



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



**Collaboration and creation of
digital pathways for academic
literacy:
Student-centred tech-enabled
learning at Western Sydney
University**

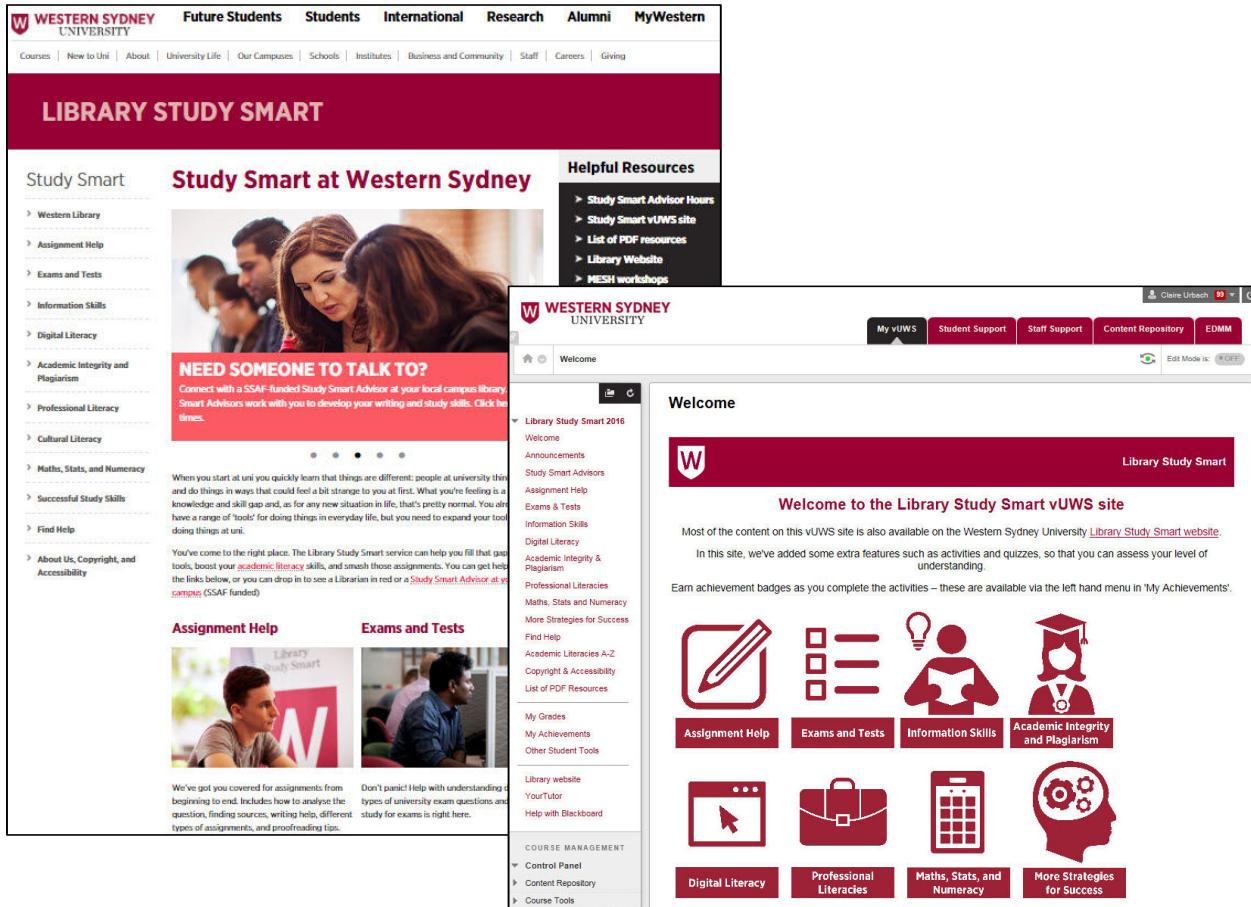
The story starts with students...



