



Rich Powell

Introduction to American Government instructor, University of Maine

MindTap® for Intro to American Government

Rich Powell teaches at the University of Maine, and has used MindTap in his Introduction to American Government course for approximately a year, in conjunction with Janda's *Challenges of Democracy* text. Rich teaches his Introduction to American Government course both in person and online. He was using Apla for American Government prior to making the switch to MindTap.

LMS INTEGRATION REDUCES INSTRUCTOR WORKLOAD

Rich decided to make the switch to MindTap when he discovered it integrates into the Blackboard Learning Management System. "The integration was key, because the integrated gradebook allowed me to take a large administrative chunk out of my workflow," said Rich. In addition to lessening his administrative workload, Rich found that having MindTap integrated into Blackboard made it easier for his students. "It's a better user experience, especially for my online students, because I can integrate the MindTap link right into the sequence of the course. It doesn't force students to leave Blackboard and go somewhere else to access content," said Rich.

ENGAGING STUDENTS AND DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

Rich has found the content within MindTap helps engage his students in course concepts. "Students especially like the questions that involve reading a news story or watching a video and then applying concepts from the class. It feels very interactive to them," he said. Rich believes that engaging content through MindTap also helps students reinforce concepts they learn in class and develop critical thinking skills. "It's connecting the materials to the way they are going to operate as American citizens," said Rich. He wants his students to be able to synthesize the course concepts with what is happening around them, and believes MindTap helps aid in that mission. "The students are applying the concepts in MindTap, not just learning them in a vacuum," said Rich.

CONSISTENT LEARNING VIA MINDTAP QUIZZES

Rich assigns end-of-chapter quizzes in MindTap as part of his students' overall homework grade. "Over time, I've replaced a good chunk of the grade that was in class exams substantially and put more weight on the week-to-week quizzes," said Rich. He said students recognize they learn better and their performance increases when they can work consistently each week using MindTap. He also found that placing more emphasis on the weekly MindTap quizzes has improved student learning outcomes. "I like the ability to move away from having such a significant weight in the class on high-stakes testing. It allows students to learn more consistently throughout the semester," said Rich.

CHALLENGES

- Both in-class and online instruction required a significant administrative work load, while a better online experience for students was necessary.

SOLUTIONS

- MindTap for Janda's *Challenges of Democracy*

RESULTS

- MindTap's integration with Blackboard lessens his workload and adds to his efficiency, while improving student engagement and giving students a better overall experience.

“MindTap
has improved
student
engagement
with the course.”

Rich Powell
University of Maine

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CONCLUSION

Overall, Rich is very pleased with the transition to MindTap. “I do think it has improved student engagement with the course,” he said. Rich has seen his students become more consistently immersed in his course since adopting MindTap. “I think students like being able to work through the course in a less pressurized way,” said Rich.

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