EMBEDDING GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES IN LAW – WHY, HOW, AND IS IT WORKING?

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ABSTRACT
This paper outlines a project the Queensland University of Technology Law Faculty has been engaged in over the last two years to address employer and graduate concerns about finding a balance between what lawyers need to know and what lawyers need to do.

INTRODUCTION
In recent years legal educators have begun to recognise that the traditional content-based approach of law school curricula is not adequately preparing graduates for the changing legal workplace. The Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC), in its recent report on managing justice, voiced the same concern when it suggested that legal education should focus on what lawyers need to be able to do rather than be anchored around restrictive and outdated notions of what lawyers need to know (ALRC, 1999, para 2.21). This also reflects feedback from employers and graduates.

In 2000, the Law Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) received a Large Teaching and Learning Grant aimed at addressing this mismatch between graduate preparation and workplace demands. The project's focus is on developing a teaching, learning, and assessment framework for an integrated and incremental approach to the development of specific attributes and skills in law. This paper outlines why the Faculty embarked on this project; details how we have identified the relevant attributes and skills and how we have incrementally integrated them into the undergraduate curriculum at course and unit level; discusses briefly an example of the teaching, learning, and assessment methods adopted; highlights some methods of staff development and resource sharing; and examines a selection of the evaluation techniques employed to gauge whether the project is working.  

WHY EMBED GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES IN LAW?

What are graduate attributes?
At the time the Faculty embarked upon this project there was no clear definition or explanation of graduate attributes within the University. Many commentators had called for university courses, law in particular, to provide a better balance between a mastery of substantive content and the necessary skills and values a graduate will need within the workforce, but no definitive explanation of what these skills are and how they could be described had been developed (ALRC, 1999; Weisbrot, 2001; Woellner, 1998; Hyams, 1995; Hart, 1999; Kift, 1997).

As there was no definition of graduate attributes within a legal context, the project team decided to adopt, for the purposes of the Faculty's project, the definition developed by the Australian Technology Network in its report 'Generic Capabilities of ATN University Graduates' that "graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community expects its students to develop during their time at the institution and, consequently, shape the contribution they are able to make to their profession and as a citizen" (ATN, 2000). The Faculty used this definition as the basis for the development of specific graduate attributes.

Are skills, and therefore graduate attributes, important in legal education?
The ALRC in its 'Managing Justice' report advocated the re-orientation of legal education around "what lawyers need to be able to do, [rather than remaining] anchored around outdated notions of what lawyers need to know" (ALRC, 1999, para 2.21).

The calls by the ALRC for the explicit integration of skills within undergraduate law
degrees in Australia is given further impetus by graduate and employer surveys indicating that the skills most frequently used by law graduates in any type of law-related employment are oral and written communication, computer skills, time management, and document management. Legally specific skills, whilst rated as important, were not the most frequently used (Vignaendra, 1998, p. 39).  

Australian universities are also collectively concerned with the issue of transferable graduate skills. The ATN project suggests that generic capabilities should be seen as inextricably linked with the learning of disciplinary content in an explicit rather than implicit manner (ATN, 2000). This is consistent with the view of the ALRC which has called for law schools to make explicit the nature and extent of their skills development programs (ALRC, 1999, para 2.80).

The legal profession has also recognised a need for the development of legal professional skills – with the competency standards for pre-admission training currently being reconsidered – with a view to including on the professional skills as well as content required by a graduate.  

**HOW TO EMBED GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES IN LAW?**

**Aim of the project**

This widespread national recognition of the need for skills training as an integral part of a law degree was the impetus for applying for a Large Teaching and Learning Grant to develop an holistic framework for the teaching of both conceptual knowledge and generic and legal skills. It has been recognised by many commentators that skills must be embedded within the process and content of learning to ensure that learning objectives are met and that teaching and learning approaches and assessment methods are desirably developed in students in an authentic learning environment (ALRC, 1999; Weisbrod, 2001; Woellner, 1998; Hart, 1999; Kift, 1997). Therefore, the aim of the QUT framework is to develop an authentic learning environment within substantive units through the adoption of appropriate learning objectives, teaching and learning approaches and assessment methods which take into account the global workplace, social and ethical values, and the development of intellectual and lifelong-learning skills. Through such a learning environment in each unit, students will be given the opportunity to develop legal professional skills and the ethical values they will need. The level of performance of nominated skills in each unit forms part of the assessment for the unit. The teaching team for each unit has nominated particular skills to be practised in the context of the substance of that unit, and therefore the skills combinations and complexity vary from unit to unit.

