of which would restrict his ability to move the car. The use of the "reasonable man" would suggest that under such injuries it would be acceptable to leave the car. The use of the "but for test", may in fact make Joe somewhat liable for the events which occurred after the first accident. But for the car being half on the left side of the road would Fred have had to swerve his car and so cause a collision with Sam. The answer to this would be no, as without an obstruction Fred would not have had to swerve his lorry, however as it will become clear below there were other intervening factors which may have played an important part. Therefore it does not seem that Joe could be liable in such a situation.

No separation between people.

The second party who could be considered liable is the MOT tester, it is the responsibility of the tester to thoroughly check all aspects of the car, at the same standard as any other qualified mechanic. This however does not seem to be the case as the tester failed to identify a significant problem within the car. It is therefore considered that the tester was carrying out his task negligently. This negligence on behalf of the tester, caused the Joe's accident to occur, resulting in injury to Joe's arm. As the accident was directly caused by the negligence of the tester during the MOT test it will therefore be considered that the tester would in fact be liable for Joe's injury. However there are further aspects to consider; firstly the tester would have been employed by a garage. When Joe took his car in for MOT, Joe would have been handing over the job not the employee involved but directly to the company. As a result of employer employee relationships, the negligence of the employee could also be a reflection of negligence upon the company carrying out the MOT. This would result in the company employing the tester to be liable. It is likely that if Joe did chose to claim over the incident, he would chose to claim over the company rather than the person who carried out the work; primarily as it is the responsibility of the company to maintain a certain standard of work. Whilst it is clear that the failure to carry out a clear MOT test caused the primary accident, the question remains as to whether the MOT tester or the company carrying out the MOT are to be liable for the second accident. After the first accident there were numerous novus actus interveniens, including that of Fred driving at an excessive speed (looked at in further detail below) the intervening factors which occurred before the second accident suggest that the MOT tester is not liable, or at least not completely liable. Mixing in 1st & 2nd accident.

The fourth party to be considered for liability of the accident is Fred. Fred, the lorry driver who came across the accident too late, resulting in him swerving and colliding with another car resulting in the death of Sam. After what is written above it would be considered that no one was negligent and so no one could be accounted as liable for the death of Sam. However there is another factor which changes the events completely. This factor arises in the form of Fred driving at an "excessive speed". The definition of excessive speed is assumed to be dangerously above the speed limit. Under such a definition driving at an excessive speed would be considered illegal and so Fred would already be liable for negligent driving. The question remains as to whether Fred evidently negligent driving resulted in the second accident. As mentioned above the car wreckage was covering half of the left side of a road which could not be clearly seen unless very close to this top of this hill. As a result of this it would not have been possible for Fred to come across this wreckage any sooner than he did. However Fred's fast driving left him less time for him to respond rationally to the problem ahead of him. Driving at a speed above the speed limit would allow people to believe he was not driving as a rational level headed driver should be and so he was in no position to control his car, meaning he was the cause of such an accident. Another factor that would be used against Fred is the fact that, accidents are expected in a driving situation and so he should have been more alert to the nature of his surroundings. However there is one last factor which may induce liability onto another party. → ?

local and dim mission

conclusion ?

This is something to which students responded very positively. Their comments clearly illustrate development in the way in which they approach answering legal problems. Furthermore, they were very enthusiastic about the task as they felt that this is a great tool from which they can learn. The subsequent discussions were often richer as they felt that they had to defend why they

had awarded certain marks. This process was immensely useful as it further clarified what we were looking for in terms of legal responses.

### **Clickers**

These are known as Educational Response Systems. In Warwick University they run on 'Turning Point' lickers are an interactive technology that enables instructors to pose questions to students and immediately collect and view the responses of the entire class. This is how clickers work:

Instructors present multiple-choice. The students click in their answers using remote transmitters and the system instantly collects and tabulates the results, which instructors can view, save, and (if they wish) display anonymously for the entire class to see.

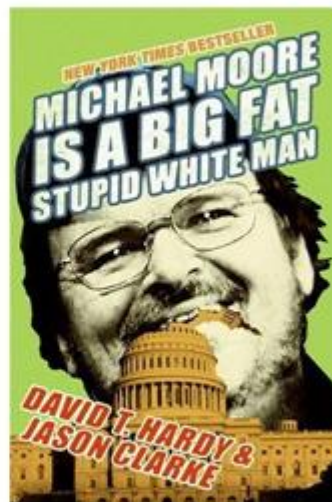
### **Ease of Use**

Previously I used them in the learning grid. All I had to do was put the questions I wanted within a powerpoint and they helped me to use it. The voting initially worked fine but for some of the groups, it initially refused to display the values of who voted for what. Luckily in the teaching grid there is hands on support when something like this happens. Hannah came and sorted it out immediately but as a result some of the values are missing.

