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MindTap® Captures the Interest of Marketing Students — and Their Instructor

Holly Hapke is a lecturer at the University of Kentucky’s Gatton College of Business and Economics. Like many instructors in business courses, Holly uses cases to promote analytical thinking and to help her marketing students connect concepts to real-world applications. Not so long ago, the manual grading of three case assignments each term for as many as 600 students became an overwhelming task. “It was too time consuming to grade assignments for all of the students, so I started looking for another solution for homework,” she says.

Holly was using a Cengage Learning textbook, so it was a logical step to look at the digital assets that supported it. One of those resources was MindTap, an interactive online learning experience built upon the textbook’s content. More than an eBook and different from a learning management system, MindTap allows students to guide themselves through their course — combining cases, readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments into a consistent learning path, with all relevant resources instantly accessible. In addition, MindTap exercises are automatically graded, which was good news to Holly.

INCREASED ENGAGEMENT AND STUDENT PREPAREDNESS

There’s a lot more to MindTap than automatic grading, and Holly has experienced a number of benefits. “My work life has improved, both in terms of homework and greater student engagement. I think we will see an improvement in students’ learning of the content as well as on their exam scores,” she says. “MindTap definitely helps students be more prepared for lectures, because they are engaging with the content before they come to class.”

To further engage students, instructors can personalize MindTap by inserting videos and their own content. They can add notes to provide context and draw attention to important material. They can also change due dates, re-order or remove chapters and activities, and re-name content to match a syllabus.

Using MindTap enables Holly to make learning more convenient for her students, which is important for today’s learners — who expect an integrated and “connected” user experience in every aspect of their lives. “It allows them to go to one place and see the content for the course. It’s a one-stop shop,” she says. MindTap tools and Learning Apps give students additional convenient ways to connect with the material and get ready for classes and exams. For instance, the easy-to-navigate MindTap reader allows students to make notes and highlight text. Students can also click on an unfamiliar word to call up a definition, or practice terms with online flashcards.



CHALLENGES

- **Engaging students in learning**, particularly in a large lecture class and with traditional textbooks, is difficult. In addition, today’s digitally minded students want convenient access to integrated learning resources.
- **Manually grading assignments** for 600 students each term is an overwhelming burden on instructors.
- **Improving students’ performance and facilitating efficient assessment** and evaluation of their progress are ongoing concerns.

SOLUTIONS

- MindTap® Marketing for *Marketing 2014*, 17th Edition, by Pride, William M. and O.C. Ferrell

RESULTS

- **Students come to class prepared because MindTap engages them** with multimedia, interactive activities, and apps that make reading and learning more enjoyable — and that are instantly accessible. Students’ preparedness frees instructors to teach higher level concepts in lectures than would otherwise be possible.
- **Auto-graded homework assignments** simplify assessment and save instructors a tremendous amount of time.
- **MindTap’s reporting and gradebook tools** allow instructors to view students’ progress and see how much time they are spending with the learning path outside of class. Instructors can tailor lectures accordingly to focus on trouble spots or introduce new material.

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EASIER ASSESSMENT WITH GRADING AND REPORTING TOOLS

The MindTap reporting tools allow Holly to view her students’ progress, something that she couldn’t do previously. “I can see how much time they are spending with MindTap outside of class, which means that I should be able to teach higher levels of concepts to them in class,” she says. “MindTap also solved the problem with grading — I no longer have to spend such a large amount of time grading assignments.”

Although Holly experienced a learning curve when transitioning to MindTap, she says any issues were ironed out. “The support team at Cengage Learning has been great, and that was a big deal. They helped me out tremendously. They have met my expectations.”

Holly listens to her students and actively solicits their input, including asking them how they feel about MindTap and what features and functions are important to them. She says that for the most part her students like using it. She also asks students about the role of social media in education to get an understanding of what the students want her to integrate into her classrooms. An option available to her in MindTap is the ConnectYard social app, which encourages students to interact with their content as well as with their peers and instructors.

As a result of her positive experience with MindTap, Holly does more than recommend the resource to her colleagues — she has also taken the time to show it to them so that they can evaluate for themselves how MindTap may be able to address their teaching needs.

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