Enter the Library Academic Literacies Team



Online learning resources



The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of online learning platforms. On the left is the 'LIBRARY STUDY SMART' website, featuring a maroon header with the university logo and navigation links like 'Future Students', 'Students', 'International', etc. Below this is a dark red banner with the title 'Study Smart at Western Sydney'. A sidebar on the left lists various study skills categories. The main content area includes a photo of students studying, a red callout box for 'NEED SOMEONE TO TALK TO?', and sections for 'Assignment Help' and 'Exams and Tests'. On the right is a screenshot of the 'Welcome' page for the 'Library Study Smart vUWS site'. It features a similar header with the university logo and navigation links. The main content area includes a 'Welcome to the Library Study Smart vUWS site' message, a sidebar with various study skill categories, and a grid of icons representing different services like assignment help, exams and tests, information skills, academic integrity, digital literacy, professional literacies, maths/stats/numeracy, and more strategies for success.

- Students today face many new experiences and challenges (Nallaya & Kehrwald, 2013)
- Online platforms provide a non-threatening environment for learning, minimising loss of face (Nallaya & Kehrwald, 2013)
- Online learning can supplement face-to-face learning to increase retention rates (Adams Becker et al, 2017)

The story involves students

Focus group:

Mix of UG/PG

Male & Female

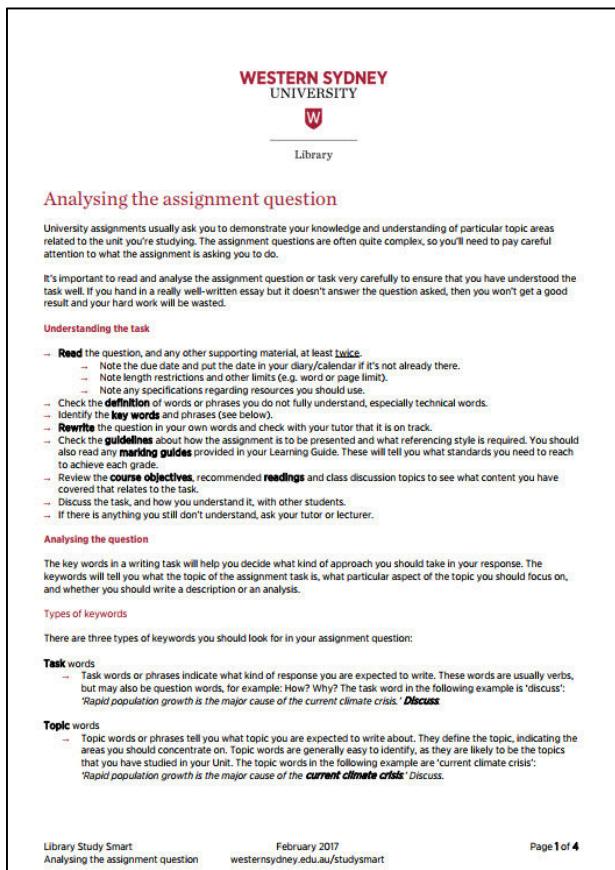
Different year levels & majors



Students wanted:

- Help to identify most relevant resources
- More experience with online platforms
- Control over their learning experience
- Option to dip in and out and come back for more later
- More from the Study Smart resources (which they liked)

Transformation of online learning resources



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Analysing the assignment question

University assignments usually ask you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of particular topic areas related to the unit you're studying. The assignment questions are often quite complex, so you'll need to pay careful attention to what the assignment is asking you to do.

It's important to read and analyse the assignment question or task very carefully to ensure that you have understood the task well. If you hand in a really well-written essay but it doesn't answer the question asked, then you won't get a good result and your hard work will be wasted.

Understanding the task

- Read the question, and any other supporting material, at least twice.
 - Note the due date and put the date in your diary/Calendar if it's not already there.
 - Note length restrictions and other limits (e.g. word or page limit).
 - Note any specifications regarding resources you should use.
- Check the **definition** of words or phrases you are not fully understand, especially technical words.
- Identify the **key words** and phrases (see below).
- Rewrite the question in your own words and check with your tutor that it is on track.
- Check the **guidelines** about how the assignment is to be presented and what referencing style is required. You should also read any **marking guides** provided in your Learning Guide. These will tell you what standards you need to reach to achieve each grade.
- Review the course **objectives**, recommended **readings** and class discussion topics to see what content you have covered that relates to the task.
- Discuss the task, and how you understand it, with other students.
- If there is anything you still don't understand, ask your tutor or lecturer.