**Stages of the project**

In building the framework, the Faculty project moved through three stages with a fourth waiting on the agenda.

1. The first stage involved the identification of the generic and discipline-specific attributes for law utilising feedback from employers and graduates, and various studies.

2. The second stage was the identification of the various skills, and the different competency levels of those skills, that a legal graduate needs in order to possess the attributes.

3. The third stage was to review the current undergraduate law course with a view to:

   (i) integrating the skills within the processes and content of the substantive units. It was recognised that an appropriate balance between skills training and the acquisition of substantive knowledge was needed. Some of the strategies developed to facilitate this are discussed under 'Integration of skills at unit level';

   (ii) the development of appropriate assessment tools and mechanisms for assessing competency levels within each of the skills;

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2 A further report in February 2000 issued by DETYA, *Employer Satisfaction with Graduate Skills*, identifies skill deficiencies amongst graduates in the areas of creativity and flair, communication skills and problem solving.

3 The skills considered necessary by APLEC (Australian Professional Legal Education Council) and the Priestley Committee are personal skills, client relations, letter writing, drafting, interviewing and communication skills, negotiation and dispute resolution, problem solving, legal analysis, research and statutory interpretation, and advocacy.
(iii) establishing an appropriate reporting procedure for the students to track their development by documenting skills attainment (at the various levels of competency) through a reflective process that will lead to the development of a student capability profile.

(iv) creation and implementation of a staff-development model to enhance the 'staff-as-instructors' abilities to facilitate, assess, and guide capability development in students;

(v) compilation of staff resources for the teaching of graduate attributes and;

(vi) coherent utilisation of the online teaching and learning facility being progressively introduced into the Faculty.

4. The final stage will involve the utilisation of skill development within a real-world context. This will be achieved by the enhancement of the legal clinic components of the Faculty courses.

**Identification of Graduate Attributes and Skills**

The first stage of transforming the LLB course was the identification of six attributes of a law graduate. The project team consulted a wide range of sources including the list of QUT 'graduate attributes', employer feedback, a graduate survey of most frequently used skills (see Vignendra, 1998; DETYA, 2000), and the attributes and values developed for United States law schools as detailed in the 'McCrate Report' (American Bar Association, 1992). The project team drew particularly from the QUT attributes, the McCrate Report and Vignendra (1998) in formulating an holistic picture of what law graduates in the 21st century should be able to do. The project team determined that the graduate attributes chosen should meet the following criteria.

The attributes should be compatible with the list of 'graduate attributes' for students graduating from QUT.

The attributes should provide a valid description of a law graduate and adequately identify the most important and frequently used skills of a lawyer.

1. The attributes should include values as well as skills.
2. The attributes should be clearly understood by teaching staff, students, and employers.
3. The attributes should be capable of being integrated into the program and developed over a period of 3-4 years in an incremental manner.
4. The description of the attributes should be sufficient for the purpose of:
   a. guiding teaching staff in the development of their teaching programs,
   b. assisting students with the tracking of their development and creation of their resumes,
   c. assisting employers with the determination of students abilities and values.

After six months of deconstructing the three major sources mentioned, and consultation with staff, students, and recent graduates, the project team determined that the objectives listed could be achieved by adopting the six attributes shown in Figure 1.

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1 The QUT attributes in 2000 were broadly labelled as Knowledge-problem-solving, Ethical-attitudinal and Social-relational with particular skills listed with each attribute. For example, in respect of the Social-relational attribute, be able to work in a team.

