



## SUCCESS STORY

### Chris McKittrick, CPA, MBA, CFE

Lecturer, Department of Accounting —

Poole College of Management, North Carolina State University

## Students Accrue Accounting Skills with CengageNOW™

Chris McKittrick has ideal credentials for teaching accounting at North Carolina State University's Poole College of Management (PCoM) — over 30 years of varied business experience. A CPA and CFE, Chris began teaching introductory managerial and financial accounting just three years ago. Seasoned business professionals-turned teachers like Chris help the PCoM provide real-world insights that enable students to develop practical, relevant business skills.

To help his students learn the fundamentals of accounting, Chris supplements both courses that he teaches by using CengageNOW™ for online homework assignments. Says Chris, “CengageNOW is a good tool to ensure that students do practice work that’s necessary for learning the concepts and principles that they need to know.”

### COURSES AND PARTICIPANTS

Each of Chris’ accounting classes includes two 75-minute lectures and a 50-minute lab session each week. Most classes have between 200 and 300 enrollees; Chris taught four classes and nearly 1,000 students in a recent term. Some students are accounting majors, while others take the courses as a requirement in the PCoM. Still others take it as an elective or as a requirement in a different discipline from another college within the university.

Chris’ students are required to use CengageNOW to complete 12-14 homework assignments each term, depending on the course. Assignments include a variety of question types, pulled from end-of-chapter text materials and crafted to support the teaching and learning needs for the managerial or financial accounting disciplines.

### THE CHALLENGES

With hundreds of students each term, Chris manages the process in part by following a “keep it simple” philosophy. “I would have a difficult time creating assignments, grading them, answering students’ questions, and tracking student progress without online tools that automate some of my tasks,” he says.

Students who think that a basic accounting course will be easy get a reality check early on. In addition, questions inevitably arise as they do their homework. “Many students are surprised by the level of work that they have to do outside of class,” he says. “To learn accounting effectively students have to do work on a steady basis. Every new concept builds on the ones presented before them, so if they get behind it creates a steep mountain for them to climb to catch up.”

### CHALLENGES

- **Students need plentiful, steady practice** outside of class to learn concepts and succeed in introductory financial and management accounting.
- **Students can get overwhelmed with** the workload in introductory accounting, and often need individual guidance as they complete their homework.
- **Tracking performance and manually grading homework** in courses with hundreds of students is virtually impossible without automated tools.

### SOLUTIONS

- CengageNOW
- Rich, Jay, Jeff Jones, Dan L. Heitger, Maryann Mowen, & Don Hansen, *Cornerstones of Financial Accounting*
- Sawyers, Roby B., Steve Jackson, & Greg Jenkins, *Managerial ACCT2*

### RESULTS

- **CengageNOW fosters learning and understanding** with consistent online homework assignments that help students grasp concepts. Practice tests, personalized study plans, and chapter-level study resources all enhance learning.
- **Numerous resources guide students to the correct answer** as they complete their homework, including hints, demonstrations, videos, eLectures, and links to an eBook. “Check My Work” feature provides instant feedback on answers.
- **Auto-graded homework saves instructors time.** The online gradebook allows instructors to track student progress. Instructors control the student experience with flexible assignment options, such as setting prerequisites and changing the number of times an assignment can be taken.

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“CengageNOW allows students to do their required homework at their own pace, and helps me ensure that they do it. It also gives me a methodology to monitor what they are doing outside of class.”

**Christ McKittrick**

Lecturer, Department of Accounting  
Poole School of Management

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[www.cengage.com/DiscoverDigital](http://www.cengage.com/DiscoverDigital)

## THE RESULTS

With CengageNOW, students complete homework online and have a variety of resources to help them answer correctly if they need guidance. Problems may be supported by hints, demonstrations, videos, eLectures, and links to the eBook version of the text. Students can see if their response is correct by clicking the “Check My Work” link. (Instructors control whether or not this feature is activated and how many times students can check their work.) Some assignments offer expanded post-submission feedback, provided at the instructor’s discretion, which includes the correct response as well as source calculations and/or commentary to guide students to deeper understanding.

“The only way to learn accounting is to do accounting,” says Chris. “CengageNOW provides an environment that allows students to get the practice that they need. It also comes with a variety of study tools, which I encourage students to use. If students don’t do the work, and don’t understand what’s covered in the homework, there is a much lower chance of doing well on their interim or final exams. When students use the tools, they’re better prepared.” In addition to problem-specific resources, students can use chapter-level study aids. For instance, some accounting titles allow students to take chapter pre-tests that identify their weak areas, and then generate personalized study plans that refer them to materials needed for further study.

Chris saves a considerable amount of time that he would otherwise spend developing homework questions and posting them online. The assignment creation process is simple. “One nice thing about the CengageNOW question bank is that I can easily change the homework each term,” he says. “I can test the same concepts, but assign different questions.”

Chris also likes the instructor tools that allow him to set consistent parameters for assignments. Options include, among others, setting the number of times the assignment can be taken, requiring students to achieve a certain score on a previous assignment, late penalties, and feedback settings. In another nod to his preference for consistency, Chris sets due dates so that homework assignments are always due on the same day and time each week.

The online gradebook allows instructors to see how students performed on individual assignments, view student assignments and responses, change grades, and more. A report generator allows instructors to run learning outcomes reports. CengageNOW content is tagged to popular accreditation standards.

“CengageNOW allows students to do their required homework at their own pace, and helps me ensure that they do it. It also gives me a methodology to monitor what they are doing outside of class,” says Chris. “By looking at their homework grades, I can see how well they understood it. CengageNOW meets my criteria for an online homework tool.”

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