Rowan College

Sociology Case Study

The Study

Dr. Brandon Chapman's goals for the study were for students to improve their performances on chapter quizzes and final exams and have an efficient way to deliver digital learning resources with minimal logistical steps. "I wanted students to enjoy the textbook and assignments and perceive that they are learning valuable and practical information from them," remarked Chapman.

Chapman implemented a controlled comparison between two asynchronous Principles of Sociology sections during the Spring 2022 semester. Chapman had the same assignments in each section but deployed SmartBook® assignments (related to each of the chapters read for the course) to the treatment section. The control section was not assigned any SmartBook assignments.



Study Specifics

School Name:
Rowan College at Burlington County

Course Name:
Principles of Sociology (intro-level course)

Program:
McGraw Hill Connect® Sociology with *Experience Sociology*, by David Croteau and William Hoynes

LMS Integration:
Blackboard

Educator:
Brandon M. Chapman, PhD

Implementation

Breakdown of Course Grade

- **SmartBook Readings**
  (140 [14 × 10 points each], 20%)
- **Power of Process**
  (75 [5 × 15 points each], 10%)
- **In Their Shoes**
  (75 [5 × 15 points each], 10%)
- **Discussion Questions**
  (140 [14 × 10 points each], 20%)
- **Chapter Quizzes**
  (140 [14 × 10 points each], 20%)
- **Film Review #1** (25, 3%)
- **Film Review #2** (25, 3%)
- **Final Exam** (100, 14%)
- **Total** (720, 100%)

On average, Chapman assigns three assignments per week. He assigns one SmartBook assignment, due at the start of the week associated with the particular topic or chapter for the week. Chapman also assigns a chapter quiz (a two-attempt pull of 15 questions from a pool of the question bank for that chapter) and a set of discussion question responses based on either the chapter reading or an additional reading beyond the textbook, and both of these assignments are due at the end of the week.

With SmartBook, Chapman assigns approximately 45 minutes of what he finds to be the most important content from each chapter covered. He often covers about 14 chapters of *Experience Sociology* per semester. Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) has a 15-week semester in fall and spring with condensed semesters (10 and 7 weeks) in summer. "I particularly find the coverage of historical theorists and theories, primary overarching concepts of the discipline (e.g., sociological imagination, socialization, power, deviance) thoroughly and accurately explained with relevant clear and vivid examples provided," stated Chapman.

LMS Integration

Chapman has consistently integrated the Connect assignments and resources into the Blackboard course sites for all his classes. "I deploy all assignments from Connect to Blackboard, and this has allowed students to navigate to any specific assignment with ease from Blackboard," said Chapman.

Inclusive Access

Inclusive Access provides students the opportunity to have the critical learning resources necessary to succeed and has been implemented institution-wide at RCBC over the last few years. "Students now enjoy instant access to course resources upon registration on the Connect site to their respective course(s), and faculty don't have to worry about student inquiries regarding access codes, finding textbooks and materials, or obtaining access to materials late," explained Chapman.

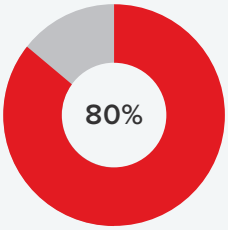
Results

Students in the treatment section had

(with SmartBook assignments)

1-5%

higher scores



in over 80 percent of chapter quizzes than in the control section.

With the reporting features in Connect and SmartBook, Chapman can focus on specific topics or concepts based on learning objectives the students are not retaining or answering accurately to increase student learning and performance. "I like to see the item analysis and missed questions reports to focus on items that need improvement across a course section. This allows me to go over these in future class sessions to improve student performance, learning, and retention," explained Chapman.

Chapman can now spend more time teaching than grading with Connect and SmartBook. "I have a variety of assignment types that I grade, and Connect has allowed me to integrate multiple forms of high-quality, automatically graded content to enable me to focus on grading and giving feedback on non-textbook assignments," explained Chapman.

Student evaluations, specifically of textbook materials, have improved, and students have reported a more efficient process of acquiring and using textbook materials within the first week of courses.



Conclusion

Results showed an increase in chapter quiz performance for the section-assigned SmartBook, and Chapman can customize his lectures by using reports in Connect and SmartBook. The Inclusive Access program has enabled students to quickly and easily access their course resources at the start of the semester. Furthermore, Chapman has achieved the most proactive and positive student evaluation comments regarding textbook use in his career since using McGraw Hill textbooks. "I'm looking forward to continuing to utilize McGraw Hill resources in all future sections of my Principles of Sociology courses," concluded Chapman.

Setting

Rowan College at Burlington County (RCBC) is a public community college in Burlington County, New Jersey. In 2016, RCBC became the first community college in New Jersey authorized to offer junior-year courses in its "3+1" option with Rowan University. RCBC was recognized as number one in New Jersey among two-year institutions for online studies. Forty-four percent of students are enrolled in distance education, and 11 programs are offered online.

Course Description

This course focuses on the science and theory that sociologists use to understand the social world. It examines the social construction of reality, the place of institutions in modern society, and the forces that shape human social interaction.

Instructor Bio

Dr. Brandon M. Chapman is a cultural anthropologist specializing in local and traditional knowledge, political and economic ethnography, political values, and cognitive anthropology. He has done fieldwork in Russia, parts of the CIS and Eurasia, Arctic and Subarctic Alaska, Trindad and Tobago, Peru, and Ecuador and has been published in several journals and popular science magazines, including *The Social Science Journal* and *Cultural Survival Quarterly.* Chapman has also authored several monographs on the history of ranching in the western U.S. and Canada during the 19th and 20th centuries.

"I'm department chair of Anthropology and Sociology at RCBC and have authority in choosing publishers' materials for all courses in these disciplines. I've decided to use McGraw Hill resources for all of these courses."

Dr. Brandon M. Chapman



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