University of Cincinnati Success Story



Study Specifics

School Name
University of Cincinnati

Educator
Ric Sweeney

Course Name
Introduction to Marketing

Program
McGraw Hill Connect®
Master: Marketing

LMS
Canvas

Grade Averages Increase with Connect Master and Inclusive Access

Educational Challenges

Professor Ric Sweeney teaches the Introduction to Marketing course, which enrolls over 2,000 students annually. Before implementing Connect, Professor Sweeney faced challenges ensuring all students had timely access to course materials and managing various assignments from different sources. To address the challenges, Professor Sweeney adopted the Inclusive Access model with McGraw Hill's digital-first courseware Connect Master: Marketing.

> **Connect Master provides me with the flexibility I need to create videos, case studies, and current news assignments for my students, with the comfort of having everything in one convenient, easy-to-navigate platform."**

> **I can create new assignments at the flick of a switch—often on an immediate basis right in the classroom; this type of flexibility gives me the comfort of being able to adapt quickly as student learning needs change and evolve."**

Implementation

Course Grade Breakdown:
Connect Adaptive Learning 24%
Connect Assignments 10%
Tests 60%
Other 6%

Interactive Reader and Adaptive Learning Assignments

Professor Sweeney assigns, on average, five assignments per week. An average assignment before class is the Interactive Reader and completing the Adaptive Learning for the module. **Adaptive Learning Assignments** give each student a personalized path to learning, allowing them to gauge their knowledge level before class. This helps the student pay greater attention in class and study weaker areas more in preparation for tests and other assessments. Assigning the Interactive Reader and Adaptive Learning before the lecture allows Professor Sweeney to review reporting for that chapter and adjust his lecture/discussion for each class to focus on those concepts students did not master, rather than merely giving lectures that cover material students already know.

Practical Assessments

Within the class, Professor Sweeney incorporates videos and case studies to build on their foundational knowledge and then provides additional assignments to reinforce that knowledge.

> "Connect has a variety of assignments that help support student learning, from matching and ranking exercises to video case studies to quizzes and exams; this gives me the freedom to create and adjust assignments to adapt to changes or unique situations throughout the semester," says Sweeney.

Practical assessments, such as Application-Based Activities (ABAs), case studies, writing assignments, video cases, and interactive activities, allow students to progress from understanding basic concepts to using their knowledge to analyze realistic scenarios and solve problems. **"This combination of knowledge retention and critical thinking takes student learning to a higher, more impactful level,"** says Sweeney. Depending on the class schedule, Professor Sweeney assigns one to two modules. In-class assignments include iSeeIt! videos, matching/ranking exercises, role-playing ABAs, and Mini Simulation ABAs which allow for group discussion that can be monitored.



The iSeeIt! videos explain a concept using a scenario that students can relate to, and the related questions allow students to assess their increased levels of understanding. **"The iSeeIt! videos are a great aid to reinforce student learning,"** says Sweeney.

The role-playing ABAs place students in a decision-making role in scenarios related to various marketing topics, helping them understand how decisions can impact a business. The Mini Simulation ABAs focus on specific areas of marketing, allowing students to consider multiple options and providing immediate feedback on how their decisions affect the outcomes within the business. The Practice Marketing full business simulation gives students complete control over their business, allowing them to consider various options and make decisions in a competitive environment. **"Students appreciate the opportunity to put their textbook learnings and lectures to the test in situations that reflect real business problems. The ABAs provide a forum for sharing opinions, insights, and ideas to develop critical thinking skills,"** says Sweeney.

The autograding of these ABAs gives students immediate feedback to help them understand the result of their critical thinking and decision-making. **"Beyond the grading aspect, these ABAs open up opportunities for students to have small and large group discussions to share insights, ideas, and opinions on various scenarios and topics,"** says Sweeney.

Video Cases take the classroom experience to a new level, using the foundation of the written text and the in-person lecture and combining those with a visual example that adds life and relevancy to the classroom experience. This creates a forum for large-group and small-group discussions where students can share opinions, insights, and relevant experiences. **"I use a mix of role-play ABAs, Mini Simulation ABAs, and Practice Marketing in my honors sections, based on how the class is structured and their level of engagement, and I use the role-play ABAs and Mini Simulation ABAs in my large sections,"** says Sweeney.

> **My students really need a lot of structure to succeed in facing the demands of college courses. Connect gives me many flexible options to add and organize assignments, assessments, mini simulations, and other activities to adapt to the needs of changing student course dynamics."**

Learning Management System (LMS)

The ease of integration with Canvas makes grading seamless and efficient, with no issues or concerns related to missing or incorrect grades. Students can see grades updated regularly and immediately, and Professor Sweeney has the peace of mind that reporting is accurate and up to date.

