Success Story

Ozarks Technical College



Connect, SmartBook 2.0, and High-Quality Homework Assignments

Challenge

Dr. Tim Rogers wanted to spend more time teaching and less time creating assignments and grading.

Solution

McGraw Hill Connect for Nickels, Understanding Business

Result

Rogers has seen a 10% increase in exam scores and has more time to create engaging lectures and office time for students.



Dr. Tim Rogers

Professor of Business

Ozarks Technical College

Springfield, Missouri

The Challenge

Professor Seeks Program with Dynamic High-Quality Assignments

Rogers desired an easy-to-use homework management system with valuable dynamic assignments, including high-quality videos and assignments lined up with the textbook content. "I did not want to use pure static assignments, such as practice quizzes, but rather, I desired better quality videos and assignments that related directly to the chapters and content in the text," explains Rogers. Rogers also wanted adaptive assignments to include the chapter reading due before the lecture. "The practice of just hoping students would read the text before class was the struggle I was hoping to overcome," says Rogers.

The Solution

Connect and SmartBook 2.0 Provide a Variety of Quality Homework Assignments and Increase Teaching Time for Instructor

With Connect each student has a personalized digital learning experience designed to help them optimize study time and ramp up their grade potential.

Breakdown of Course Grade

- SmartBook 2.0 - 20%
- Connect Homework – 35%
- Exams – 45%

Rogers requires a 30–45-minute SmartBook 2.0 module for each chapter before the lecture. After lecture, Rogers assigns Connect homework including Application-Based Activities, the Manager's Hot Seat Videos, iSeeit! Videos and Video Cases.

Application-Based Activities are a practical way of integrating the chapter content in a real-world scenario. Students get to make decisions, both right and wrong, in the simulation and apply the information they have learned. The Application-Based Activities are assignable for points and auto-graded, which assures Rogers that the students make them a priority, and they receive instant feedback. **"It would be nearly impossible for me to manually grade all of these different types of assignments, and, in the past, I would shy away from having too many assignments for my students, because I was swamped with grading and other associated tasks,"** says Rogers.

> **"Since my exams are now 45% of my overall score, Connect homework makes up 55%, so students have a fighting chance to pass the class and do well if they try. They may not be the best test takers, but if they complete the homework, their scores will be solid before taking the exam. Connect has helped students pass the class and stay in the course compared to only having exams and a few homework assignments. Good quality homework assignments can bolster student performance."**

Rogers assigns the **Manager's Hot Seat Videos** to get the entire group of students singularly focused on a particular scenario that can then be discussed and analyzed from a common viewpoint. "When the students watch these semi-real-life scenarios play out on the screen, they can speak to the variety of situations that could have improved or hindered the outcome – the Manager's Hot Seat Videos make excellent discussion board topics for online classes, and they make for excellent in-class discussions," says Rogers.

Rogers assigns the **Video Cases** to highlight how real companies apply business principles that are being covered in class. **"When I assign a video case from a specific chapter, I know that the information that is being presented in the video is directly in line with the information in the text,"** says Rogers.

SmartBook 2.0 modules are preparatory, and the Connect homework assignments act as additional instruction to help students understand and retain the material in various ways, "which is an excellent complement to my lectures and in-class discussions," says Rogers. Rogers uses Connect in conjunction with the school's learning management system, Canvas. "It is seamless and works fantastic for instructors and students, and pairing the two takes only minutes, saves a lot of time, and there is less confusion each semester," says Rogers.

The Results

Connect, SmartBook 2.0, and High-Quality Homework Assignments Reduce Grading Time for the Instructor and Improves Student Exam Scores and Retention Rates

> **"You do not have to change the way you teach! Connect can help you ADD to your course through better quality, meaningful homework assignments that will benefit your students."**

Connect frees up time for Rogers, which he then uses to prepare different lectures and topics and offer more office time for students. **"Connect seems to run itself, and that frees up time for me to find current, relevant topics to use in my lectures to make them more interesting and engaging. I rest assured that the homework assignments I am giving are good quality, and they relate directly to the materials,"** says Rogers. Students are also more engaged in the classroom. When Rogers refers to Connect assignments, such as the Manager's Hot Seat Video scenarios or the Activity-Based Application simulations, while discussing a topic, students can identify with the common information in a way that did not happen before using Connect.

With grading time decreased significantly, Rogers can now spend time identifying struggling students or difficult topics with Performance Tracking and can address these issues before the students take the exam or fail the class. "I focus on the At-Risk report to get a glance at those who might need attention, and I utilize the Most Frequently Missed Question and Challenging Objective reports so I can identify the top 3-5 topics students find confusing," says Rogers. These reports allow Rogers to see exactly what students are struggling with before he walks into class to lecture. "Since I make SmartBook a prep assignment, I check these reports before I head off to class so I know what I should stress and emphasize as we cover the chapter. It is like being able to "change the future," says Rogers.

Rogers has seen a 10% increase in exam scores in his face-to-face sections since making SmartBook a required prep assignment. "Students are more prepared before they come to class. Let's be honest—most students do not read the book if there is no consequence. SmartBook forces them to interact with the material in a way they would not normally do, making them prepared for class," says Rogers.

Retention rates have improved as well. Fewer students drop the class after mid-term. "There are always students who just will not do the assignments, but once the students have a track record of homework scores, they do not seem to drop the class after the mid-term point," explains Rogers. The students who put in the effort to complete the homework assignments during the first half of the term are passing the class and improving retention rates.

> **The push for Open Educational Resources (OER) has been overwhelming the past few years, but administrators really do not understand that OER is not free, a collaborative team does not properly vet it, and the hodgepodge resources are inferior in nearly every way. The OER 'trend' is working against the upward trajectory of education.**
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> Dr. Tim Rogers