

Micro-Modules for Conflict of Laws – REPORT

OBJECTIVE

Five videos were produced. The objective of each video was to aid the revision of a topic traditionally found difficult by students, by explaining clearly and concisely the key points and then to illustrate how this worked in practice, in order for the student to develop a clear understanding of the legal concept.

FEEDBACK METHOD

Student feedback was received from a focus group of two students and by an end of course questionnaire. In addition feedback was provided in the students' CTE returns.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive without any significant negative comments. The mix (by accident or design!) of the personal touch (on camera introduction by me giving a succinct outline of the topic), followed by PowerPoints and ending with an invitation to answer a topic related question with the solution then presented to the students, proved to be exactly the combination the students preferred. It is surely no coincidence that I have received my highest ever CTE teacher satisfaction course of 5.73 during the six years I have taught this subject and my second highest ever CTE score overall!

In relation to each video the student responses were as follows:

Video 1 Domicile Av. Mark 9.25/10. The students found this the least formal of the videos and welcomed the personal touch by having to identify the legal domicile of my son and me, taking into account our life history. They considered that this 'brought the topic to life'.

Video 2 Renvoi Av Mark 8.8/10. This was the most difficult of the five topics but the feedback was that the topic was made 'very clear' and in particular the graphics were praised with the analogy with a tennis match considered 'an excellent idea'.

Video 3 Tort Av Mark 8.6/10. The feedback concluded that the video clearly illustrated the main points of the topic though one student did mention that a flow chart graphic might have been useful.

Video 4 Substance and Procedure Av Mark 8.9/10 Again the feedback was that this difficult legal distinction was made very clear, though one response did say that it would have been preferable if the video had only focused on the existing law and not in the way the law should change.

Video 5 Contract Av Mark 9.5 /10 . The shortest and simplest of the videos and overall the best received! The video was considered very helpful in clearing up misunderstandings as to which factors were the most important in deciding the choice of law.

All the student responses stated that the objective of each video "*to aid the revision of a topic traditionally found difficult by students, by explaining clearly and concisely the key*

points and then to illustrate how this worked in practice, in order for the student to develop a clear understanding of the legal concept” had been met.

In relation to other benefits that the videos provided two pertinent comments were;

The videos act as a good memory refresher

the videos are very helpful in the sense that they start by a clear explanation of the concepts, and end with a simple and clear example. They help me to visualize how some of these topics might be inter-related, to the whole theme of Conflict of Laws as a course. As the videos are short and to-the-point, they allow me to compare these concepts in parallel, and reflect on the course as a whole.

Other than the response of one student who would have welcomed flow charts there were no suggestions made as to how the videos could have been improved, one comment being that they were ‘close to perfect’ and all the students who replied would have welcomed additional videos on the other course topics. .

PERSONAL APPRAISAL

Overall the success of the videos exceeded my expectations. It is clear from the student feedback that the intended aims were achieved. In terms of their production leaving the shooting of each video to CUAV while I focused on the content was a perfect division of labour and in my view much preferable to doing everything oneself via Camtasia. CUAV also provided helpful immediate feedback which also enhanced the quality e.g. by highlighting that more passion should go into the delivery!

Three issues that I think can be usefully flagged are:

1. To my surprise students welcomed the fact the speaker was on screen for part of the video. I had toyed with the idea of leaving myself out totally but students clearly liked the ‘personal touch’. Psychologically it seems to calm them down if they have access to their course tutor at any time in the form of a video presence!
2. I was surprised by the excessive length of time each video took to produce. This far exceeded my expectations. Preparation of a script took at least a full working day and production of the graphics/PowerPoints with the assistance of a student helper took a further half a working day. To counterbalance this the shooting of each video took far less time than expected, approximately one hour. On the plus side I fielded fewer questions directly from students than in past years because the questions they would normally have asked had been covered in the videos.
3. It is sometimes difficult to assess whether to let a PowerPoint speak for itself or whether it should be accompanied by a voice over. By trial and error I found that what worked best was the PowerPoint going on the screen and then either no comment or, after the student would have had time to read it thoroughly, just one small comment for clarification purposes. A very ‘busy’ PowerPoint and lots of simultaneous comment would leave the student overwhelmed.

CONCLUSION

I feel the micro-modules I have produced have had a very beneficial effect on the students' learning experience and have provided a perfect supplement to the existing course. It is my plan to make them an integral part of each course on which I teach.

PART II

Financial data

Funds available:

Funds awarded from MMCDG	\$20,000		
Funds secured from other sources	\$		
(please specify _____)			
Total:	\$	\$20,000	

Expenditure:

Item	Budget as per application	Expenditure	Balance
From Chinese University AV Division. <i>Referring to your information, our quotation for your 5 mini modules is \$18,000.</i> <i>Our package includes the related video shooting for the "Discussion"; VO recording and editing; Video editing, compiling and encoding. (All PPTs will be provided by you)</i>	\$18000	\$18000	Nil
Assistance from IT literate University student in preparing top quality PPTs and other assistance 40 hours @ \$50 per hour = \$2000	\$2000	\$2000	Nil

Total:	\$20000	20000	Nil
--------	---------	-------	-----

Table 2: Resource accessible to a target group of students

<u>Course Code</u> <u>Target Students</u>	<u>Term & Year of offering</u>	<u>Approximate No. of students</u>	<u>Platform</u>
LAWS 6040 CONFLICT OF LAWS	<i>Third term 2014/ 15</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>Blackboard</i>
<i>LAWS4000</i> <i>PRIVATE</i> <i>INTERNATIONAL LAW</i>	<i>First term 2015/16</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>Blackboard</i>

Keyword 1: blended learning

Keyword 2: conflict of laws

Keyword 3: videos

Keyword 4: blackboard

Keyword 5: revision aid