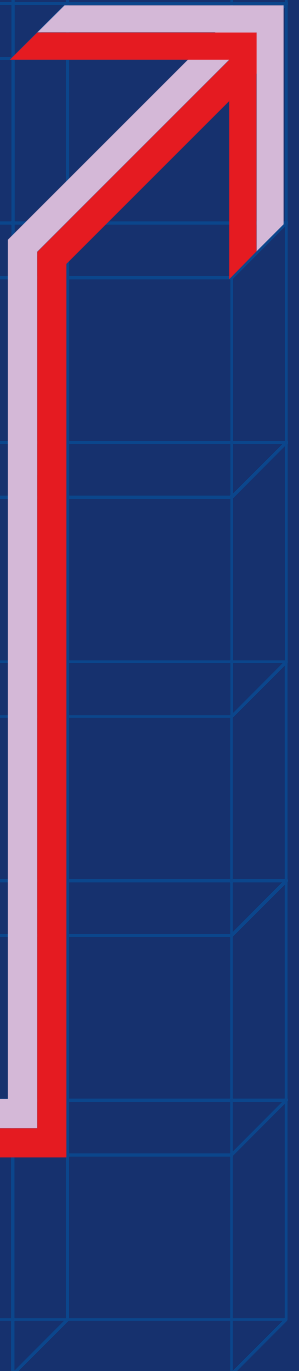


**Meeting students
where they're at:
the impact of
student-centred
instruction at
New Mansoura
University**



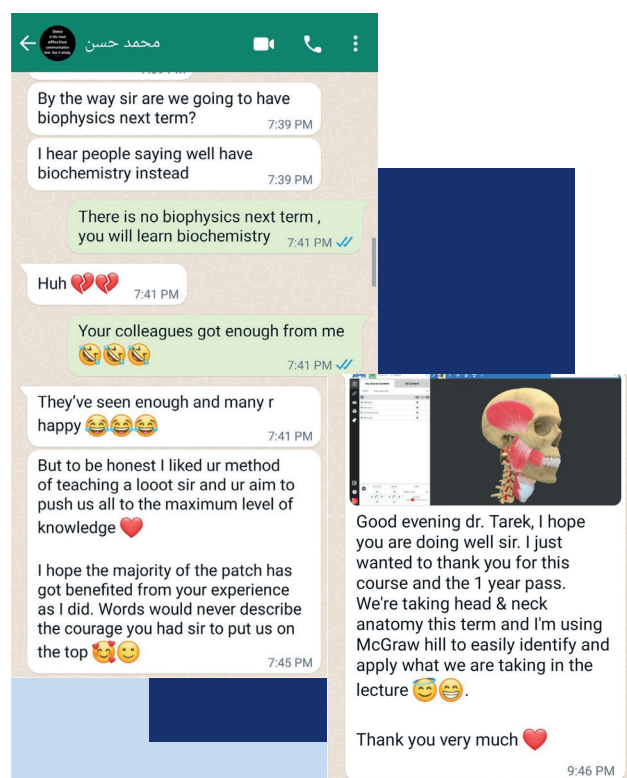
Case Study Facts

Instructor: Dr. Tarek Elkhooly

Course: Biophysics

Cohort size: 290

WhatsApp messages from students displaying their gratitude may be seen to be seldom in the life of a lecturer; messages decorated with a myriad of the cheeriest emojis coupled with heartfelt appreciation are perhaps even rarer.



