

Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant Report, March 2015

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In mid-February 2015 module 1 of the Micro-Module Courseware Development Grant (MMCDG) “Enhancing the Core Curriculum: A Blended Learning, Micro-Modular Approach” went live online (at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/his/proj/csd/>). Although designed for first-year students of History at CUHK so as to boost fundamental skills of how History works module 1 was tested on an undergraduate elective programme *The Industrial Revolution and its Impacts* (HIST4341/5504) so as to garner quick feedback prior to the MMCDG project’s completion in the summer of 2015. With students of the aforesaid Modern History course having to undertake a paper review as part of their formal assessment, i.e. for assignment 1, thus the micro-module offered an opportunity, firstly, to help develop core students skills within the context of the study of the Industrial Revolution, and secondly, to obtain as noted previously feedback on the design and working of the MMCDG.

Figure 1. Screenshot of the introductory video for the MMCDG.

Micro-module 1 : Video

1. A Paper Review Definition

What is a Review?

2. What a Review is Not

What a Review is Not...

- An essay
- A book
- A book report
- An off-the-cuff, personal response
- A string of quotations

3. Reading and Writing

TEXT (Book)

READER (You)

AUTHOR

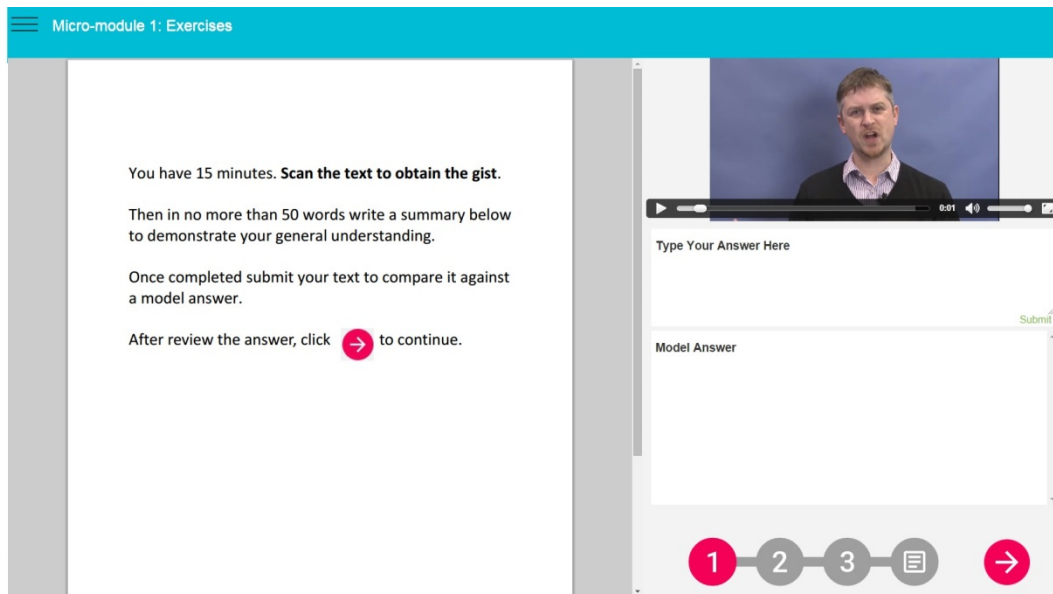
QUESTIONS

What is the author's purpose in writing?
What is the main message of the text?
What does the author's argument have to do with the text's context?
What does the author's argument have to do with the text's context?

After finish viewing the video clips, click this button to do the interactive exercise.

Comprising of two basic components the micro-module was designed with a short introductory video presentation – see figure 1. It, along with three Echo360 video files – each 2-3 minutes in duration - explained to students what a paper/chapter review is, what a review is not, and what the relationship between academic reading and writing is. With a duration of approximately 10 minutes students were then offered within the micro-module an opportunity to practice their new-found knowledge (figure 2).

Figure 2. Screenshot of the opening to the paper review practice exercise.



With the practice section, the second section of the two-part micro-module, informing students that they had to read a short text an accompanying video outlined to students what they had to read for. They were then given 15 minutes to read the text and write a short summary of the document they had read. Upon inserting their text they could then compare their answer against a model answer. Upon completing this task the students then had to read the same document again, albeit with a different purpose, and once again this had to be undertaken in 15 minutes (figure 3). Upon inputting their summary of the document read again a model answer appeared on the screen so that learners could compare their review against a model answer. Finally, students re-read the document, i.e. for the third time, with 15 more minutes were granted for this task. However a more lengthy summary of the document had to be composed (figure 4).

