Mc Graw Hill connect®

Success Story

Montgomery College



Challenge

Alining real-world Nutrition education with individualized, experimental learning.

Solution

Connect for Nutrition and NutritionCalcPlus with *Human Nutrition: Science for Healthy Living* by Tammy Stephenson and Caroline Passerrello.

Result

Stronger engagement, time savings, and cost effectiveness.

> **McGraw Hill offers a direct, individualized look at one's own diet so students can align what they learn with what they actually eat."**
>
> – Dr. Dorelle Engel

The Challenge

Before implementing Connect, Dr. Dorelle Engel and her colleagues at Montgomery College relied on Blackboard and another publisher's textbook to manage their Introduction to Nutrition courses. But with outdated materials and inconsistent tools for dietary analysis, it became increasingly difficult to engage students or provide relevant, personalized instruction.

"We needed a program that would stay current with USDA Dietary Guideline updates," Dr. Engel explained. "Using a generic nutrition report didn't align with students' actual diets, and McGraw Hill's NutritionCalc Plus provided an experiential learning opportunity that made the science come to life."

Dr. Engel sought a solution that could modernize the curriculum, deliver personalized dietary analysis, and help meet statewide General Education (Gen Ed) assessment goals. NutritionCalc Plus offered a powerful combination of accuracy, usability, and alignment with student learning objectives.

The Solution

Connect has helped Montgomery College deliver a more engaging and impactful experience to its 1,450 annual Nutrition students. Dr. Engel and her team now use NutritionCalc Plus and the autograded Assess My Diet assignments to provide students with personal insights into how their daily food choices relate to the science of nutrition.

"Using Connect and NutritionCalc is an experiential learning experience—a core goal for all courses at Montgomery College," said Dr. Engel. "Students leave the course with a better understanding of their dietary patterns and often continue tracking their diets beyond the semester."

This approach helps meet Gen Ed assessment requirements while preparing students for careers in hospitality, healthcare, agriculture, and nutrition science. Students apply what they learn in class directly to their diets and are encouraged to reflect and adjust based on their NutritionCalc analysis.

> **"Students are integrating their diet with what they are learning—and they love this program."**

Implementation

Montgomery College integrates Connect across all sections of the course. The grade breakdown includes:

- Exams: 35-40%
- Quizzes: 20-30%
- NutritionCalc Assignments (7 Assess My Diet): 20-30%
- Extra credit and discussion-based work

Assignments are clearly organized through Blackboard, linking directly to McGraw Hill Course Resources. Connect's bank of 100+ quiz questions per chapter ensures reliable, low-stakes assessment.

The team will also begin incorporating SmartBook® to reinforce conceptual understanding and promote student confidence.

The Results

With Connect, Dr. Engel has seen increased student engagement and more classroom conversations tied to students' real eating habits. "Since it's connected to their own diet, students comment more in class. They really understand the science when they see it applied to themselves," she said.

Connect's built-in videos and autograded assignments have also freed up faculty time. "I don't have to explain how to use NutritionCalc—students get it. The platform walks them through everything they need."

> **"Students say they see their diet differently now—and many begin making healthier choices during the semester. That's pretty cool."**

Grade distribution has improved as well. "More students are earning Cs and Bs, and my bell curve stays centered on a B average," said Dr. Engel. "There are fewer drops and withdrawals, which suggests students are staying engaged."

Connect has also helped maintain affordability. "It's essential that costs stay low. If they rise, we'd be pushed to adopt Open Educational Resources. Fortunately, Connect has been cost-effective and well-supported."

Conclusion

Connect and NutritionCalc Plus have transformed Montgomery College's Introduction to Nutrition course into a student-centered experience rooted in science and real-life application. By leveraging personalized dietary analysis, autograded assessments, and a unified digital platform, Dr. Engel and her team have delivered on learning goals while boosting engagement and student satisfaction.

> **"Connect makes my job easier and improves the student experience. I wouldn't want to teach this course without it."**

About Montgomery College

Montgomery College is a public community college in Montgomery County, Maryland, serving over 50,000 students annually across three campuses. With a commitment to affordability, access, and academic excellence, the college offers a wide range of degree and certificate programs in science, health, business, and the arts. It is known for its diverse student body and strong transfer pathways to four-year institutions.



Dr. Dorelle Engel is a full Professor at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland. She holds a doctorate in Health Sciences from Eastern Virginia Medical School and an M.S. in Cell Biology from Johns Hopkins University. With a passion for education and STEM outreach, Dr. Engel has served on the Advisory Board for the College of Science at the Rochester Institute of Technology and contributed her expertise as a board member for local biotechnology companies in her community. She currently supports the next generation of innovators as a judge for Montgomery College's Raptor Tank business pitch competition and for BioGENEius, where she helps highlight emerging leaders in the biotechnology sector.

