

# Connection: how can a teacher help students stay connected?

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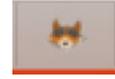
Te Piringa Faculty of Law – University of Waikato

MSB.1.03

LearnFest2020 – Wednesday 11 November 2020 2.30pm MSB1.03

# Xorro - please answer a few questions

<http://q.xorro.com/rqzu>



Involve your audience  
Instantly, easily, any place, any time

- Scan QR code
- Click on link that appears
- Create an alias for anonymity
- Audience participation tool
- It's Voluntary
- A few discussion questions
- Only used during this session



# A super-quick intro

- Senior Lecturer of Law and Convenor of the BA in Law
- BA (Otago), LLB Hons (Otago), LLM Hons (Waikato), PhD (Waikato), PGCertTTL (Waikato)
- Barrister and Solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand
  
- I presented at LearnFest19 on contract cheating and academic integrity
  
- I taught in 4 law papers in 2020
  - LEGAL203 – Jurisprudence (first 6 weeks in B trimester)
  - LEGAL208 – Law of the Public Sphere (all of A Trimester)
  - LEGAL209 – Law, Policy and Practice (all of B Trimester)
  - LEGAL104 - Legal Method (all of B trimester)
  
- All: 1 x 2 hour lecture per week except LEGAL104 (50 mins) + tutorials or workshops weekly

# Inspiration for my presentation topic...

Lock-down

Teaching online and (initially at least) no students on campus

My memories of things I learnt during the PGCertTT

# Thing 1: the official guidance to moving online

“If you are recording a lecture, either in a teaching room, from your office or elsewhere, use Panopto. Do not use Zoom.” 19 March email

“It is not intended that video material be static recordings of 50-minute lectures. Rather, we are aiming for shorter videos that form a series that can be interspersed with other activities. Moodle Lessons provide a good means of structuring this approach, as they enable you to embed videos among other activities and notes as well as to track students' progress through the material and identify those students who are not engaging or are falling behind” 18 June

Pre-record your lectures – use Panopto – try to keep them short, in chunks

# Thing 2: my personal views on teaching

## Brene Brown – ‘The Power of Vulnerability’

- 50 million + views

“Connection is why we’re here. It’s what gives purpose and meaning to our lives”

- Brene Brown

We are hard-wired to seek connection – it is what we need to thrive



# Thing 3 – snippets from the literature

- John Biggs *Teaching for Quality Learning at University: What the Student Does* at 74: we need to shift the focus from what the teacher does to what the student does

“we have a two-sided ledger sheet (a) what the teacher is doing and (b) what at the same time students are doing...

attaining the intended learning outcomes depends more on (b) than on (a)

Richard **Bowman** 'Rethinking what motivates and inspires students' (2011) 84 The Clearing House – A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas 264  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2011.592164>

- “Drawing on four decades of scientific research on human motivation, Pink (2009) argues that **exceptional educators** provide students with a contextual sense of their intrinsic worth by **creating environments** that engage **three overarching human needs: *autonomy***, the freedom to make choices and determine one’s future; ***mastery***, the ability to learn and develop expertise; and ***purpose***, the quest for meaning in one’s life.” Bowman at 264
- “Because the student’s brain experiences the classroom **as a social system**, educators must enhance their leadership capability to ‘intentionally address the social brain in service to optimal performance’ (Rock 2010, 90)...” Bowman at 268

# My instinct...

- Keep teaching using Zoom
- Otherwise, I will lose my connection with my students & they will lose their connection with each other
- They will lose their sense of community
- They will lose the routine of lectures at set times
- They will lose the chance to talk to their peers – to connect with their class
- They will lose the chance to have discussions, ask questions
- They will lose their connection with the university/their studies
- **They will lose their sense of connection**
- So...
- I decided to keep teaching using Zoom
- I didn't record a single 'Panopto' lecture
- I did that throughout the remainder of A trimester and all of B trimester

# What I did (1/2)

**Every lecture held via Zoom – recorded, then uploaded to Moodle after the lecture**

**Nothing pre-recorded**

## **Zoom activity inside Moodle**

- Add an activity – click on Zoom – set up recurring meeting (see image) – Zoom icon
- Post an announcement that lectures will be live, via Zoom, recorded
- Post a reminder announcement each week
- Encourage discussion/questions
- Trying to give an authentic ‘lecture theatre’ experience – break mid-way through, pause and discuss

