



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BIRMINGHAM

Case Study

University of Birmingham Business School

Finance Department



About the University of Birmingham Business School

Adaptive learning solution from McGraw-Hill Education engages students and improves grades

Birmingham Business School creates business degree courses which, academically and personally, prepare students for the working world. It offers a number of exciting and forward-thinking undergraduate degree programmes across its departments.

Case Study Facts

Instructor:

Dr Oksana Pryshchepa

Number of Students:

267

Course:

Module leader for Corporate Financial Management on MSc in Financial Management
Class teacher for Introduction to Finance on BSc in Accounting and Finance

Credit Hours:

20

Digital Product in Use:

Connect® and LearnSmart®

Case Study Terms:

2015/2016 (without Connect) and Autumn 2016/Spring 2017

The Challenge

The challenges for Oksana have been twofold. The first challenge she has faced are large class numbers. Her cohort for this course is just under 270 students. The second challenge is the heterogeneity of the students beginning their courses with her. Some are already acquainted with the basics of Finance, whereas others will be coming to the subject completely new and will naturally need more guidance and more of an introduction to the subject. Oksana estimates that half of her yearly group will be familiar with the topics covered but the other half will be completely new, so ensuring everyone is engaged can be a challenge.

The Solution

Oksana was already using McGraw-Hill Education textbooks, and in partnership with one of MHE's Learning Consultants moved to Connect. Connect is a digital learning environment that saved students and instructors time whilst improving performance through adapting learning pathways for each student based on their interactions with it. Connect supports students by helping them to test their understanding as they go, building confidence and knowledge every step of the way. Sitting within Connect is LearnSmart – an interactive study tool that adaptively assesses students' skill and knowledge levels to track which topics students have mastered and which require further instruction and practice. Based upon student progress, it then adjusts the learning content based on their knowledge strengths and weaknesses, as well as their confidence level around that knowledge.

Oksana was excited about using Connect because she felt it would enable the students with their differing understanding of Finance to find their own pace. "In addition to that I felt it would make my teaching more efficient and effective."

"For each chapter I created additional assignments and mid-term tests which has had several benefits: it increases my students' knowledge and has made my teaching more effective because if students have made a mistake using Connect, these mistakes are picked up straight away with a really thorough explanation so they understand where they went wrong."

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"Connect has also really helped because there's a lot of practice required in this subject around numerical exercises and Connect is the perfect tool for that. Students typically want to practise a lot which is wonderful, but it can be quite time-consuming. Connect is great because it offers a platform for practice with answers that are self-qualifying. Students are happy as they get more practice and I'm happy because I get fewer emails."

The Results

"The initial data suggest that the overall module mark of students who frequently used Connect was well above the average (72 compared to the average mark for all students of 62)."

"I'm really pleased with how Connect has worked this year. It was implemented with ease, and I was happy that McGraw-Hill Education presented the advantages of using it during the first session. And I'm even more excited about the fact that the university will be funding the purchase from September 2018, which means it will be compulsory for all students taking the course."

"Connect means my students are more likely to get an A than a B."

"Connect proved to be exceptionally useful when dealing with large student groups by making teaching more personalised and learning more individual."

"Connect means my students are more likely to get an A than a B."