Analysing the question

The key words in a writing task will help you decide what kind of approach you should take in your response. The keywords will tell you what the topic of the assignment task is, what particular aspect of the topic you should focus on, and whether you should write a description or an analysis.

Types of keywords

There are three types of keywords you should look for in your assignment question:

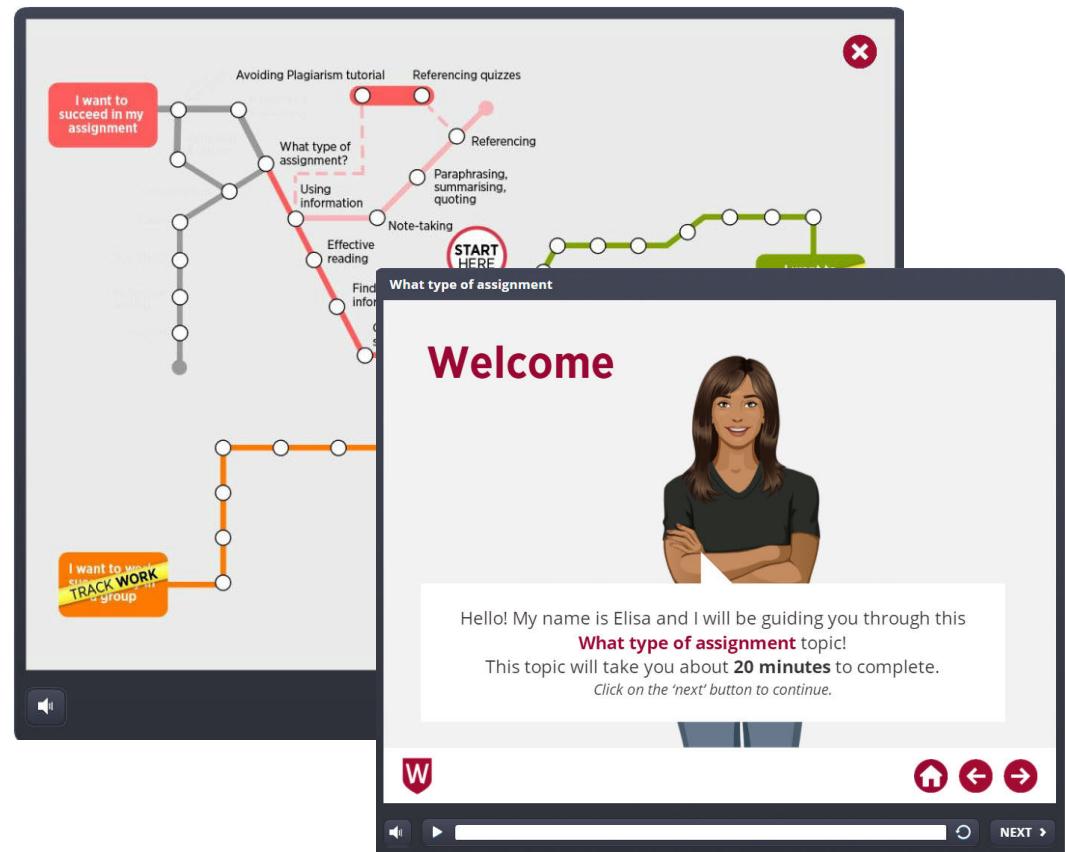
Task words

- Task words or phrases indicate what kind of response you are expected to write. These words are usually verbs, but may also be question words, for example: How? Why? The task word in the following example is 'discuss': *Rapid population growth is the major cause of the current climate crisis. Discuss.*

Topic words

- Topic words or phrases tell you what topic you are expected to write about. They define the topic, indicating the areas you should concentrate on. Topic words are generally easy to identify, as they are likely to be the topics that you have studied in your Unit. The topic words in the following example are 'current climate crisis': *Rapid population growth is the major cause of the current climate crisis. Discuss.*

Library Study Smart
Analysing the assignment question
February 2017
westernsydney.edu.au/studysmart
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I want to succeed in my assignment

Avoiding Plagiarism tutorial

Referencing quizzes

What type of assignment?

