

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant

Scheme 1: Basic Scheme

Final Report (2017-18)

Report due 30 April 2018

Please return by email to The Ad hoc Committee on Planning of eLearning Infrastructure
mmcd@cuhk.edu.hk

PART I

Project title: Micromodules for Contract Law

Principal supervisor: Alan Gibb

Co-supervisor(s)

Department / Unit LAW

Project duration: From May 2017 to April 2018

Date report submitted: 3rd May 2018

1. Project objectives

All objectives of the project were achieved, all micro-modules were produced on time for use on the program for which they were designed. The principal aims, to complement traditional teaching methods by focusing on areas where students traditionally have difficulty (making the same mistakes year in year out) and to overview complex topics highlighting the key issues, were altered to some degree in that two of the micromodules also focused on emphasizing the connections between different areas of law which are traditionally taught in a linear way.

2. Process, outcomes or deliverables

Five micromodules were produced for the Contract II LAWS 1042 which ran in the second term for first year LLB students. The details are as follows:

1. What is a Misrepresentation Running Time 10.25 mins
2. Remedies for Misrepresentation Running Time 9.08 mins
3. I did not agree to what I had signed Running Time 8.32 mins
4. Common Mistake and Frustration Running Time 10.10 mins
5. Remoteness of Damage Running Time 12.50 mins

The focus of 1 and 2 was in relation to areas that students frequently find confusing and each year make the same mistakes, with the objective of minimizing these mistakes

The focus of 3 was to take a common legal problem and highlight what relevance a number of different areas of law, eight in total, have in dealing with it, showing their differences and interconnections.

The focus of 4 was to compare and contrast two closely related areas of law, highlighting their similarities and differences

In addition the aim behind 3 and 4 was to tackle the problem that areas of law, out of necessity, must be taught in a linear way. The danger of this is that students develop islands of knowledge with no bridge between them. The aim of 3 and 4 was to provide those bridges

The focus of 5 was to overview the single most difficult topic on the course, highlighting its vagueness and inconsistency and comparing, critically, the Hong Kong approach with that taken in Singapore

3. Evaluation Plan

The evaluation process involved two elements – a focus group of 5 students who I had a face to face meetings with as well the provision of written feedback and the statistics made available from Panopta.

4. Dissemination, diffusion and impact

The micro-modules were made available for the 77 students taking the Contract II course via the medium of Blackboard.

The author will also give a presentation at the Conference Directions in Legal Education, on 1 – 2 June 2018 MICRO-MODULES –GIMMICK OR (USEFUL) GIZMO? The focus of the presentation will be an evaluation of the benefits of the micro-modules in enhancing the students' learning experience. Based on the author's own experience and feedback from focus groups, are the micro-modules merely a placebo with no discernible gains to the students' comprehension of an area of law or just a glorified form of spoon feeding? Alternatively have they actually had a beneficial effect on students' developing a better understanding of the law, thereby enabling them to take their independent study of a topic to a higher level?

PART II

Financial data

Funds available:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Funds awarded from MMCDG | \$ 30,750 |
|--------------------------|-----------|

Funds secured from other sources \$ _____
 (please specify _____)

Total: \$ 30,750 _____

Expenditure:

| Item | Budget as per application | Expenditure | Balance |
|---|---------------------------|-------------|---------|
| CU AV Division Video Shooting with Chromakey setting VO recording and editing , Video editing, compiling and encoding | 28,000 | 28,000 | 2750 |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| Total: | | | 2750 |

PART III

Lessons learnt from the project

The overall aim of the micro-nodules –of reinforcing the more traditional forms of teaching by producing useful overviews in order to enhance the students’ learning and understanding of the law- appear to have been met. A five star rating was given for each video and the comments provided both orally and in written form by the focus group and other students on the course were all totally positive . A clear tangible benefit was that the number of questions normally asked by students in the areas covered by the micromodules was reduced as were the mistakes normally made in class.

However the statistics brought up one surprising fact, not all students took advantage of the opportunity to watch the micromodules, for example video 2 had 47 unique viewers out of a total cohort of 77.

On reflection this may be my fault in the sense that I should have done more to highlight the aims and objectives of the videos and integrated them more into the course e.g. by requiring the videos to be watched as part of the pre-tutorial preparation and incorporating directly into the class some of the issues raised in the videos, rather than merely as add-ons, icing on the cake so to speak . I was not prepared for this as the take up rate for the two previous micro-module projects was 100%.Therefore in future years I intend to ‘sell’ the

micromodules more, giving greater highlighting to their importance and making them an integral part of the course rather than as an add-on revision aid.

The feedback from students revealed a demand for more of these videos, in particular in relation to the proper technique to be applied in answering legal problem questions. This is a skill that first year law students need to develop and there is a real potential to develop such videos in this skills area.

One important point I wish to flag in relation to Panopta –the statistical information provided is not user- friendly –it would be helpful if there could be a clearer overview making it easier to discern e.g. the total number of students who actually watched each module.

PART IV

Information for public access

Five micromodules were produced for the Contract II LAWS 1042 which ran in the second term for first year LLB students. The details are as follows:

1. What is a Misrepresentation?.
2. Remedies for Misrepresentation.
3. I did not agree to what I had signed
4. Common Mistake and Frustration
5. Remoteness of Damage

The focus of 1 and 2 was in relation to areas that students frequently find confusing and each year make the same mistakes with the objective of minimizing these mistakes

The focus of 3 was to take a common legal problem and highlight what relevance a number of different areas of law have in dealing with it, showing their differences and interconnection.