2 The skills and values listed in the McCrate Report are problem solving, legal analysis, legal research, factual investigation, communication, counselling, negotiation, litigation and alternative dispute resolution, organization and management of legal work, recognising and resolving ethical dilemmas.
Discipline Knowledge
Graduates will possess a detailed and comprehensive knowledge of the Australian legal framework and principles, an understanding of comparative and international legal systems, an understanding of the ethical framework in which the Australian legal system operates and a fundamental knowledge of the extra legal factors impinging upon the substantive law.

Ethical Attitude
Graduates will possess a sense of community and professional responsibility and be able to offer proper solutions to ethical dilemmas.

Communication
Graduates will be able to clearly, appropriately and accurately communicate both orally and in writing having regard to the appropriate language for a variety of contexts.

Problem Solving and Reasoning
Graduates will possess critical thinking and problem solving skills, which enable effective analysis, evaluation and creative resolution of legal problems.

Information Literacy
Graduates will be able to use current technologies and effective strategies for the retrieval, evaluation and creative use of relevant information as a lifelong learner.

Interpersonal Focus
Graduates will be able to work both independently and as a productive member of a team, practice critical reflection and creative thinking, be socially responsible and inclusive, and be able to work effectively and sensitively within the global community in continually changing environments.

Figure 1. The project team’s six attributes of a law graduate.

Although it was decided that each attribute should be generally described for the purposes of presenting the overall picture of a graduate, the team considered it was also necessary to separately detail the types of skills and values which would be exhibited by a law graduate possessing these attributes for the following reasons.

1. Such a graduate should generally be able to demonstrate a variety of skills and therefore it was not considered desirable to pigeonhole particular skills within certain attributes, as a multitude of skills may be brought to bear when a graduate demonstrates any of the attributes.

2. To facilitate the development of an integrated and incremental teaching program; and

3. To meet the objectives of guiding teaching staff in the development of their teaching programs and assisting students with the tracking of their development and the creation of their resumes.

It was further decided that some of the skills listed by the project team had common characteristics and should be collated into categories. This was mainly for the purpose of assisting the teaching staff to maintain a balance of different skill types within the LLB program and to provide an ordered arrangement of the skills within a table format. After collating the skills the project team decided that all identified skills could easily be included within the following four categories.

- attitudinal skills,
- cognitive skills,
- communication skills,
- relational skills.

The specific skills have been collated as follows within these four skill categories as shown in Table 1.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication skills</th>
<th>Cognitive skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>Problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral presentations</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Legal analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal interviewing</td>
<td>IT literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooting</td>
<td>Legal research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation</td>
<td>Document management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Discipline &amp; ethical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drafting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudinal skills</th>
<th>Relational skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical orientation</td>
<td>Work independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative outlook</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective practice</td>
<td>Appreciate race, gender, culture and socio-economic differences specifically and diversity generally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive perspective</td>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social justice orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-active behaviour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1. Specific skills in the four skill categories.**

**CREATING AN INCREMENTAL MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

To facilitate and guide staff in the development of an integrated skills program which also developed these 'Core Skills' incrementally, the project team developed the following:

1. a description of the broad levels of student progression for the Core Skills through the LLB program and,
2. a detailed description of what a student should be able to do to demonstrate each skill at each level of progression.

A student within the LLB program will typically undertake 24 core units and 8 elective units over the course of a four-year period. The core units are spread across the four-year period with a high concentration in the first and second year. The project team determined – after taking into account the course structure – that a student’s development of the Core Skills could naturally develop in three stages. As a broad proposition it was considered that a student would develop through one stage in the first year of their course, the second stage in the second year units, and the final stage in either a third- or fourth-year core unit. The project team adapted the levels of development outlined in the ATN report of scoping, enabling, training, and relational to create three levels. Each level requires a student to move through a process of instruction, practice, feedback, assessment, and reflection.

Each level is described in Figure 2.

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**Skill Level 1** - At this level the student will be instructed on the theoretical framework and application of the skills – usually at a generic level. The skills may be practiced under guidance, and feedback provided. Assessment will usually include a critique of the skill as practiced.

**Skill Level 2** - At this level students may be provided some additional guidance of an advanced level of skills, an environment in which to practice the skill that is linked to a real world legal scenario, and feedback provided to the student on their progress. Students will be encouraged to reflect on their performance and ways to improve. At this level students should be able to individually, or within a group, complete a task utilising a range of skills in relation to a simple legal matter.

