

Case Study

**Community
College of
Qatar**

Languages Department



About Community College Qatar

A move to a 100% paperless course saw boosted outcomes and sustainability for the largest and most consistent Spanish program in the Arab Gulf Region.

The purpose of CCQ is to provide a diverse range of educational opportunities which include: 2-year academic programs that prepare students for transfer to four-year universities, 2 + 2 academic programs as well as 2-year career oriented programs to meet the country's critical workforce and labor needs.

CCQ is the fastest growing institution in Qatar with an enrolment of 4300 students at four different campuses.

Case Study Facts

Instructor:

Ali Abdullah

Course:

Spanish

Digital Product in Use:

Connect® combined with Blackboard® and Promethean ActivInspire®

Program in Use:

Connect Spanish

Number of Students:

Approximately 150 students with around roughly 26 per class

Themes:

- Student satisfaction
- Innovation in teaching
- Student engagement
- Digital resources quality
- Cost and time avoidance/efficiency

Ali's story



Ali's relationship with McGraw-Hill Education started in 2013 when he was using MHE content as the basis for his course. He started considering a move to digital on the back of logistics. Ali explains, "As our program kept expanding, we really had to focus on delivery. The

hardbacks we were using just weren't that efficient; students would be using a book for one term and then throwing them away. The used-book habit isn't something that has taken off here as yet, so we were really looking to address that."

Ali explained that a couple of factors then led him to move to a digital learning space. He attended a McGraw-Hill Education event where he saw how the print textbook he was using could be used digitally via ebook within Connect, and then put together a proposal for his Department Chair who presented it to the Dean for approval.

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“I created a proposal that highlighted the waste of a book – both financially and environmentally. Once they crunched the numbers it just made sense to go to ebook.”

Supported by academic learning consultants at McGraw-Hill Education and his own thirst for technology during implementation, Ali talked us through initial impressions of Connect.

“On the student side, I initially noticed that their book being in a cloud felt very new to them, but in the same breath the thing they liked was that they had everything. Everything was one solid unit! And this started pushing the program into a disciplined direction. You could instantly see a change in the students. They were more focused. They knew what was expected of them; student activities were assigned – you could see the cylinders really taking off.”

“The quizzes are written to match what’s being taught and there is so much material it allows you to tailor each one to what’s going on in class. If you’re focusing on speaking, there’s listening quizzes, for example,” Ali explained. He also highlighted the fact that Connect can ensure that students don’t get the same questions for quizzes. “So even though students may sit next to each other, they’ll each have difference questions, and this is really beneficial

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And how did Ali himself find the move from print to digital? To start with, he said, it was a challenge bridging the gap from using a print book to using a book “in a cloud.”

He said it took some time, and it took some effort ironing out some challenges. He highlighted that dishonesty was an issue he faced in 2017, with passwords being granted to outside tutors who were able to complete assignments. Ali explained how he adjusted elements of his course to counter this. “Firstly, we restricted the password,” he said, “and then we restricted the use of mobile phones.” This was effective in minimizing the problem.

Now, having smoothed over the challenges, Ali is delighted with the progression of his course. He has brought in new elements to make his teaching totally seamless, and hugely efficient. Combining Blackboard, Promethean ActivInspire and Connect, he now has a course that he is delighted with.

Explaining the benefits of the combination of these three solutions in one course, Ali explained, “Once I combined them there was no stopping me as my courses just really started to flow. I was saving so much time I was on cloud 9! I could make my lessons in advance and everything really took off.”

He also explains how much he students enjoy the LearnSmart component of Connect. “This is their favourite part and they had great feedback on it! They said it was interesting, engaging, beneficial and useful.”

“Typically,” Ali said, “vocabulary is left out in today’s fast-paced teaching space, but because LearnSmart has vocabulary sections I was assigning this so my students were actively learning it. I could also set the course up so there were vocabulary sections, then grammar, and then homework. In my eyes this is the perfect blend.”

And what impact has the course had on grades? Ali commented, “the grades are much higher than they’ve been in the past. And this is based on the same work as students in the past were doing.”

Period	Mean Mark Average	Highest Mark Average
Spring 2017	44.9%	77%
Spring 2018	63.36%	94.55%

Ali explained how he has set his course up for assessment. “Before the course was 50% non-Connect and 50% Connect. Now, however, the course is 20% Attendance and 80% Connect related materials. This was made possible with the addition of LearnSmart Lab and Blackboard Journals based on the Producción Personal from Connect. In addition to this, the Final Exam is also Connect based, which in the future will most likely be a blend of digital and paper because of the lack of consistent access to the computer labs.”

Ruminating on the transformation his teaching and course has gone through, Ali commented, “The use of digital materials in the Spanish courses at the Community College of Qatar has created a learning environment that is conducive to learners building their confidence thus allowing them to develop into the successful student they want to become. I highly recommend digital materials to any instructor who has the resources and desire to engage students in innovative ways.”