



City Research Online

City St George's, University of London

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Tuning in not zoning out...

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The City Law School



Flexibility of learning



The challenge: improving student engagement re legal skills



- ▶ Legal research
- ▶ Legal writing
- ▶ Public speaking

- ▶ Exam skills
- ▶ Career planning skills
- ▶ Making the most of being an LLB student (aka newbie)



Current problems

- ▶ Traditional format lecture/tutorial
- ▶ Managing student expectation
- ▶ Skills gap: A-levels – degree
- ▶ Type of student and tools available markedly different
- ▶ Students live in ‘connected world’ where the visual = king



How to ensure students really do tune in and not zone out...

- ▶ **We'll look at:**
 - ▶ Enhancing post-classroom experience
 - ▶ Aligning skills with multimedia
 - ▶ Peer learning
 - ▶ Better and targeted research



Student feedback November 2010

‘Learnmore = a confidence booster for all new students’

‘Learnmore is a must for any student new to studying law’

‘Everything overwhelming at start and Learnmore is very reassuring’

‘We know we’re not on our own’

‘Gives you the extra help and techniques you need to survive in this course’

‘Pretty useful as I found it all very scary at the start of the course’

‘A gateway to success – one-stop shop. Focuses on what is necessary and crucial to your success’

‘Tailor-made to us as City students’



Enhancing the post-lecture experience

- ▶ Allowing students a space to:
 - ▶ Reflect on skills taught
 - ▶ Relate taught skills to learning objectives
 - ▶ Discuss/practice with others
 - ▶ Improve students communication skills



Advantages/disadvantages to such a resource

+ points

- ▶ Get students attention
- ▶ Available 24/7
- ▶ Helps perception of provision
- ▶ 'friendly'

- points

- ▶ Labour intensive to create
- ▶ Project planning
- ▶ Tech skills needed
- ▶ Constant monitoring
- ▶ Maintenance
- ▶ Keeping fresh!



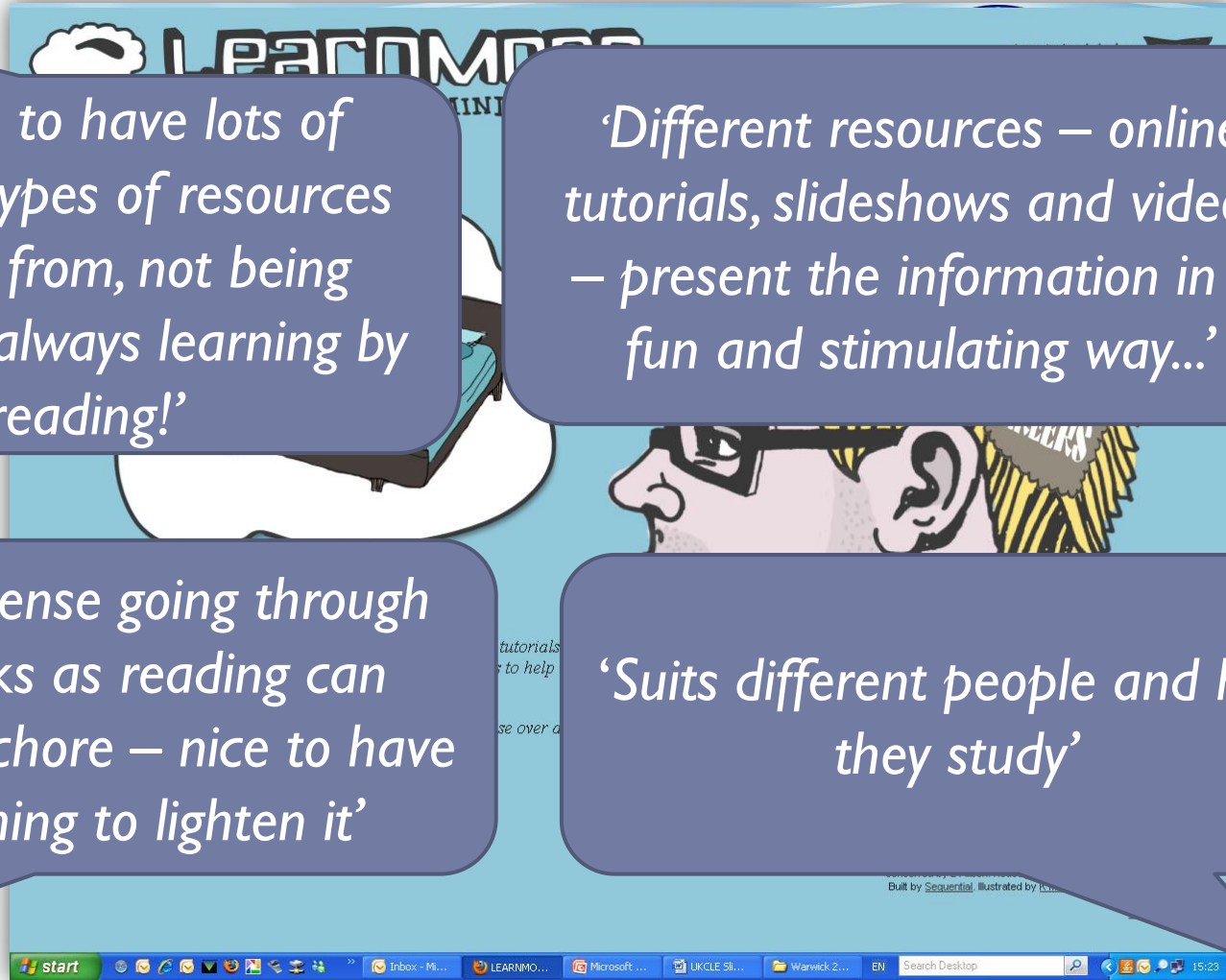
What do the students think about Learnmore as a learning resource?