Whereas earlier they had read for gist and to identify key points in the text, now students in their review had to show depth of understanding. As before, students' answers once inputted could be compared with a model answer.

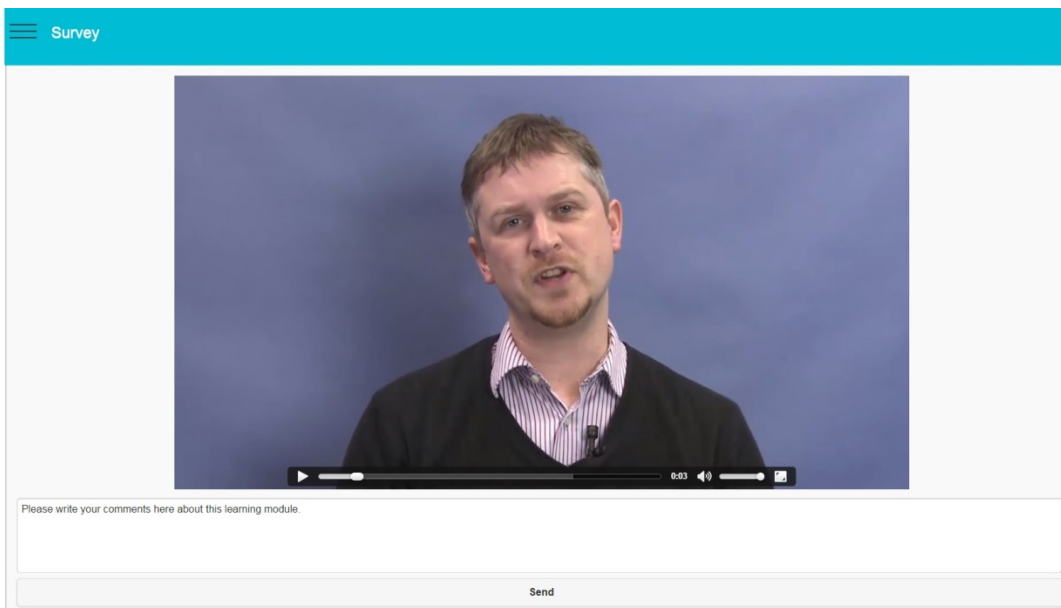
Figure 3 and 4. Screenshots of the paper review exercise.

This screenshot shows the first step of a paper review exercise. The interface is titled "Micro-module 1: Exercises". On the left, the text reads: "You have 15 minutes. Read the text to identify key points. In about 75-100 words, compose a summary to demonstrate your identification of the text's key points. Submit your text to compare what you wrote against a model answer. After review the answer, click → to continue". On the right, there is a video player showing a man speaking, with a progress bar at 0:06. Below the video are two text input fields: "Type Your Answer Here" and "Model Answer", with a "Submit" button. At the bottom, a navigation bar shows a sequence of steps: 1 (highlighted in red), 2, 3, a document icon, and a right arrow.

This screenshot shows the second step of the paper review exercise. The interface is titled "Micro-module 1: Exercises". On the left, the text reads: "Re-read the text for the final time. Identify details associated with the key points. In 150 words or so write a summary that highlights your depth of understanding. Submit your text to compare what you wrote against a model answer. After review the answer, click → to continue." On the right, the video player shows the same man speaking, with a progress bar at 0:07. Below the video are two text input fields: "Type Your Answer Here" and "Model Answer", with a "Submit" button. At the bottom, the navigation bar shows steps 1, 2, and 3 (all highlighted in red), followed by a document icon and a right arrow.

With the aim of informing students about a review, and getting them to practice the undertaking of a review, within a period of about one hour so as to obtain feedback the final screenshot (figure 5) of the micro-module encouraged students to offer their thoughts on the micro-module in an open yet anonymous way. So as to further encourage student feedback a part-time student helper has been employed to gather information about the micro-module and the working of the Historiography programme at CUHK prior to the 2014-15 academic year. To date the opinion of 100 students has been gathered.

Figure 5. The end screenshot of the micro-module.



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March 2 2015.