**Skill Level 3** - At this level students should be able to draw on their previous instruction and translate and use the skill in a variety of different circumstances and contexts without guidance. Students should be able to adapt and be creative in the way they approach the context and the particular skills that are used. Reflection on their performance will be a key aspect. At this level students should be able to individually, or within a group, complete a task utilising a range of skills in a complex legal matter for a knowledgeable and critical audience.

*Figure 2. Skill levels associated with student progression through the Core Skills.*
The broad description of each level was applied to each skill and an explanation of what a student should be able to do in respect of each skill was insert into the 'Table of Core Skills'. This table is used by staff in the creation of their teaching program for each unit, and by students as a clear indicator of what they need to do for assessment – and as a tool for tracking their development. An extract from the Table of Core Skills in relation to time management appears in Table 2.

**Adoption of the Table of Core Skills**

Prior to embarking upon the integration process, the Table of Core Skills was critically reviewed by three student focus groups (current students, recently graduated students (1 year out) and lawyers (2-3 years out) and staff of the Faculty. After taking into account the feedback from these groups, the table was presented to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee for approval as part of the Faculty's quality assurance procedures. As the integration process progressed, the Teaching and Learning Committee also critiqued and finally approved the new unit outlines for each unit. As part of the Faculty's policy each unit outline was required to include details concerning how each skill was to be taught and assessed.

**Integration of skills into the LLB curriculum**

In order to assess progress in this area and facilitate development, the ALRC suggested that "law schools should make explicit the nature and extent of their skills development programs (whether as separate units, as modules within substantive units, or in clinical programs), and how they examine these skills" (ALRC, 1999, para 2.80).

An important aspect of the Faculty project is not only the integration of skills within the substantive units but also the fact that the teaching and assessing of those skills is made explicit to the students. As indicated above, a Table of Core Skills detailing the different levels of each skill has been prepared to assist with the task of integrating skills into the program. The Table of Core Skills contains,

1. a context statement explaining to students the skills program within the LLB;
2. details of the broad skill category, and the specific skills within the category, the demonstrated abilities of a graduate for each of the skills, and an explanation of the abilities a student should demonstrate at each of three levels.

The Table was specifically developed by the project team to include all of the necessary information for both students and staff. Faculty staff use the table to assist with identifying the suite of skills incorporated within the unit and the level of skill to be demonstrated. Students are provided with a copy of the table to ensure they understand the nature and type of skills which will be taught within each unit and the course as a whole. Table 2 is a short extract from the Table of Core Skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Demonstrated ability at graduation</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>Demonstrate an ability to:</td>
<td>Demonstrate an ability to:</td>
<td>Demonstrate an ability to:</td>
<td>Demonstrate an ability to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• determine the most effective use of time and resources in order to meet critical deadlines and reduce pressure on oneself, family and colleagues</td>
<td>• comply with the preparation and submission of assessment requirements</td>
<td>• comply with the preparation and submission of assessment requirements</td>
<td>• comply with the preparation &amp; submission of assessment requirements in the context of a more complex range of tasks</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Extract from the Table of Core Skills.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Unit - Level 1</th>
<th>Unit - Level 2</th>
<th>Unit - Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>Legal Research and Writing</td>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>Advanced Legal research and Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Legal letter writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3. Extract from the matrix of units and skills.*

Integration within substantive units – course level

The ultimate aim of the Faculty project was to develop a law course where students develop skills in parallel with the substantive law content. The integration of skills across the different year levels of the course was overseen by members of the project team. The team met with representatives from units in each of the years of the course to establish the suite of skills that would be included in that particular year. Unit representatives were asked to nominate the skills that would be integrated into the unit. The project team members then ensured that a balance of skills was integrated across the particular year of the course and negotiated the insertion of skills within units if necessary. This process was used to address the following with each unit representative.