# What I did – (2/2)

## **Pre lecture and post-lecture non-recorded casual conversations –**

- To retain the classroom atmosphere
- Tell students what I am trying to do here: imagine the lecture theatre, chatting to the person next to you
- I come online but I mute my audio and video
- Encourage casual conversations before the lecture & after it – just like in ‘real-life’

## **Xorro**

- Audience participation questions
- 3 batches of questions (usually) per lecture
- Before, during (mid-point of lecture), end of lecture
- Discuss the results – stepping off point for discussions, increase student participation
- Can ask questions as a ‘reminder’ not just to seek responses (see example from LEGAL104)
- Can gauge the mood

# LEGAL209-20B (HAM) - Law, Policy and Practice

[Dashboard](#) / [My papers](#) / [LEGAL209-20B \(HAM\)](#)

## Welcome to LEGAL209 Law, Policy and Practice

-  [Announcements](#)
-  [Paper outline for LEGAL209-20B \(HAM\)](#)
-  [Studiosity](#)
-  [In-class audience participation questions](#)
-  [General Discussion & Questions](#)
-  [Teacher-student private communications](#)
-  [Rubrics for grading](#)
-  [Lectures via Zoom at 1.10pm on Tuesdays](#)

elearn.waikato.ac.nz

Library ▾ Useful Links ▾ Moodle Help ▾ Student Support ▾ Learning From C

and suggestions for improvement in less than 24 hours. In addition, you can get unlimited writing support from [Student Learning](#)

-  [General Law Library Research Wiki Page](#)
-  [Weekly Jurisprudence Lecture \(First 6 weeks of B Trimester\)](#)
-  [Student participation tool for in-class responses](#)
-  [Lecture 5 Xorro activity Law and Economics II](#)
-  [Lecture 6 of B Semester - Postmodernism etc \(last lecture with Myra\)](#)

## Add an activity or resource



-  Group choice
-  Interactive Content
-  Lesson
-  Quiz
-  Reengagement
-  SCORM package
-  Survey
-  Wiki
-  Workshop
-  XorroQ
-  Zoom meeting

### RESOURCES

-  Book

Select an activity or resource to view its help. Double-click on an activity or resource name to quickly add it.

Add

Cancel

26 67

Leader Board

All Participants

- AK AV AP AH
- AS AT AI AR
- AV AB AH AP
- AA BR BG BM
- BN CT CW CVD
- CLB CB DG DM
- EB EZ EF EG
- ES EW FS FH
- GW GM GW HH
- HM I(G) JB JB
- JC JV JBR JM
- JC JB J' JF
- KW KA KT KB
- KM LS LC LP
- LC LD MC MT
- MC MJM MG MC
- NM NR NC NIJ
- PJ RW RB RDS
- RR SW SS SU
- SR SD SB SB
- SGH SP SK SM
- SM TR TD TTMS
- TJ TT TM TP
- WF