'It helps to have lots of different types of resources to learn from, not being reliant on always learning by reading!'

'Different resources – online tutorials, slideshows and videos – present the information in a fun and stimulating way...'

'It gets intense going through textbooks as reading can become a chore – nice to have something to lighten it'

'Suits different people and how they study'





Align the legal skill with the right multimedia

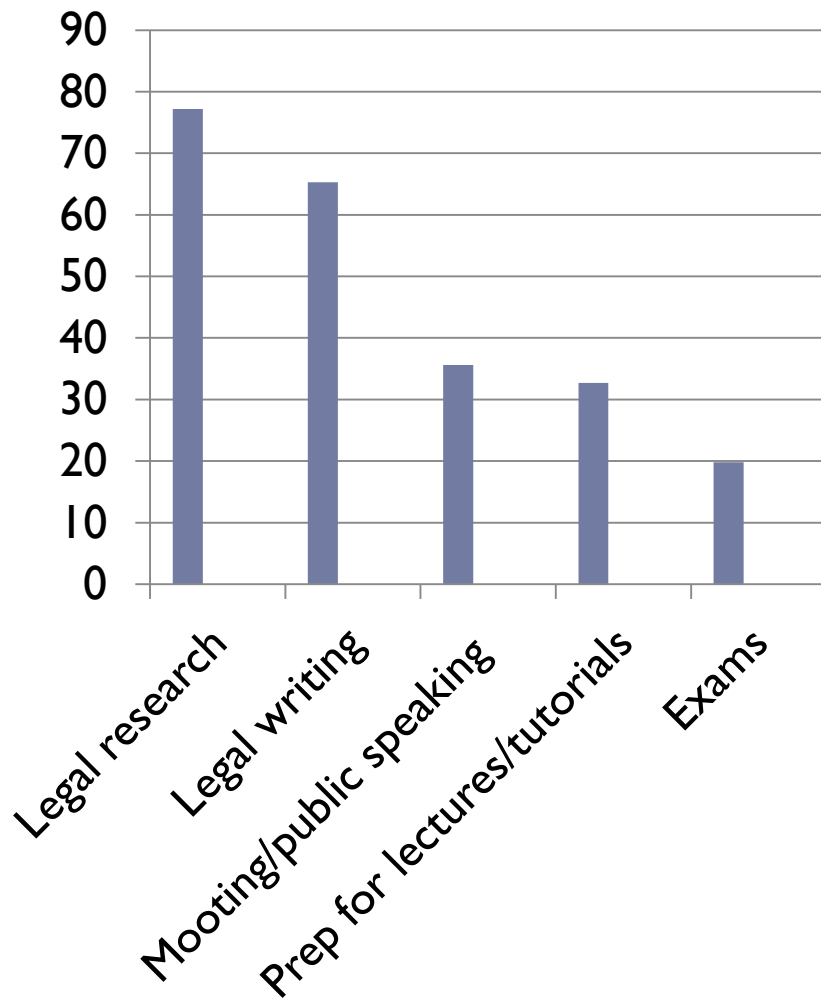
- ▶ Students need to become deep learners of legal skills:

- ▶ So...what they learn is meaningful and long-lasting
- ▶ And they can apply to all their substantive law

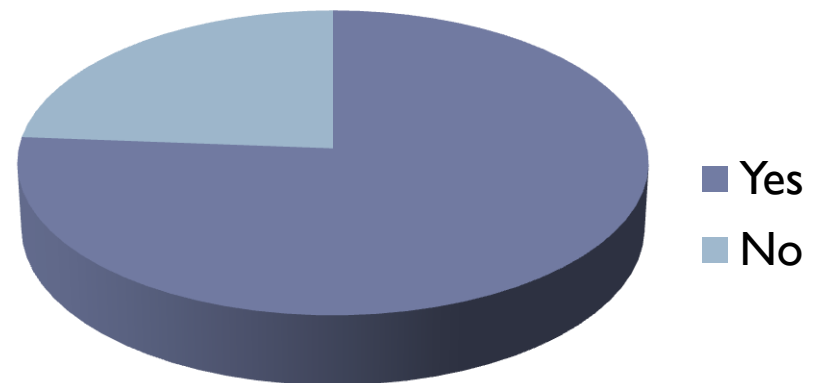
Important to
match the skill
with the resource



What do the students think?



**Do multimedia
resources enhance your
learning experience?**



Why does multimedia help?

- ▶ *I'm that type of learner/everyone learns by different methods – closes the learning gap*
 - ▶ *More interesting medium*
 - ▶ *Get the chance to watch it again*
 - ▶ *More fun to work so I concentrate more/get us students working with a greater passion*
 - ▶ *Makes it stick more in my mind/ideal for people who are more 'hands-on'*
 - ▶ *Able to visually see things*
 - ▶ *Variety of resources is refreshing, not dull and boring like a book*
 - ▶ *Breaks up lectures/visuals can be beneficial from the daily monotonous lecturers talking*
-



What methods did we chose...

For:

- ▶ Legal research
- ▶ Legal writing
- ▶ Public speaking/mooting
- ▶ Exam skills



Peer learning

- ▶ 71% of LLB students surveyed - value mix of advice from lecturers and other students
- ▶ “Law professors’ personal stories about ‘*how I learned it*’ –somewhat meaningless and antiquated. ..Novice peers, are perfect mirrors to help each other reflect and regulate law student learning (Herndon, 2010)



“Felt inspired by reading about what others in our position have achieved”



Better and targeted research



- ▶ Search engine holding all the answers?
- ▶ Surface learning
- ▶ Internet stealing away our capacity to concentrate
- ▶ Spence (2004) *'we're on the web all the time. We can find the information we need'*



Research on Learnmore



Promoting independent learning & adding value



- ▶ Improving academic confidence
- ▶ Supporting students to help themselves
- ▶ Too much at the beginning of their academic life?
- ▶ Sink or swim approach doesn't work
- ▶ Browne report



Questions?



Thanks for the images!

(via CC licence www.flickr.com)

- ▶ Slide 3 – ‘put your hand up if you're having a good time’ by vern http://www.flickr.com/photos/mic_n_2_sugars/564570276/
 - ▶ Slide 5 – ‘new headphones’ by Dave Makes <http://www.flickr.com/photos/buriednexttoyou/3286761072/>
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