Using information

Paraphrasing, summarising, quoting

Referencing

Effective reading

Note-taking

Find information

START HERE

What type of assignment

Welcome

Hello! My name is Elisa and I will be guiding you through this **What type of assignment** topic!

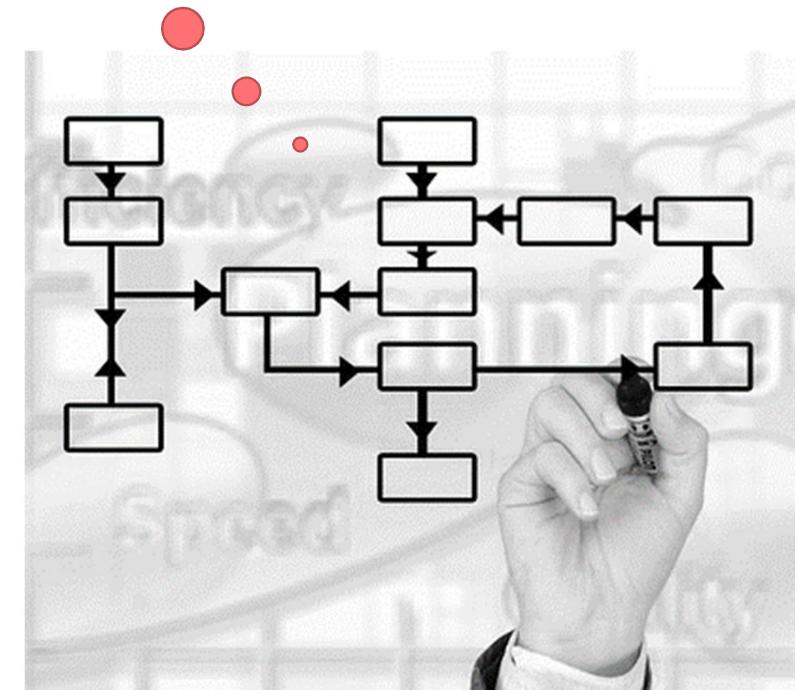
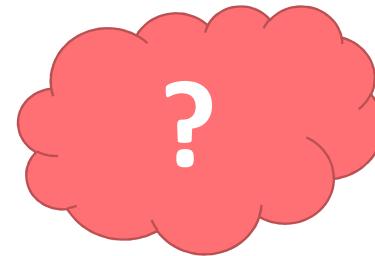
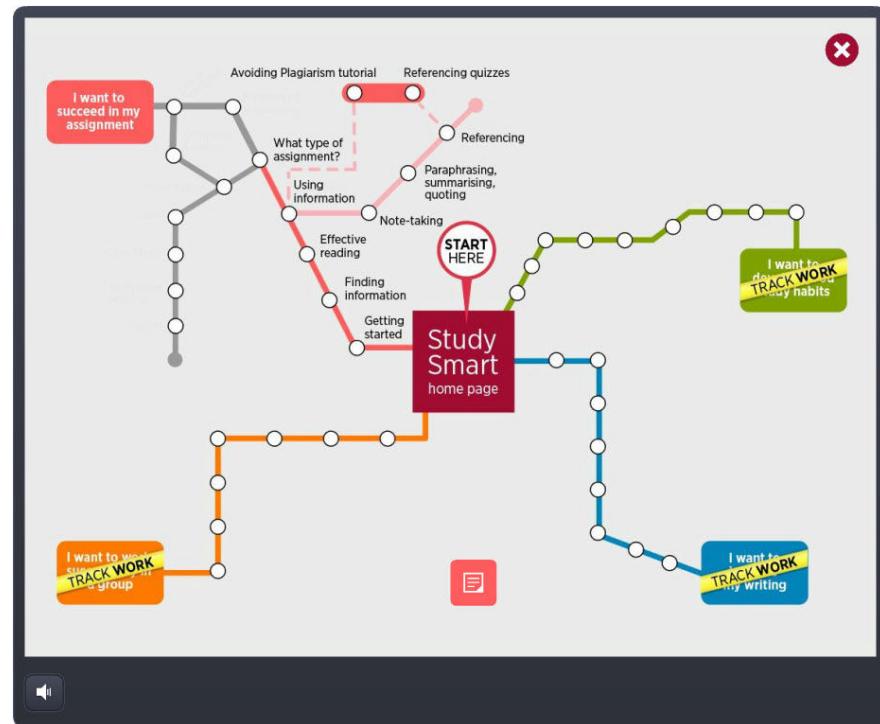
This topic will take you about **20 minutes** to complete.