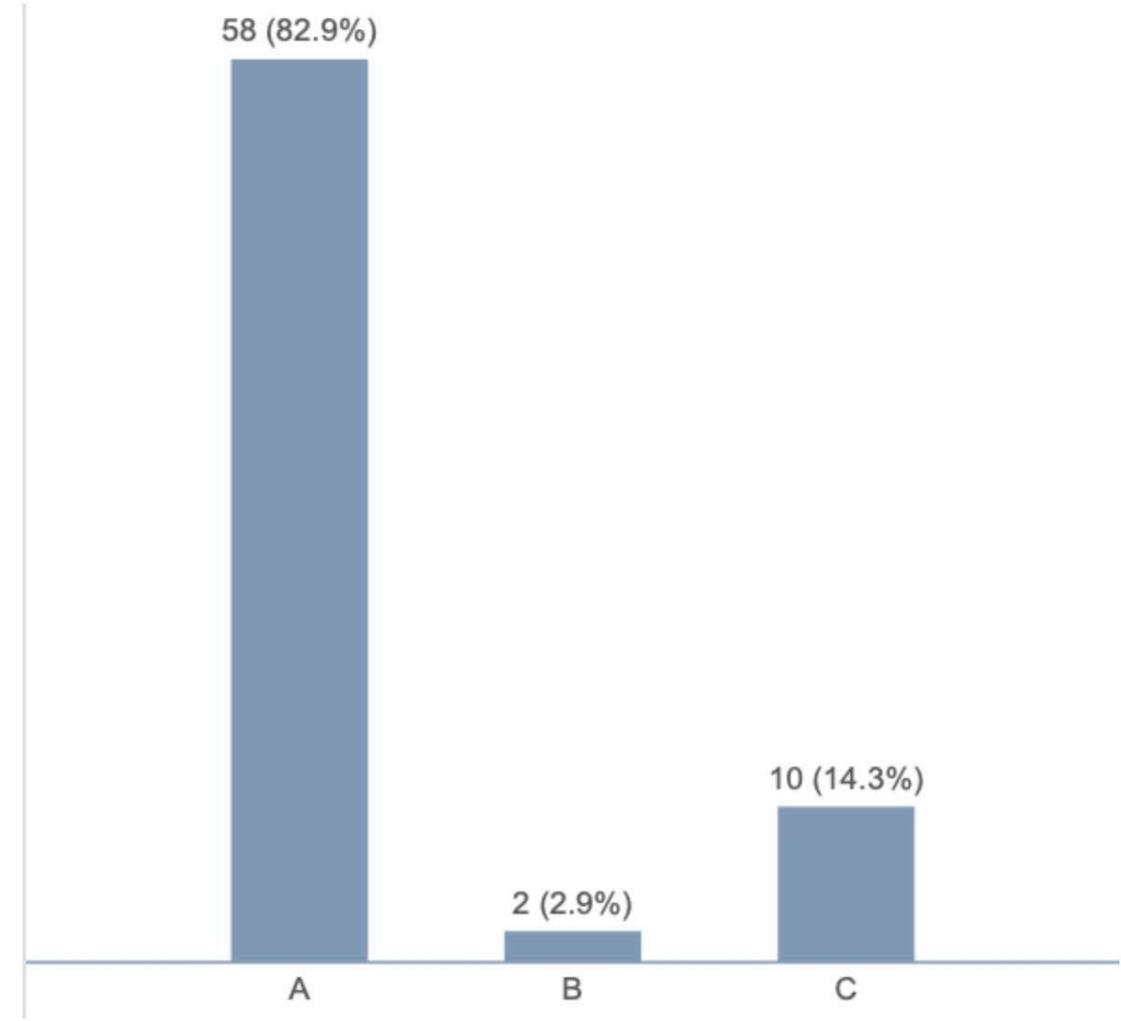
Q 1.4 Have you seen the sample written submissions on Moodle? If so, were they helpful

Multi-Choice (Single answer)

- A: Yes, I've seen them, they're helpful
- B: Yes, I've seen them, but not helpful
- C: No, I haven't seen them

Finish this Batch

Results Progress Bar QR Code



- 1
- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 1.6

Prev Next Ask instant



# So, how did it go?

Student feedback

# Sources of feedback on how it went

1. Case Management Initiative – during lockdown
2. Zoom chat messages
3. WULSA survey
4. Private conversations with students who came to see me & anecdotal evidence

# 1. Case Management Initiative – April 2020

## “The 2-hour Panopto recording phenomena”

The case management conversations were the first inkling that I was onto something

- A few students remarked how difficult it is to have to watch 2-hour long Panopto recordings. They have to watch, pause, take notes, sometimes go back and re-watch. They found this tedious
- Very time-consuming process when it occurs across all their papers.
- A tendency amongst lecturers to sit in front of their computer and go through all their slides as if they were in a classroom - they may want to make sure that they take up the normal 2 hour time-slot.
- Watching so many long, pre-recorded lectures is difficult for students.
- Students (in April) were already tired of this format

## 2. In-class – Zoom chat

Some students' comments from my saved meeting chats:

“11:11:20 From [REDACTED] to Myra (Privately) : I am a student attached to the Marlborough satellite group. I definitely prefer the live zoom lectures...I hope that the Law Faculty continues with this system so I can complete my entire degree remotely.

“11:02:59 From [REDACTED] : I agree with others on this too. Thank you Myra. I LOVE the live studio audience too. Very much appreciated.

“11:05:43 From [REDACTED] : I like the live lectures too but am glad they are recorded as well.