### **Impact**

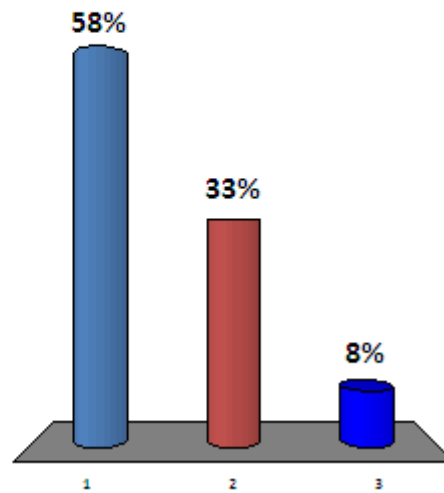
I used them in order to stimulate discussion as well as to test the students instinctive reactions from reactions based on legal reasons. The fact that you have a vote helps to stimulate discussion. Sometimes the votes can be pretty divisive.

The question that followed those two images was whether either image could be termed defamatory. The class was pretty clear that the first one was not defamatory because the class was too wide. However when you look at the values of this class for the second book jacket, there more of a split which generated good discussion.



## What if you call Michael Moore 'a stupid fat white man?'

1. Yes
2. No
3. Not sure



*Please turn over*

- 4.1** Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?

The noting technology is extremely useful and was a new, interesting way to learn. Videos are also useful as they provide a visual representation of what we are learning; and powerpoints too as they give us the ability to learn a lot of facts quickly.



**Please turn over**

- 4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer?  
Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

Voting tech could be used more.  
Perhaps powerpoints to show the law behind the answer,  
so more time can be spent on answering the question.

I have since used this in an ordinary seminar room. I had to download the turning point software to my computer as it was not downloaded already. After downloading this, you have a USB which you install in the PC in the seminar room and as long as it is installed there you can distribute the clickers and it should work.

On this occasion, I used it to test the students' knowledge and they seemed to really like the instantaneous nature of response.

### **Analysing case law with the help of multimedia (visual aids)**

- **Short Description**

The seminar task was for them to read the case of Chief Constable of The Hertfordshire Police (Original Appellant and Cross-Respondent) V Van Colle in order to help them to understand how the law of negligence treats the omissions of public bodies. I wanted to use the case as a visual aid on a big screen as a background to our discussion in the seminar.

- **Pedagogical rationale**

Studies show that some learners whose thought processes are predominantly in the right hemisphere where visual-spatial and non-verbal cognition activities are their predominant method of processing and remembering information may have a problem with a focus on learning through orderly verbal-mathematical left hemisphere tasks. Liu and Ginther (1999) p 2. I restricted myself to only visual text because of studies by Schnotz Bennert and Seufert (2002) who argue that some learners paid less attention to visual text when graphics were added.

Thus in this class, I relied on the use of multi-media not to convey information but as a background aid to engage discussion, find parts of the judgment easily and also for those students who remember better through the visual.

- **Ease of use**

The technology is relatively easy to use because it basically requires you to log in much the same way you would on your personal computer. You normally have a computer in front of you and so you can easily navigate.

The only thing to consider is that different rooms use different screens. Some rooms use a projector type of screen while other rooms use flat screens. When you are using a flat screen, it is essentially your computer screen. This makes it slightly harder to manoeuvre especially if it is behind you. However on the whole this is a relatively easy tool to use.

- **Impact**

Many young people are currently doing a lot of reading digitally using computers, (through emails, blogs, and newspapers), e-readers, iPods and cell phones.

Hearther (2008) notes that 'reading' doesn't have to involve cover to cover, word for word activity.' (p 34) This is important because in any case most first year law students would struggle to read a legal case in its entirety. The focus should not be on how much but that which is relevant. With this in mind, I wanted the students to communally see the case on a large screen.

Through this task, I wanted to do two things. The first was a guided search. Building on their knowledge from the Modern Legal Education System, they would help me find the case in question. This seemed to go very well with lots of differing opinions as to what was easier and more accessible, Lexus Nexus, West law or even ordinary search engines like Google.