Click on the 'next' button to continue.





Team capacity



Collaboration with other units

Library Academic Literacies



Library Digital Discovery Services



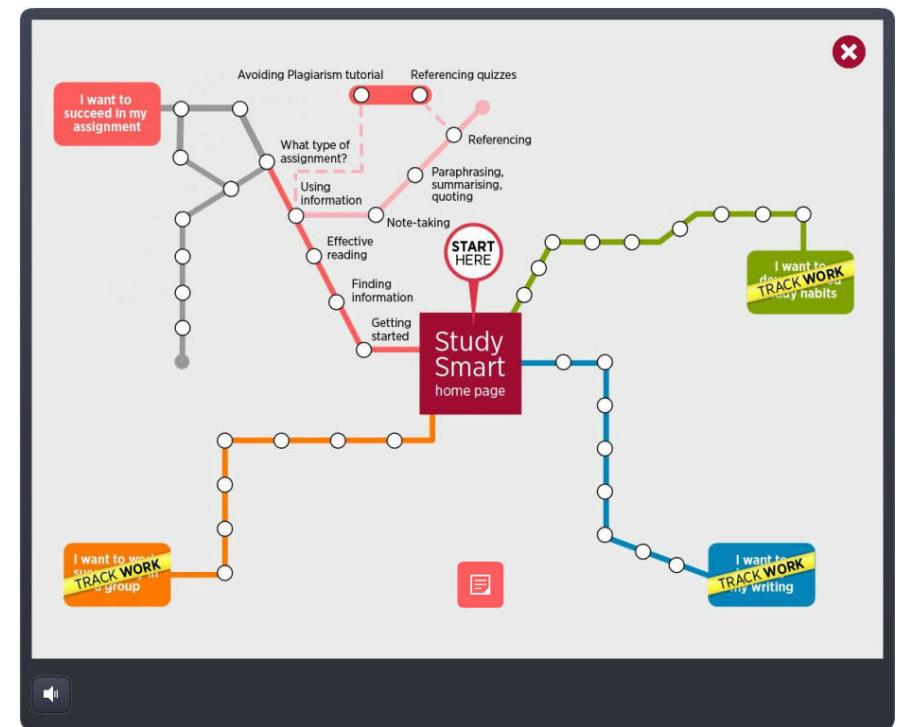
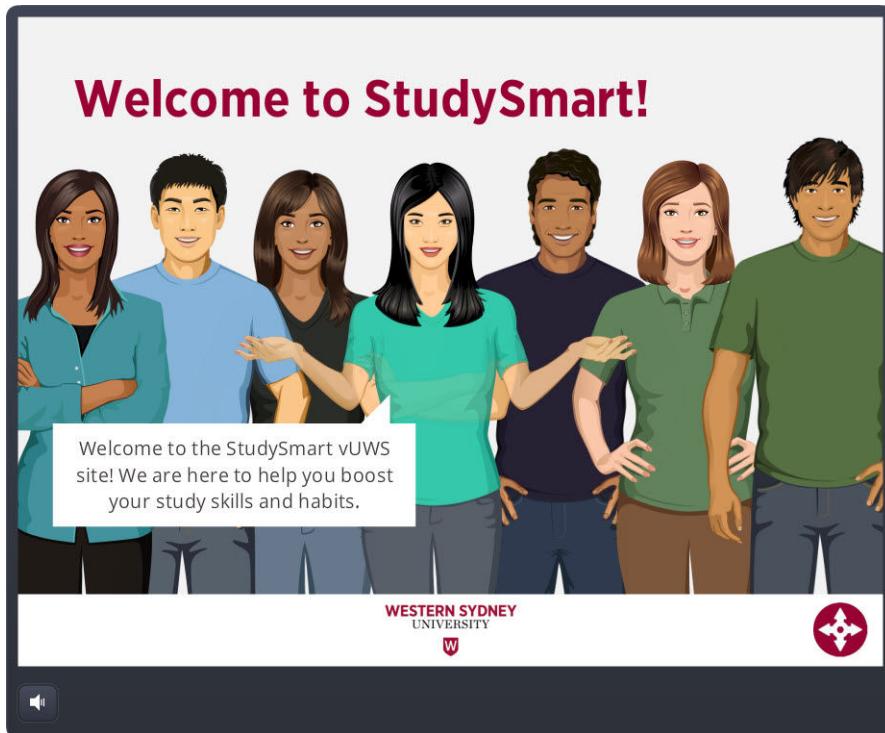
Central Blended Learning