- The project team encouraged each unit to develop the skills and skill levels experientially through a systematic process of explicit instruction, practice, feedback, and final assessment and ranking across the whole of the course (see Kift, 1997).
- It was not necessary for each unit to take on the responsibility for the whole of the process of development for each skill. It was necessary to spread the students’ experiences across a number of units – particularly with a multi-faceted skill such as written or oral communication.

Each of the skills needs to be developed as an integrated package across the particular year of the course and then vertically through the remainder of the course. This required each of the teams within the particular year of the course to be aware of the skills that each unit was integrating. In addition, each particular unit team was required to liaise with unit teams in the years above and below to ensure a progression of the skill from one year to the next. To facilitate this process a matrix of units and skills was developed for staff and students.

An example of the matrix for written communication appears in Table 3.

INTEGRATION OF SKILLS AT UNIT LEVEL

The skills listed in the Table of Core Skills have been incorporated across the curriculum both horizontally (across a year of the degree, e.g., first year) and vertically (incrementally developed from first year to final year) into units in the LLB. The teaching team for each unit considered the following when integrating skills.

The existing competency level of students entering the unit.

Where the unit was in first year, competency levels varied depending on the demographic of the student cohort. Information concerning first year students’ competency levels was obtained through a self audit of their skills against the Level 1 description of skills which was collated, analysed, and made available to staff and students. Information about the new students such as gender, age, enrolment status, entry status (e.g., school leaver, mature-age entry), and whether they were enrolled in a combined degree program was also collected in the self audit. This information assisted in analysing the skills self audit because it allowed us to identify needs of particular student groups. In later years of the course, teachers were able to gain guidance from the objectives of units in the earlier part of the course regarding skill development. For example, the teachers in the second-year unit Real Property, which develops legal research at Level 2, can expect all students to have been exposed to legal research at Level 1 in the first year unit Legal Research and Writing.

Review of learning objectives for the unit

The learning objectives for each unit, articulated in the unit outline and study guide, were required to clearly indicate the skills to be developed, the methods used to develop the
skills, the competency level expected of the student upon completion of the unit and the methods for assessment of the skill. While skills have often been 'taught' implicitly in the past, it is obviously preferable and more effective that they be taught by explicit identification of the skills in unit descriptions and assessment. Students need to be informed very early in their studies how and why they are going to be taught generic skills, how these skills preface the development of legally specific skills, and what part they, as students, should be playing in developing these skills.

Review of teaching strategies

Depending on the level of skill to be achieved, teaching strategies aim to put the skill within the context of the unit content, accommodate large class numbers and to give the skill a real world meaning. This was made achievable by an appropriate matching of the skill with the unit. For example, legal interviewing was an appropriate skill to integrate into the unit Torts because it is an area of law that covers topics such as negligence where good legal interviewing skills are crucial in legal practice. A brief example of a teaching and learning strategy is outlined in the Example below.

Review of assessment

Assessment methods for each unit have been revised through consultation with teaching staff, the Assistant Dean (Teaching and Learning), and the review of previous unit evaluations to ensure appropriate assessment tasks for both substantive content and skills. Generally, this has meant an increase in the intensity of the assessment within a unit. This may translate to an increase in the number of assessment items or a change in the type of assessment to ensure both skills and substantive content are assessed.

Example of skill integration in compulsory first-year unit

Letter writing is a daily activity for those in the legal profession. Legal letter writing has traditionally been included in the compulsory first-year unit Legal Research and Writing. Students are required to draft a simple letter of advice centred around the substantive problem they are researching. As part of this project, materials on legal letter writing were made available to students on the unit's online teaching site and hints and tips were discussed with them prior to them undertaking a practice letter-writing exercise in class. Students were encouraged to reflect upon their attempt against the assessment criteria that was being used to assess their assessable letter and tutor feedback was given individually and collectively in class. The assessment criteria reflect the Level 1 description of legal letter writing in the Core Skills Table. This process of teach, practice, feedback, assess, and reflect before advancing to the next level and repeating the cycle appears to promote positive student learning outcomes. As one student reflected "...actually doing something in practice is very useful in learning, rather than just talking about it. This method of learning is especially useful for letter writing as it is a reasonably difficult task in which repetition and feedback can help". Staff also commented upon an improvement in the quality of letters submitted.

