

LEGAL EDUCATION REVIEW

Adventures in Pedagogy: The Trials and Tribulations of Teaching Common Law in China

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Pedagogy in any environment is complex and requires a clearly defined normative framework designed to ensure that the pedagogical objective is achievable. In dealing with China, the reality is that even though the country presents some very excellent opportunities, it is also the case that competition among Western education providers is very intense. To get the appropriate competitive edge, institutions need to be innovative in the design of their curriculum and their style of pedagogy. But whatever technique is adopted to secure the competitive edge, it is critical for the long term benefit of the program to ensure that the pedagogical imperative of imparting valuable knowledge and intellectual excellence is not compromised in the pursuit of financial gains. In the summer of 2000, the Law Faculty of the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) introduced a new postgraduate program, which specifically targeted the Chinese market. The course comprised internationally focused subjects based on the university's 48 credit points system required for the award of coursework master's degrees. The development of a master's degree course program for the Chinese market in itself was not unique. What was unique about the UTS program however was the fact that the coursework program in its entirety was designed to be delivered and assessed by Australian lecturers in Mandarin. This paper is a brief assessment of that program. The paper examines general issues in pedagogy in the delivery of programs in a 'Language Other than English' (LOTE) and the use of 'proxies' in the delivery of LOTE programs. The paper seeks to conclude that while the UTS program demonstrates that it is feasible to use proxy lecturers or interpreters in the delivery of programs in LOTE, the exercise entails significant problems that can undermine the integrity of such programs.