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A Revel Story:

Monash University

Educator: Greg van Mourik
Lecturer, Management Accounting & Accounting Information System, Monash
University

Key Findings

Greg van Mourik, a lecturer at Monash University, found utilizing Revel in his Accounting for Business course was very beneficial in many ways including,

- **Improving the number of students who complete their pre-lecture study which leads to more effective use of lecture time**
- **Keeping track of and improving student intellectual engagement**
- **Providing an online avenue for students to conduct learning activities independently**

Summary

The course¹ featured in this Educator Story is Accounting for Business. It is delivered through a hybrid model of online and face-to-face learning. Greg van Mourik, the educator in this story is the first lecturer to use Revel at Monash University, and through his experience he sees the value in implementing Revel over other digital learning resources. From his point of view, the most significant benefits of using Revel are improving student intellectual engagement and ensuring the majority of students complete the assigned pre-lecture study each week.

Description of the Course

Accounting for Business is an on-campus course; a core unit in the Master of Business degree and Master of Banking and Finance degree. This is a graduate course and the prescribed textbook for this course is *Accounting for Non-Specialists* by Peter Atrill. The typical course enrolment is 600 students and the course duration is 12 weeks.

The students enrolled in this course are typically full-time and in their first year of a Master's degree. Most students have not had any significant business experience. Many students commence this course almost immediately after completing their undergraduate degree and with a large proportion of those students being international.

During the semester, there are weekly two-hour in-person lectures, as well as a one-hour tutorial each week. Van Mourik has been teaching this course for 8 semesters; he first started using Revel in the first semester of 2018.

¹ The use of the term 'course' in this Educator Story refers to a unit of study, commonly referred to as a 'unit' at Monash University. It does not refer to an entire program of study, which is the typical use of the term 'course' at Monash University.



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Students use Revel outside of class for this course, as it provides the background reading for all of the topics, and the students use Revel to learn the content required to complete their pre-lecture assignments.

According to van Mourik, many of the students enrolled in this course are not necessarily planning to become accountants, and many of them approach the course with incorrect and negative perceptions of accounting. They perceive accounting as being mechanical and highly numerical. However, van Mourik wants his students to understand accounting is not objective and certain, as the outcomes rely on a range of assumptions and limitations associated with accounting methods. This course focuses on teaching students how to use accounting information critically to make better decisions.

Product Implementation

Van Mourik decided to use Revel for more of a strategic purpose as opposed to technical reasons. Prior to Revel, he had used MyLab Accounting for two years to provide students with the means of scaffolding the learning they received in a lecture, to help them to prepare for their tutorial. However, the use of MyLab Accounting had mixed results. Revel was an attractive alternative, as it enabled van Mourik to reduce the amount of didactic explaining in the lectures by moving some content into the online space.

With the use of Revel, van Mourik asks students to read some of the content online and complete a multiple-choice quiz. This is their pre-lecture assignment each week, which requires students to learn the content online to answer quiz questions correctly. The students' 10 best scores (of the 12 pre-lecture quizzes assigned) comprise 10% of the overall course mark. Since quiz performance affects their course score, the students are motivated to participate. They have 2 attempts to answer the questions. If they get the correct answer on the first attempt, they will receive 5 points, or 3 points on the second attempt.

As a result of this strategy, van Mourik has found the students tend to come to the lecture with some prior-lecture learning done. This means he can use the lecture to talk about the quiz responses and elaborate on areas that require more explanation or assistance. He said:

"Students come to the lecture with a higher state of preparedness than they would have if we hadn't used Revel."

Discussions in the lectures are informed by what students have encountered in the Revel assignments, making them more interactive. Van Mourik commented that:

"A portion of the lecture then becomes focused on the learning at a more advanced stage in the whole process."

Van Mourik believes students' use of Revel is a helpful and significant part of the learning process, as it helps the students to be better equipped to handle all the other content that's covered in the lecture. From his point of view, using Revel for online learning activities contributes positively to student learning and he expects this will translate into exam and course results.

Apart from the pre-lecture Revel assignments (that account for 10% of the course's overall grade), the course utilises two other assignments. One, focused on the basics of accounting, is worth 10%. The other assignment



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focuses on critically assessing accounting information and using this information to make decisions; this assignment is worth 25%. A final written exam is worth the remaining 55% of the overall grade.

Van Mourik looks at the participation rate and the quiz results in Revel to monitor student engagement and learning progress on a weekly basis. This data informs questions or conversations to bring up in the following lecture. If student performance around a particular question is poor, it suggests to the educator that perhaps there is confusion about the terminology, or something needs to be remediated in the lecture. Van Mourik may then take that opportunity to further explain and clarify why certain answers are wrong.

Educator Experience and Perception

Van Mourik's overall experience with the Revel has been positive, despite the fact that there were some access and registration enquiries (due to a lack of LMS integration at the time, which is now available for Revel). He was satisfied with the support and customer service provided by Pearson but noted that, as the pedagogies of courses become more dependent on online systems, the requirement for the timeliness of support becomes closer to real-time.

Van Mourik expressed that he sees the value in Revel and how it adds to the teaching and learning experience. He is satisfied with the way Revel supports pre-lecture learning and assignments.

The responses from a student survey that van Mourik administered to his class informally also indicated that Revel is popular among students. In fact, 40% of the 167 respondents recommended a longer pre-lecture assignment: instead of 1-2 subtopics from each chapter, they suggested 3-4 of them be included. Van Mourik thinks the students are open to having more content in the online space, allowing him to spend more time covering more complex concepts in lectures. He added:

"I get pretty positive as it suggests that this way of learning suits the students."

"It seems to me that this design gives the students the best of both worlds. The online opportunity as well as face-to-face on-campus opportunities that Monash provides."

In terms of improving student engagement, the completion rate of the pre-lecture assignment each week is very high. Van Mourik believes that Revel helps with engaging students and getting them to prepare for the lectures and tutorials. He mentioned that:

"If I didn't have Revel, a lot of those students may not have attended lectures. They may have attended tutorials but may not have done any preparation for them."

The students are also relating lecture discussions with their own experience of completing the assignments. In van Mourik's view, that indicates intellectual engagement with the content that is facilitated through the use of Revel.

Revel has interactive questions at the end of each chapter, giving students the opportunity to test and check their level of understanding of the content. Van Mourik believes that Revel facilitates learning using an active 'practice' paradigm, where students are prompted to engage with the content with interactive activities, moving away from a more passive 'transmission' paradigm of learning. However, he also finds the questions are designed with



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objective and definitive answers, which reinforces what he believes to be the incorrect perception that accounting is objective and certain. Van Mourik feels this allows room for improvement regarding question design and expand from the traditional standard.

Conclusion

Overall, van Mourik is satisfied with the trial and sees value in using Revel. Not only does Revel help with getting the students to study independently before the lecture, but it also provides an opportunity for them to discuss their learning experience in the lecture. Van Mourik is able to monitor student participation and performance in the pre-lecture assignments and adjust his teaching if necessary. Van Mourik reports that all these activities promote better student engagement and more efficient use of the educator's time during the lecture. He would like to continue to use Revel in his course.