# 3. Waikato University Law Students Association (WULSA)

- Student survey – conducted via WULSA Facebook group ‘Waikato University Law Students’ Hub’ on 6 Aug 2020
- Overall, 68.5% of students said that online learning had not been better for their learning experience; 31.5% said it had been an improvement
- Many students reported struggling with anxiety, depression (and that their existing mental health issues were made worse)
- WULSA report extracts:
  - “Many students also commented on the fact that online learning did not provide enough space for social interaction. WULSA tried to fill this void by hosting several online catch-ups”
  - “Many students commented on the inability to chat with classmates about the lecture content or interact with lecturers in a timely manner”
  - “Overall, students seem to really miss the social aspect of in-person classes”

“Online learning is very hard in the sense that we also cannot ask questions and get immediate answers from lecturers (Zoom live lectures weren’t so problematic)...”  
(sic)

“As a student with ADHD it is extremely hard for me to watch a 2-hour lecture are home and be able to pay attention...it feels so much harder for me”

A couple of comments from law students reported in the WULSA student survey (August 2020)

## 4. Private conversations/anecdotal evidence

- Please don't move to pre-recorded Panopto lectures
- Please retain the Zoom live lectures – it's the next best thing to face-to-face lectures
- Please keep recording them for times when we can't get to class
- Please spread the word that 2 hour long recordings are very hard to watch and shouldn't be a way of communicating content
- Students want access to their lecturers - they want to be able to ask questions, in a live context, to clarify meaning but also assessments etc

# Positives of synchronous teaching via Zoom (instead of pre-recorded asynchronous)

- Sense of community is fostered
- Students can see their lecturer every week
- Class discussions
- Connection with classmates – share ideas, sources, links to websites
- Ask questions – clarify points of confusion all at once – move forward
- Sense of routine – for students and lecturers
- Solidarity – a feeling that we are all in this together
- **...Connectedness!**

# Negatives of teaching via Zoom

- Some students switch off their videos for the entire lecture
- Knowing its recorded, a lot of students don't show up to the live Zoom lecture (they will watch the recording)
- A few students do most of the heavy-lifting when it comes to questions/comments (xorro-q can help here)
- Internet connectivity issues

# Times Higher Education article on 9 November 2020



PROFESSIONAL JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT SEI



## Is 'Covid-secure' teaching really best for student well-being?

Scientists say pandemic-related restrictions call into question Westminster government's claim that face-to-face tuition is vital for mental health

November 9, 2020

[Anna McKie](#)

Twitter: [@annamckie](#)

Scientists have challenged the Westminster government's claim that continuing face-to-face teaching is essential to protect student well-being, highlighting that while that might be true for tuition in normal times, the "Covid secure" equivalent may be less beneficial.

In a letter to vice-chancellors, universities minister Michelle Donelan justified demanding that in-person teaching should continue during England's second coronavirus lockdown by warning that shifting wholly to online learning "could jeopardise the learning that students receive, as well as risk their mental health and well-being".

But academics have questioned whether the benefits of face-to-face teaching outweigh the risks attached to it in the middle of a pandemic.



Source: Getty

...shifting to wholly online learning could “jeopardize the learning that students receive as well as risk their mental health and well-being”

- Minister of State for Universities (UK) Michelle Donelan – justifying govt’s demands on in-person teaching during England’s second lockdown, quoted by Anna McKie in “Is ‘Covid-secure’ teaching really best for student well-being?” (THE, 9 Nov 2020)



Photo source UK Parliament website. Used under [Creative Commons](#)

“Simon Wessely, professor of psychological medicine at King’s College London warned that many students did not have access at home “to a desk in a quiet room, a pair of headphones if others are around, good broadband and so on”.

“The transition to online has disproportionately affected those students from less well-off backgrounds,” he said. “University is a time of learning, transition, maturity and independence...I think it is right that to say that **in-person teaching is better for mental health than the opposite, and not just teaching, it is all aspects of what a university education provides.**” (emphasis added)

“the current restrictions have already significantly impacted on all aspects of the purpose of a university. That makes it even more important we should do everything we can to **keep whatever semblance we can of what a university provides alive.**”

Professor Wessely, THE article, 9 Nov 2020



# Conclusion

Run second batch of xorro questions...

# 5 final things to think about going forward

1. In future, perhaps change the advice to lecturers: conduct live (but recorded) Zoom lectures. Use pre-recording as a last resort. Maintain routines and lecturer-student connections as much as possible.
2. Student connection should be a priority – students' mental health should be a priority regardless of COVID-19 restrictions. Keep better track of students' mental health.
3. Focus on student connectedness even if/when we 'go back to the new normal'
4. Consider that the new normal could be more complicated – Zoom has problems of students turning off cameras, not communicating, not coming online; if there is blended learning there is likely to be lower in-person attendance – no easy answers here
5. Communicate with students throughout: whether the news is good, bad, or still up in the air, students want and need to hear from their university, their Dean and their lecturers frequently – they want more communication. Communication is part of connectedness.