The focus of 4 was to compare and contrast two closely related areas of law highlighting their similarities and differences

In particular the aim 3 and 4 3 and 4 was to provide an overview showing the connection between areas of law that of necessity must be taught in a linear way . The danger of this linear approach is that students develop islands of knowledge with no bridge between them. The aim of 3 and 4 was to provide those bridges.

The focus of 5 was to overview the single most difficult topic on the course highlighting its vagueness and inconsistency and to critically compare the Hong Kong approach with that taken in Singapore

1. Keywords

Please provide five keywords (in the order of most relevant to your project to least relevant) to describe your micro-modules/pedagogies adopted.

Keyword 1: blended learning

Keyword 2: contract

Keyword 3: videos

Keyword 4: blackboard

Keyword 5: revision aid :

2. Summary

Please provide information, if any, in the following tables, and provide the details in Part I.

| Table 1: Publicly accessible online resources (if any) |
|---|
| (a) Project website: <i>If a publicly accessible project website has been constructed, please provide the URL.</i> |
| (b) Webpage(s): |
| (c) Tools / Services: CUHK AV Department were responsible for the production of the videos |
| (d) Pedagogical Uses: Project best described as blended learning materials as the micromodules are intended to supplement existing teaching methods. With the videos and the fact that all lectures were recorded it would be possible in theory to totally flip the classroom but in my view this would not be suitable for year 1 students who need the assistance of face to face lectures and tutorials in order to achieve a more gradual introduction to law –they need to learn to walk before they can run! |
| (c) Others (please specify): |

| Table 2: Resources accessible to a target group of students (if any) | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------|
| . | | | |
| <u>Course Code/ Target Students</u> | <u>Term & Year of offering</u> | <u>Approximate No. of students</u> | <u>Platform</u> |

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------|----|---------------|
| LAWS1042 1 st year LLB | 2 nd term 2018 | 77 | Blackboard |
| Table 3: Presentation (if any) | | | |
| <i>Please classify each of the (oral/poster) presentations into one and only one of the following categories</i> | | | Number |
| (a) In workshop/retreat within your unit (e.g. department, faculty) | | | N/A |
| (b) In workshop/retreat organized for CUHK teachers (e.g. CLEAR workshop, workshop organized by other CUHK units) | | | N/A |
| (c) In CUHK ExPo jointly organized by CLEAR and ITSC | | | N/A |
| (d) In any other event held in HK (e.g. UGC symposium, talks delivered to units of other institutions) Directions in Legal Education Conference, on 1 – 2 June 2018 | | | 1 |
| (e) In international conference | | | N/A |
| (f) Others (please specify) | | | N/A |

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Table 4: Publication (if any) | |
| <i>Please classify each piece of publication into one and only one of the following categories</i> | Number |
| (a) Project CD/DVD | N/A |
| (b) Project leaflet | N/A |
| (c) Project booklet | N/A |
| (d) A section/chapter in a booklet/ book distributed to a limited group of audience | N/A |
| (e) Conference proceeding | 1 |
| (f) A chapter in a book accessible internationally | N/A |
| (g) A paper in a referred journal | N/A |
| (h) Others (please specify) | N/A |

3. A one-page brief write up

This project involved the completion of five micro-modules each approximately 10 minutes long to support the teaching of year one LLB students. Each module was professionally produced by CUHK AV department. The principal aims of the micromodules were to

complement traditional teaching methods by focusing on areas where students traditionally have difficulty (making the same mistakes year in year out), to overview complex topics highlighting the key issues and to demonstrate the connections between different areas of law which are traditionally taught in a linear way. The author had very much in mind the needs of first year law students who have not yet fully developed effective study skills and have comparatively little general legal knowledge.

The project can best be described as blended learning to supplement more traditional teaching methods such as lectures and tutorials, as it is the author's view that that first year law students are in need of a gradual introduction into developing an understanding of a key subject such as contract law and the learning of associated legal skills.

A focus group of 5 students was invited to provide oral and written feedback on the efficacy of the project. The response was overwhelmingly positive. The students highlighted how useful the micromodules were for enhancing their understanding of the areas of law involved, the fact that they could be replayed a number of times until the student has totally understood the issues raised was particularly valued, especially by mainland students who in the first year find the speed of a native English speaker sometimes difficult to cope with! There was a strong request for more videos especially focusing on the legal skill and technique of how to produce an answer to a legal problem involving the law of contract. Interestingly all lectures were also recorded, so in theory it would have been possible to totally flip the classroom but a student questionnaire revealed that the students still valued a face to face introductory lecture on a legal topic, supplemented by the ability to replay the class and micromodules on difficult aspects of the law.

One area of surprise, contrary to the author's experience with other micro-module projects, was that not all students took advantage of the opportunity to view the videos, in the case of one of the micromodules only 42 out of the total cohort of 77 watched it. The author feels he could have perhaps done more to highlight to the cohort the importance of watching the micromodules and to integrate them more into the course, rather than as merely 'icing on the cake' and for next year, rather than emphasize their use merely as revision aid, an attempt will be made to integrate them more into the course e.g. by requiring a video to be watched as part of the preparation for a tutorial.