In doing so, I identified that many people who went in through the custom built law search engine concentrated on the case note as opposed to the entire case. Some of them claimed they failed to find the case and so the exercise was a good way of communally finding the case.

The second was the idea that they could be critical about specific things in the judgement. That involved identifying which judge, whether they were in the majority or the minority and the importance of particular parts of the judgment in relation to the discussion on omissions.

Since the task, cases have become more realistic to the students. A significant number quote directly from the case itself as opposed to case summaries. This makes them engage in deeper reading of the nuances in different judgments from individual judges even when they all agree.

It is important to note that the task seems to work better on projector screens because they have a bigger surface area and so the audio visual effect is much better. This fits in with the findings of the findings of Kim and Kim (2010) who argue that large screens seem to create a better visual memory for students than smaller ones.

Of course with the task, there are dangers that I am just enabling students who have not read the case before the seminar to try and read it during the seminar. However, I have asked myself what the value the seminar would be if they have not done any work and haven't seen the case as well. The other important point is that this is not something that a teacher would use every week thereby creating this dependence. It is an important tool but this is solely for more important, complex visual tasks.

## **Conclusion**

Using technology intensively in this way helped me to think more clearly about my lesson plans. My task moved from an emphasis on the seminar questions to a deeper exploration of how students learn and which things might help them to explore the seminar questions better. This was truly empowering for me as a young teacher and tied in with the other finding from GTA interviewees who felt empowered by the process.

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## Appendixes

- Sample Questionnaire for students
- Sample questionnaire for GTAs
- Sample disclaimer for students

## **Survey of students perceptions of using technology within seminars**

Thank you for your willingness to answer this survey. The survey is being conducted by Dr. James Harrison and Dr. Sharifah Sekalala as part of a project being run for the Institute of Advanced Studies in Warwick. We would understand how the efforts of the university at using technology in teaching meet your needs.

Your answers are confidential and neither the university nor IATL will be able to identify you. We appreciate your time and participation. If you have any concerns at any point please contact either James Harrison or myself at [sharifah.sekalala@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:sharifah.sekalala@warwick.ac.uk) Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with the School of law.

**1. Statement of Consent:** I have read the above information. I consent to participate in the study. **Please circle one.**

- Yes
- No

**2. Which of the following electronic devices do you own? Circle all that apply, Could you please approximately state the number of hours a day you would spend on each technology that you circle.**

2.1 Personal desktop computer

2.2 Personal laptop computer

2.3 Tablet e.g. ipad, kindle

2.4 Personal digital assistant PDA

2.4 Smart phone

2.5 Cell or digital phone

**3. Which of the following best describes your preference with regard to the use of technology in your classes? Please circle one.**

- I prefer taking classes that use no information technology
- I prefer taking classes that use limited technology features
- I prefer taking classes that use moderate use of technology
- I prefer taking classes that make extensive use of technology

**4. Which of the following technologies did you find useful in your tort seminars**

- Smart boards
- Videos
- Audio recordings

- Clickers/ voting technology
- Power point presentations

**4.1 Could you please tell us a bit more about your answer? Do you have any suggestions for future use of technology within this and other seminars?**

**4.2 What is your gender (Please circle one)**

- Male
- Female

**4.3 What is your age? (Please circle one)**

- 18 -25
- Over 25

**4.4 Are you a full time or part time student**

- Full time
- Part time

**4.5 What degree are you taking?**

- LLB
- Law and Business Course
- Law and a language
- Law and Sociology
- Law and Business

**Thank you**

**Thank you for taking time to answer this survey. Any additional comments you wish to make about the use of technology within your seminars (for this module and other modules within your course) will be most welcome.**

## Sample Questionnaire for GTAs

**Name:**

**Department:**

1. How many years have you been teaching?
2. What do you understand by e-learning/blended learning?
3. What technologies do you use in the classroom?
4. How long have you using such technologies in class room teaching?
5. Why do you think using technologies in classroom teaching is important?
6. Have you had any problems from using this approach?
7. Has your department supported/ helped you in using these technologies?
8. Has the University supported/ encouraged you?
9. What do you generally think about your departments approach to young teachers?
10. What do you think about the university's approach to young teachers?
11. Do you have any final thoughts about improving seminar teaching?

## Sample Disclaimer for Students



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Your contribution is defined as your words and actions recorded for a joint project between the School of Law and IATL.

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Date.....

Address .....

Email: [iatl@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:iatl@warwick.ac.uk)

.....

.....

.....

Signed (for the IATL) .....

Date .....

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