Staff development and resource sharing

It was acknowledged from the outset of this Project that staff development and a comprehensive collection of resources were going to be vital to maintain the project. A staff-development model was created that initially entailed a needs analysis that identified needs across the Faculty and within particular units. Tailored staff-development activities were then designed and delivered by staff with expertise from within and outside the Faculty and repeated for each offering of units as required by new staffing complements. Staff meetings were also conducted to discuss the implementation of the project. Extensive literature from journals, texts, websites, and other relevant resources was located and collated. A website was created for staff as a central portal for accessing project documentation, including the Table of Core Skills, links to literature on graduate attributes, and legal education and drafts of work in progress for staff comment. Another website, entitled 'Law graduate', was created for the students that also hosts the Table of Core Skills and has become the up-to-date source of literature on skills for students and staff.

EVALUATION TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED TO GAUGE WHETHER IT IS WORKING

A number of evaluation strategies were employed to assess the effectiveness of the project from a pedagogical perspective. Pedagogically we were concerned that the project achieve an improvement to the teaching and learning process, and to learning outcomes (Ramsden, 1989). Evaluation methods to gauge
the effectiveness of the project included focus groups to discuss the Core Skills Table, online surveys for feedback on the staff resources website, staff surveys on the project effectiveness, student surveys asking students to self-audit their ability in skills and evaluate the effectiveness of tasks in developing their skills across whole years of the degree, student reflective journals reflecting on changes in their understanding, and individual unit evaluation through the university's formal Student Evaluation of Unit (SEU) process.  

The student self audits and first skills journal are good illustrations of the evaluation techniques employed as they provide a rich source of information. Ramsden and Dodd suggest that "the purpose of a university education is to change students' ways of thinking in a discipline and to equip them with specific skills and knowledge... changes in understanding are fundamental" (Ramsden & Dodds, 1989, p. 13). They also suggest that the effectiveness of student learning is not related to our (the teacher's) interpretation of the course but to students' experiences and, therefore, collecting information about student perceptions is a worthwhile exercise (Ramsden & Dodds, 1989 p. 15). A survey of final year students was conducted at the end of 2000 asking students to self-audit their skill level at the completion of their degree. The results from this survey have been useful in furthering the evaluation of the current LLB and will provide a useful evaluation point in the future to gauge the effectiveness of the changes to the curriculum in demonstrating a positive impact on student learning.

The purpose of the first-year skills journal was to provide a pro forma journal entry mechanism and reflective questions – for the students to record in and thereby reflect upon the development of their skills in their first semester of the study of law. Students were also required to complete a self-audit of their skills at the beginning of first semester and again at the end, and submit it with their skills journals. A component of the skills journal was an overall reflection and evaluation activity which sought to evaluate how the changes that were introduced in 2000 in the new first-year curriculum – incorporating generic and legal skills – assisted in the development of skills. For example, feedback was sought on whether the seminar presentations helped oral presentation skills, whether use of the OLT site helped information technology skills, and whether group presentations helped teamwork skills. These data have provided useful feedback on the range of tasks that students find most useful in developing skills, and have been used to enhance the development of positive student learning experiences. Students appear positive about reflecting upon their skill development as is evidenced by comments such as "I think that this skills journal has been a good idea. It has helped me reflect upon what I have done and in knowing that it helps motivate me to keep learning and developing skills" and "A learning, evaluating, understanding, organisational assessment of ones capabilities or lack of. Very humbling reflective experiences so far...look out Semester 2." Evaluation is an ongoing process. Future data from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) and ongoing feedback through the Law Faculty Advisory Board from the profession, the Queensland Law Society, and Legal Practice course administrators on graduates who have completed the new program, will also assist in evaluating how effective the new skills-enhanced LLB, introduced progressively from 2000, has and will continue to be.

OUTCOMES AND ISSUES
A variety of outcomes and issues have arisen as a result of the implementation of this Project.

Cultural shift
The project has resulted in a cultural shift in the teaching and learning paradigm in the Faculty from content-driven to capability-driven, from teacher-focused to student-focused, and from the attitude of teaching students in a 'talking-

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6 This paper qualitatively discusses the outcomes of this project. Quantitative data, such as progressive improvement in unit evaluations and improvements in skill ability of students, have been collected but is beyond the scope of this paper.

