Success Story

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill





Courtney Knoll
Clinical Professor of Accounting, Associate Dean of the Master of Accounting Program, and Executive Director of the UNC Tax Center

"My students love working practice problems in Connect, enabling them to identify areas of confusion and seek help, leading to more focused office hour discussions and enhanced learning through additional algorithmic practice."

Challenge

Professor Courtney Knoll faced several challenges in the Federal Income Tax course. Professor Knoll wanted to encourage more active reading and engagement with the course materials, provide more opportunities for practice and feedback, and track student progress effectively. Another challenge was the cost of traditional textbooks, especially for a constantly updated subject like Tax Law.

Solution

McGraw Hill Connect® Accounting with Principles of Taxation for Business and Investment Planning 2023

Result

With Connect Accounting, student engagement with practice problems increased, student feedback on Connect and SmartBook® was overwhelmingly positive, and students found the cost to be reasonable compared to traditional textbooks.

The Challenge

Professor Seeks Program to Engage Students and Track Students' Progress Effectively

In search of a solution, Professor Knoll adopted Connect for her Tax courses and found it to be a game-changer in achieving her goals. Her primary selection criteria for adopting Connect were its cost-effectiveness as a textbook option, and its enhanced functionality for creating practice and graded problem sets from various sources, including algorithmic end-of-chapter questions. Integrating Connect with the school's Learning Management System (LMS) streamlined the assignment process, improving convenience, and effectiveness.

The Solution

McGraw Hill Connect® Accounting Provides Practice and Graded Problem Sets with Real-Time Feedback

With Connect's implementation, Professor Knoll successfully achieved her three main goals. First, the ability to create practice and graded problem sets allowed students to actively engage with the textbook content, and the SmartBook® modules were valuable in identifying students' areas of struggle before exams. Second, Connect's practice assignments provided students with more opportunities for practice and real-time feedback. This allowed Professor Knoll to pinpoint specific topics where students struggled, enabling her to tailor the in-class focus accordingly. Finally, Connect significantly reduced the financial burden on students, providing a cost-effective alternative to hard copy textbooks, particularly in a subject with frequent edition updates like Tax Law.

The Results

Student feedback on Connect and SmartBook was overwhelmingly positive. Students appreciated the self-paced practice problems and found the cost reasonable compared to traditional textbooks. Students' engagement with practice problems increased, leading to more focused interactions during office hours and email consultations. Professor Knoll observed that students spending more time in SmartBook correlated with better performance in the course.

Overall, Connect transformed tax education in Professor Knoll's course, improving student engagement, providing cost-effective solutions, and offering valuable practice and feedback opportunities. Its integration with the LMS simplified the process, for both the instructor and students, enhancing the overall learning experience in the course.

> **"Connect is easy to use and the customer support is exceptional, so dive in and play with it. Ask for help, and you'll get it. My McGraw Hill representatives have been fantastic resources."**
>
> **— Karla Swanson**

Implementation

The following determines the course grade:

- **Connect homework 10%**
- **Mini-quizzes 10%**
- **Breakout submissions 10%**
- **Tax Return project 15%**
- **Exams 55%**

Professor Knoll assigned an average of two Connect assignments per week, usually covering one chapter each. Her favorite feature is the ability to use algorithmic questions for practice, allowing students to work with different variations of the same problems. "I also increasingly use the Data Analytics exercises during live sessions to deepen students' understanding of the relevant tax concepts/issues, but also to expose students to tax-based analytics use cases and allow them to get some hands-on practice interpreting and manipulating dashboards," says Professor Knoll. The integration of Connect with the school's LMS (Canvas) proved beneficial in several ways. The single sign-on capability made it easy for students to access their Connect course, while the auto-sync feature helped streamline grade synchronization.