Student name: **Mohamed Hassan**

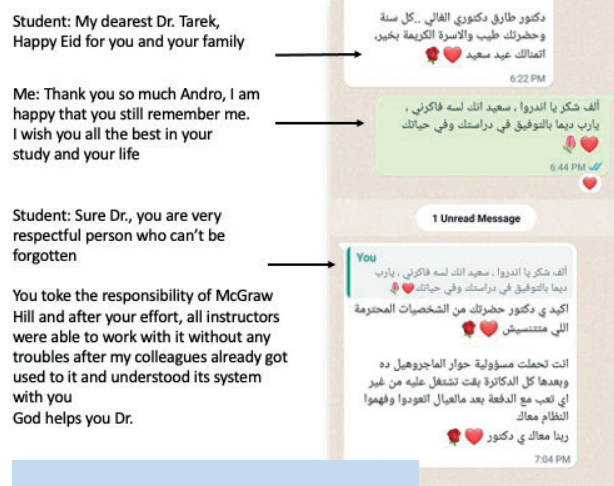
Program: **Dental medicine**

Academic year: **level one**

Cumulative GPA: **3.6**

Biophysics grade: **A**

McGraw Hill (OEI): **10**



Student name: **Andro Nagih**

Program: **Dental medicine**

Academic year: **level one**

Cumulative GPA: **3.95**

Biophysics grade: **A**

McGraw Hill (OEI): **6.3**

For Dr. Tarek Elkhooly, though, they're not uncommon. Dr. Tarek, Associate Professor in Biophysics at Delta University for Science and Technology is able to share many conversations like this. The relationship he has with his learners is testament to a wholly student-centric approach to his teaching which is more than apparent through their messages to him.

Dr. Tarek's teaching is based on a number of beliefs. The first is that the teacher has to truly understand their students.

Integral to the concept of being cognisant of learners, Dr. Tarek talks around the journey they are on. He explained that the instructor should be seeking to take the hand of the students and take them, through careful guidance, to the right place.

Dr. Tarek is also mindful that his learners are often being asked to prioritise a number of different priorities. "There is a lot to think about when it comes to their workload. My course isn't the only course they're doing and I believe an instructor should also consider planning activities that will support their learning in other areas too."

For Dr. Tarek, this means it's important to consider carefully what to share with his students. He thoroughly curates content to have the most impact and to ensure they're not overburdened. "It's important to pick and choose carefully what information to show them."

"The instructor has to be centred around the student and this can only happen if the instructor gives careful consideration to the activities and expectations they're setting."

A second belief integral to Dr. Tarek's course is that textbooks are crucial for learning.

Dr. Tarek shared that it was common across Egypt to see universities utilising Learning Management Systems (LMS) to host PowerPoint presentations and lecture notes. The LMS in place were often also hubs to self-written question banks. Whilst there was an advantage to storing files centrally and with relative ease, for Dr. Tarek the model was limited. "For me, it impaired the level of student engagement, satisfaction and learning effectiveness."

"In addition, it also restricts the self-directed and lifelong learning abilities of students. Limited resources mean limited teaching techniques and a lack of gained knowledge."

"Many instructors have relied more on slides as their main source of knowledge, ignoring the role of textbooks to provide the students with comprehensive and interrelated understanding of all the concepts in the course. Even when the university provides a hard copy of the textbooks in the library, the student will not be able to interact with the book content as it is usually possible in the electronic version of the book."

When New Mansoura University began a partnership with McGraw Hill and invested in the use of Connect, Dr. Tarek was pleased. Connect's combination of tools to analyse and support engagement with digital access to a textbook was a good match for the two core beliefs of Dr. Tarek's teaching.

He has been able to set up his course with Connect to align to these beliefs.



Connect supports textbook engagement

When it comes to students and their reading textbooks, Dr. Tarek is happy. "McGraw Hill has really helped with this. Students will learn more and they'll learn better when they're back in the textbook era," he said. "It's important for increasing knowledge."

One of his learners also told Dr. Tarek that he had read the whole of the book, from cover to cover, even when the parts that he read were from chapters which are not related to the course content, as he enjoyed reading in an interactive manner.

Further elements within the Connect platform support student engagement with the concepts in the books and these are something Dr. Tarek's learners have shared their thoughts on these. Islam Abdullah, a first year Dental Medicine student, shared with Dr. Tarek that, "There were explanations for every concept in the course with additional videos to deliver the information in the shortest and easiest way. Also, the interactive tests for each part of the course made the understanding of the course very easy."

Connect supports student-centred learning

When it comes to setting up a course that has the student at its heart, Dr. Tarek points to the way Connect can be switched to 'student view' as an asset – this affords instructors a way to view the course as a student in one click.

