Aplia™ Improves Learning in Management
This research study examined one of the most widely used digital tools in post-secondary education, Cengage Learning’s Aplia. Aplia is an online learning solution designed to improve student learning outcomes by increasing student engagement and ultimately enabling students to think like managers.

A survey of 73 principles of management instructors at two- and four-year institutions of higher education was conducted to assess the impact of Cengage Learning’s Aplia on the engagement and learning of students enrolled in management courses and on the satisfaction of instructors with the use of Aplia for instruction in comparison to using textbooks alone.

The results of the study were informed by twenty-one instructors (29% response rate).

These instructors represent a cross section of the continental U.S. (see Figure 1). Instructors’ responses were based on experience using Aplia to teach principles of management for 1 to 4 semesters in contrast to using only a text book.

**About Aplia**

Aplia is an online learning solution that provides interactive chapter assignments designed to move students from lower- to higher-order thinking skills. Problem sets consist of randomized, automatically graded problems and detailed explanations that seek to effectively engage the student to think like a manager. Aplia follows a path of various learning activities to obtain these results:

- **Engage:** Interactive problems engage students, showing them how management is relevant in their own lives
- **Connect:** Real world applications help students master a body of knowledge and connect terms and concepts
- **Perform:** “What Would You Do” scenarios provide an opportunity to apply management concepts
- **Lead:** Higher level problem types, such as video cases, provide opportunities to practice and improve leadership decisions.

Learn more online at www.cengage.com/aplia
Figure 1
Map of Instructor Locations

14 different states representing all geographic regions of the country: AL, AR, CA, CT, FL, IA, IN, KS, MS, NC, OK, SC, TN, and TX

Student Learning Increases Dramatically Using Aplia

Of the 21 instructors:

- **100%** (21) require the use of Aplia as part of the overall course grade.
- **90%** (19) believe Aplia assignments help students better understand course content and application of the material to real world situations in comparison to teaching management courses using textbooks only (Figure 3).
- **90%** (19) believe that Aplia assignments have helped to move students to higher level learning, including critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and decision making (Figure 4).
- **71%** (15) cited student grades as the measure of improved learning (Figure 5).

“They have to read the chapter to complete the assignments and are more likely to ask questions during lecture.”

**Stephanie Smith**
University of North Carolina Wilmington

“With immediate feedback and grading, I can see how the [students] are doing.”

**Doris Donovan**
Dodge City Community College

“The examples [in Aplia] give students another view of the material along with the examples that I provide. This helps with cognitive type questions that they will see on an exam.”

**Lisa Nieman**
Indiana Wesleyan University
Of the instructors who reported improved grades as the measure of improved student performance, 27% reported an improvement of more than 15% in their students’ grades and 80% reported an improvement of at least 5% in their students’ grades since using Aplia vs. a textbook alone.

Figure 2
By How Much Have Your Students’ Grades Improved Overall?

- 1–5%: 7%
- 6–10%: 20%
- 11–15%: 20%
- 16–20%: 27%
- More than 20%: 27%

“Students seem to understand the practical application of the concepts in the chapter.”

Stephanie Smith
University of North Carolina Wilmington

“I use [Aplia] for an online class, so it helps students think on their own without just copying answers out of the book.”

Glenda Orosco
Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology
Aplia Helps Instructors Teach Better

Instructors who participated in the survey reported a high level of satisfaction with their use of Aplia as a teaching resource (90%) and zero of the instructors were dissatisfied with Aplia as a teaching resource at any level. In addition to improved student engagement and learning outcomes, the features of Aplia that instructors find most helpful for teaching include auto-graded assignments and immediate feedback that is provided to students through Aplia.

Figure 3
Do You Feel that Aplia Assignments Help Students Better Understand Course Concepts and Application of the Material to Real-World Situations?

- Yes: 90%
- No: 10%
“[Aplia] helps them apply the material that they are learning and they need this to get out of the mindset that they can google everything; as their boss will want them to think on their own.”

Lisa Nieman
Indiana Wesleyan University

Figure 4
Do You Feel that the Aplia Assignments Help Move Students to Higher Level Learning, Including Critical Thinking, Analysis, Synthesis, and Decision Making?

90% Yes
10% No

Figure 5
Has Student Performance Improved in Your Course Since Using Aplia?

71% Yes
29% No

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In Conclusion

The majority (90%) of two- and four-year instructors surveyed (21 instructors) at institutions of higher education indicate that using Aplia to teach management courses vs. only textbooks helps students to better understand course concepts and apply material to real world situations; helps to move students to higher level learning, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and decision making; and (71%) cite improved student grades as a measured outcome of learner engagement using Aplia. Furthermore, the majority of instructors (90%) have reported satisfaction with the instructional efficiencies of Aplia — creating greater opportunities to engage learners and influence improved learning outcomes.
Cengage Learning is a leading provider of innovative teaching, learning, and research solutions for academic, professional, and library markets worldwide. The company's products and services are designed to foster academic excellence and professional development, increase engagement, improve learning outcomes, and deliver authoritative information to people whenever and wherever they need it. Through the company's unique position within both the library and academic markets, Cengage Learning is providing integrated learning solutions that bridge from the library to the classroom.  

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