“Eighty percent of success is showing up”: Getting students back in the classroom

Catherine Brown and Dr Colin Anderson
Tax units – pedagogical environment

• Lectorial mode (all electives):
  – 2 hrs f2f lecture/tutorial
  – Podcast for all students
  – Online materials – ppt slides etc on Blackboard
  – External / internal enrolments

• LWB364 Introduction to Taxation Law
  – 2 hr f2f lecture; 1 hr f2f tutorials
  – Podcast lectures for all students; Podcast tutorials for external students

• QUT policy
  – Encourages use of technology
  – Does not permit assessment based on ‘turning up
Impact of technology

• Doubtful that traditional teaching approaches ‘fit’ with technology advances and flexible delivery modes (Matthew, 2012; Corbin, Burns and Chrzanowski, 2011)

• Our students are now predominantly ‘born digital’ (Matthew, 2012)

• Podcasting – although increasingly popular and pedagogically sound – is not necessarily effective in terms of learning outcomes (Heilesen, 2010; Luna and Cullen 2011; Nworie 2008; Matthew and Evans, 2011)

• Instructional technologies (whether intended or not) have effectively altered the role of educators to facilitators rather than lecturers (Nworie, 2008)
End result – the empty lecture theatre
Inspiration: McGill University, Active Learning Classrooms
McGill University – Tina Piper, PVRVR144
Common Property Law

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilYEk-j-jp0&feature=youtu.be
Teaching approach – LWB359/LWN188

- ½ hr podcast with slides and study guide – key points only (all students).
- 1.5 hrs ‘workshop’ in collaborative learning spaces (internal students). Podcasts for external students.
- Weekly list of readings and questions for the topic
- Students were expected to complete the readings and listen to the podcast. Preparing answers to questions was optional.
- Tutorial discussion assessment item – 10 marks based on engagement with workshop exercises in class.
- Students worked with the technology – rather than me imposing it in class.
QUT Collaborative Learning Spaces – Advanced Taxation Law
QUT Collaborative Learning Spaces – larger classrooms
Positives

- They turned up! Once there learning happened for a number of reasons.
- Students were much more interested in participating in group work and more actively engaged in learning.
- Ability to work through problems as a whole group was greatly facilitated with technology.
- Students were (generally) more self directed and focussed. Very little facebook activity!
- My role was more in facilitating (as opposed to directing) their learning.
Student comments

The delivery of the material really suited me. In that the readings were available online, a lecture podcast was available, and then coming together in class for the questions, revision etc. …

I do not think a separate timetabled lecture would work. I know that my deeper understanding of the topics came from the readings, particularly the journal articles and the Tax and Accounting Handbook.
Possible issues

• Clearly worked better as students did not have a bank of answers to work with.
• Small group – 40 students who (by self admission) were highly motivated.
• Will need to keep workshop material ‘fresh’.
• Might not necessarily be more time efficient.
• Blended reasonably well with Masters students but that might depend on the cohort.
• May not be the best fit for external students – or first year students..