7 The University is currently developing a Student Capability Profile (SCP) to enable students to document the development and assessment of their skills during their course to enable them to provide evidence of their skills to potential employers. This was trialled in 2001 as part of this project in a compulsory first-year LLB unit on legal research and writing.

8 It will be 2004 before the first cohort of fulltime students participating in the complete new program will graduate.
head fashion to providing learning environments. For staff it has also prompted a
greater awareness of curriculum design and student learning needs and an acknowledgment
of a need for ongoing staff development. Staff
competency in relation to curriculum design was
enhanced through discussion with members of
the project team on a regular basis, regular
presentations by the project team, distribution
of materials to staff specifically directed to
curriculum issues, the development of a website
where teaching and assessment tools from each
unit were placed for all staff to utilise, a
specialised staff development program provided
to each unit team while they were in the process
of developing their program, and by several
staff-led seminars on the work being undertaken
within each unit.

The student response has been positive although
it has necessitated a cultural shift for later year
students accustomed to pure content knowledge
transference in lectures and exams. As they are
at a stage of applying for jobs, they can,
however, see the ultimate benefit. Overall, the
students have a greater awareness of the legal
and generic skills they require to complete their
degrees and to be successful in the workplace,
are comfortable in considering whether they
possess sufficient skills, and see value in
recording their reflections and processes in the
development of their skills.

Workloads

At a management level the project has resulted
in a reconsideration of workloads, a recognition
of the increased workload which arises with
skills programs that involve large student
numbers, and a creative allocation of resources.

As a direct result of the project a detailed
workloads policy was developed by the Project
Director and Assistant Dean Research in
consultation with staff, and was adopted by the
Law Faculty Executive. This workload policy
gives explicit recognition to time spent in the
teaching of skills both in class and in an online
environment, the assessment of skills, and the
development of new curriculum. The policy was
adopted by the Faculty Executive and will take
full effect in 2003.

Resources

The importance of a central pool of regularly
updated resources is also apparent. Staff and
students require easy and quick access to
materials to assist the teaching and learning
environment of the program. The project team
considered that the easiest way of achieving this
objective was to create a website where all
materials related to the project and the ongoing
development of the course could be housed.
This has been very successful in encouraging
staff to share their resources and for facilitating
the integrated and incremental development of
the skills. Students clearly see how skills are
integrated in the curriculum and can plan to take
some responsibility for their own learning and
skills development.

Adoption by the University

At the time this project commenced the
University's list of graduate attributes was brief
and poorly explained. As a direct result of
greater awareness generated by the Faculty's
project, the University Teaching and Learning
Committee established a working party in 2001
to revise the University's statement of graduate
attributes. Consistent with the approach adopted
in the Faculty, the University's statement of
graduate attributes includes a brief general
description of graduate attributes and the
purpose of the statement and six broadly
described attributes. This statement was
approved by the University Teaching and
Learning committee in late 2001. Each faculty
has been asked to:

- identify the graduate capabilities for each
discipline which expand and enhance the
University list;
- develop a graduate capabilities
development strategy for each course. The
strategy will include a statement of the
qualities, skills and knowledge the faculty
agrees its students should develop within
the individual course. These qualities, skills
and, knowledge will incorporate the
graduate capabilities articulated by the
University;
- map graduate capabilities across each
course and advise students explicitly of the
capabilities being addressed in each unit;
- advise students where within the course the
capabilities are assessed (e.g., core or
capstone or other units);
- incorporate graduate capabilities
development within the substantive content
and learning of each course;

9 QUT graduate attributes may be viewed at
http://www.qut.edu.au/admin/mopp/C/C_01_03.html
• review the use of the Student Capability Profile (SCP) to document activities in courses and units which develop generic capabilities, and encourage students to use the SCP to systematically record and reflect upon learning experiences and activities that illustrate their development of generic skills at QUT and;
• attempt to identify for students the levels of capability development that they have possibly using the ATN model.

REFERENCES