Reporting

Connect reporting allows Professor Sweeney to prepare for class efficiently by having access to reporting prior to class.

> "Since I require that students complete the Interactive Reader and Adaptive Learning before class, I can pull reports showing which concepts students mastered and which ones were more challenging," says Sweeney.

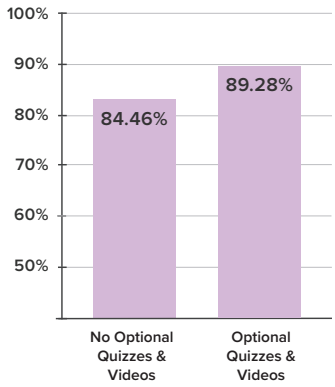
This allows Professor Sweeney to focus on the challenging aspects of each chapter and allows more time for discussion and activities rather than lecturing. Professor Sweeney found the Student Performance reports most helpful in coaching individual students and identifying their approach to completing assignments. He could review their progress and guide them to manage their study time effectively.



Results

In preparing for tests, Professor Sweeney encourages students to go beyond the traditional "study your notes and re-read the chapters" approach. In addition to allowing students to re-read chapter material, Connect Master: Marketing provides optional online quizzes and videos with questions to reinforce learning and SmartBook® recharge assignments. In two sections of Introduction to Marketing, totaling 600+ students, those who took advantage of the optional quizzes and videos **raised their score from a class average of 84.46% to 89.28%.**

Class Average Raised



Connect's implementation significantly improved Professor Sweeney's teaching experience. He no longer had to worry about students lacking access to course materials. Additionally, the integration with Canvas made grading seamless, allowing more time for engaging with students, and delivering high-quality lectures. **With Inclusive Access, students gained immediate access to course materials, eliminating lag time for signing up or registering.** This enabled the students to start the learning process earlier, leading to increased comfort and confidence in their learning experience.

Connect positively impacted student engagement, as completing assignments earlier allowed students to reinforce their learning and better prepare for class discussions. **The immediate feedback from quizzes and videos motivated students to structure their study time more efficiently.**

Conclusion

Adopting Connect and Inclusive Access has positively impacted Professor Sweeney's teaching efficiency and student engagement in the Introduction to Marketing course at the University of Cincinnati. Modules within Connect allow for flexibility of assigning various readings, adaptive learnings, quizzes, case studies, and other activities in one singular point of access. This provides a structured approach to student learning, giving students a singular location to access the materials related to the course. With streamlined access to course materials, targeted assignments, and real-time reporting, the instructor and students experienced enhanced learning outcomes.

> **Before Connect, I had no way of knowing if students read their text. Now, with Connect, I can see a student's progress and encourage them to complete assignments earlier rather than at the last minute. When students realize that completing assignments early helps them to increase their overall learning, they become more motivated to structure their homework and study time more efficiently."**

Course Description

Introduction to Marketing is a 3-credit-hour principles course covering fundamental principles of marketing for undergraduate students. Topics include strategic marketing planning, consumer behavior, product development, pricing, distribution, and promotion. The principles learned in this course can ultimately be applied to a multitude of industries and settings and will provide students with the fundamental vocabulary and conceptual skills necessary for continuing the study of business and marketing in advanced courses. The main objective of this course is to help students achieve basic "marketing literacy."

Setting

Since 1906, the nationally ranked Carl H. Lindner College of Business has placed students at the forefront of the business world by offering rigorous academics and harnessing the power of Greater Cincinnati's vibrant business community. As part of a thriving top-25 research university in a city with eight Fortune 500 companies, Lindner delivers academic excellence with an emphasis on experiential learning, bringing real-world value to students and the community. The college provides students with unique opportunities to build professional experience, cultural competency, and leadership skills through co-operative education, internships, field-study research, and cross-disciplinary opportunities.



Instructor Profile

Ric Sweeney is a Professor-Educator of Marketing, the Director of Co-curricular Student Enrichment, and the Lindner Business Honors COE Director. He currently serves as Faculty Advisor for UC DECA, and is a member of Beta Gamma Sigma, Delta Sigma Pi, Order of Omega, Omicron Delta Kappa, and the Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity. He has received numerous awards for teaching and service excellence, including the EXCEL Undergraduate Teaching Award, Boyd Innovation Award, UC's Barbour Award, UC's Cohen Award, and the Harold Grilliot Award. Prior to joining UC, Ric served as Director of Marketing for Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center and has prior corporate marketing experience in banking, hospitality, and consumer insights. Ric is also the past-Chairman of both the American Marketing Association's Board of Directors and Board of Advisors for the AMA Foundation.

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