Challenges & solutions

CHALLENGE	SOLUTION
Unfamiliar delivery mode and format	CBL team made a prototype to demonstrate the possibilities
Creating meaningful interactivity	Input from CBL team about best practice, past experience & Articulate 360 Online tutorials; research best practice
Finding examples of real student work	Scour collective sources; source via connections in Schools
Pitching content across disciplines	Audit content to ensure no discipline bias
Getting a consistent voice across the content due to multiple authors	Style guide & share work regularly for review according to checklist
Small number of designers for production work	Launch with fewer modules and add later
Accessibility for visually impaired	Voiceover audio to accompany text

Launch of new site

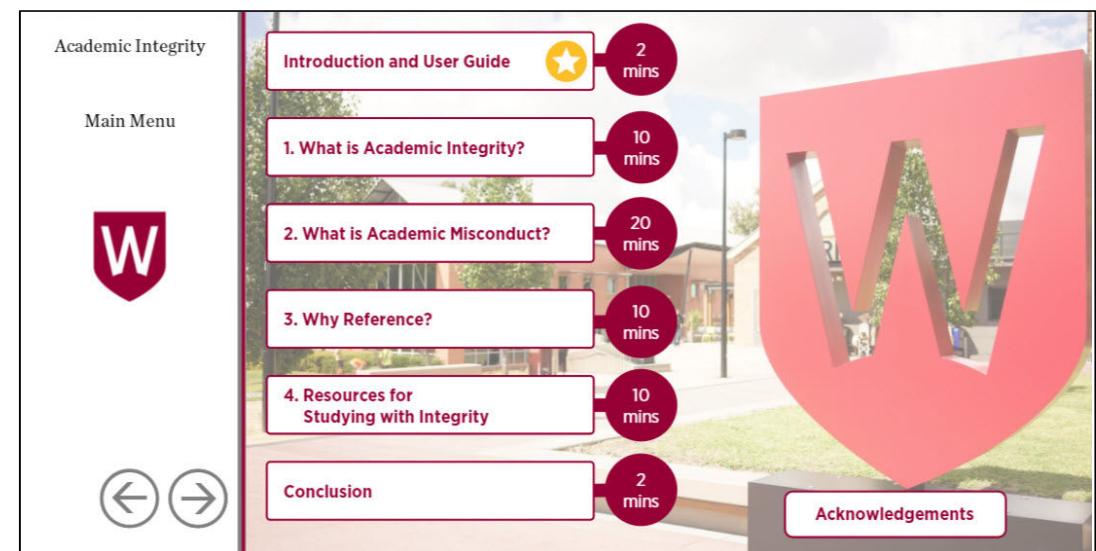


Spring access: 5329 students, 644.12 course hours

The end... not really

Things to improve on:

- User testing to ensure intuitive navigation
- Consult with academic staff
- Create more visibility around the project at launch
- Engage another designer



To be continued...

- Additional content – further expansion and revision
- Involve focus group students again for iterative review: feedback & user testing
- Connect with colleagues at other universities developing similar content

All contingent on continued funding for Academic Literacies support, of course.



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