Success Story

Florida International University



Challenge

Revamping Business Analytics II: Enhancing Course Structure for Large-Scale Learning

Solution

Connect with *Introduction to Business Analytics* by Vernon Richardson and Marcia Watson

Result

Enhancing Learning with Connect: Boosting Efficiency, Engagement, and Student Success

> **The course change was worthwhile thanks to the responsiveness of McGraw Hill's team and the author, which allowed us to enhance student learning. Tools like Connect, SmartBook®, Proctorio, and the Labs have made it easier to flip classes, ensure academic integrity, and instill a SOAR analytics mindset in students."**
>
> – Carlos Parra



Carlos M. Parra, PhD

Clinical Professor, Department of Information Systems and Business Analytics

The Challenge

Dr. Parra's Business Analytics II course at Florida International University needed to be revamped by adjusting the course structure and better manage multiple sections of students. This challenge underscored the need for a streamlined learning management system, robust support systems, and the integration of high-quality content to foster critical analytical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, ensuring quick and efficient support for course materials and platform issues became a priority, as did providing help with academic integrity and a seamless and intuitive digital learning experience for his students.

The Solution

To address these challenges, Dr. Parra adopted McGraw Hill's Connect, utilizing the Richardson, *Introduction to Business Analytics* title, and its applied labs. The implementation began with thorough training on how to integrate Connect into his course structure. McGraw Hill provided extensive professional development resources, ensuring that Dr. Parra was fully prepared to use the platform effectively.

One of the key differentiators of the Richardson product is the SOAR analytics framework. This framework, comprising four steps—Specify the question, Obtain the data, Analyze the data, and Report the results—was central to Dr. Parra's course redesign. With each chapter he can include labs that reinforce these analytical steps. The labs provided two datasets: a main lab with step-by-step instructions and an alternate lab designed for independent application.

Dr. Parra incorporated these labs into both online and hybrid courses using Connect. For online students, he recorded lectures covering the main labs and assigned the alternate labs as homework, with multiple attempts allowed and no time limits. Quizzes were derived also from these alternate labs, allowing one attempt with time limits, to provide a focused assessment of student understanding. For hybrid and face-to-face classes, students completed SmartBook assignments in Connect before attending lectures, where they also engaged in group work to solve the labs collaboratively. This group work culminated in presentations, promoting peer-to-peer learning. The SOAR analytics model and variety of labs gave Dr. Parra maximum flexibility as he adapted the product to different modalities.

"We worked with the McGraw Hill team on developing a new lab that could be used to help students learn regression-based forecasting and a new appendix to cover linear programming theory," Dr. Parra noted, highlighting the responsive support he received.

Additionally, Proctorio and Proctorio+ were instrumental in ensuring academic integrity. **"Proctorio and Proctorio+ have helped us ensure that the same student is completing all assignments and assessments, which is also of the essence for managing multiple sections."** The intuitive nature of the Connect platform also played a significant role. **"Our students are familiar with Connect and tend to like it,"** he shared, emphasizing how user-friendly the platform was for students and instructors alike. The robust content of Richardson's product, focusing on instilling an analytics mindset, was another critical component.



The Results

The implementation of Connect yielded significant improvements in teaching efficiency and student outcomes. The integration of algorithmically generated labs and quizzes, which were automatically graded, drastically reduced the time Dr. Parra spent on grading. This allowed him to focus more on teaching and interacting with students.

> **“The labs are algorithmically generated and automatically graded, making my grading more efficient, especially when managing multiple sections.”**

Student engagement improved significantly with the use of adaptive learning tools, ensuring students arrived prepared for class. Dr. Parra explained, **“SmartBook can be used to ensure that students come prepared for class, which leads to richer discussions and allows for collaborative problem-solving."** By assigning 7–12-minute lecture recordings and accompanying them with a set of associated SmartBook questions before class, students were better equipped to engage with the material.

The academic performance of students also improved. Students understood and incorporated an analytics mentality faster and better **“Thanks to Conect and Richardson students are appropriating Business Analytics concepts and methods faster and better,”** said Dr. Parra.

Flexibility was another significant benefit. Connect's features, such as extensions and grade adjustments, were crucial for managing multiple sections efficiently. **“Connect has a lot of flexibility regarding extensions and grade adjustments, which are important when teaching multiple sections,”** Dr. Parra mentioned.

Education for All

McGraw Hill’s commitment to **“Education for All”** played a vital role in Dr. Parra’s success. The adaptive and accessible learning solutions provided through Connect ensured that every student, regardless of their starting point, could achieve academic success. **“The SOAR mentality is more easily instilled through the use of the labs and associated alternative labs”** Dr. Parra highlighted, illustrating how these resources helped clear learning paths for all students.

Dr. Parra’s experience with McGraw Hill’s Connect and Richardson’s Introduction to Business Analytics underscores the platform’s effectiveness in large classroom settings. By leveraging responsive support, user-friendly tools, and robust content, he was able to enhance student engagement, streamline grading, and improve academic outcomes. This success story exemplifies McGraw Hill’s commitment to supporting educators and students in achieving meaningful and accessible education for all.