"This is so important. I have to see what they see, because if I'm doing that, I can solve their problems and help them get the benefits and get the most out of this learning solution."

"I put myself in their eyes and see what they're doing."

Putting himself in their eyes is precisely what Dr. Tarek has done. From the moment his students begin their studies, they're guided through in a way that's carefully and intentionally considered.

Dr. Tarek was aware that his learners would join the course having in some cases never seen a platform like Connect. "They wouldn't have seen this type of thing at primary school or secondary school."

To get them up and running, Dr. Tarek painstakingly built out his own set of PowerPoint slides showing learners what they needed to do in Connect. Rather than these being dull documents, Dr. Tarek interlaced humour and emojis throughout.

"If you get bored or want to watch a movie," one call out reads, "Don't worry, you can exit and complete the reading another time when you are really focused."

He also added the "watching you emoji" to the guide. "This was put in place to motivate the inactive students to read more. I was warning them that I always monitor their reading performance."

Dr. Tarek shared, "Students speak using light humour and are fairly casual in their language they use so I'm looking to always use their language."

"Every generation has a different language – now we have smartphones and so on, this is the language we have to use to enhance student engagement with instructors."

Connect can benefit learner progression

Dr. Tarek has put in place a structure to keep progression at the heart of what he's looking to do. Final grades for his course are built from a range of activities which means learners need to ensure they're keeping abreast of not just their reading or revision for a final exam. Dr. Tarek allocates marks to a suite of activities such as participating in group discussions on LMS, encouraging team-based learning through group presentation assignments, completing practice assignments, sharing knowledge and answering the questions each other, engaging with him and asking questions in lectures. He also ensures they're using Connect by giving learners marks for registering in the platform itself.

Monitoring how they're getting on is also central to his course. With a large cohort of almost 300, this wouldn't be feasible without functionality to support. Connect contains an Online Engagement Indicator (OEI) metric which is built on a set of data tied to student engagement with the platform.

"I always monitor the students' engagement using the OEI feature of Connect."

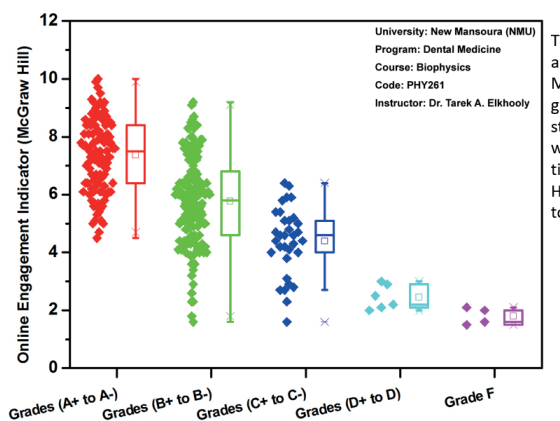


Results

The careful consideration of what students are going through and the meeting learners where they are at has paid off. Not only are his students delighted with the course and the way it has been taught, they reach out directly to thank Dr. Tarek. Their language is positive and appreciative, as demonstrated in the messages sent over WhatsApp. They are keen to relay the fact they have enjoyed their learning and feel they have been set up to succeed.

If the feedback wasn't enough, the course results show an excellent correlation between Connect and final outcome.

Correlation diagram between online engagement indicator and student grades



This figure shows How the active engagement with McGraw Hill affected the grades and the success of students. Most of students who got A grades spent more time learning from McGraw Hill using adaptive learning tools

Reflecting on his course and his intention to support students as much as possible through careful consideration of all aspects of the set-up, Dr. Tarek shared that, “There are many parts of Connect that make me happy and many parts that are useful for instructors. The activities in Connect that signify students are really ‘doing’ have truly helped enhance their learning.”

“We dedicate our life to helping our students be effective lifelong learners through a student-centered learning approach and we also try our best to prepare our graduates for the labour market through real life experience with technical and soft skills. I am grateful to McGraw Hill for providing the tools that help us achieve these goals.”



To find out more about Connect, please visit:
mheducation.co.uk

mheducation.co.uk

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