Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences is a new university with campuses located in Hamm and Lippstadt in the North Rhine-Westphalia state of Germany. Founded in 2009, this forward-looking institution offers high quality study programmes catering for current and future market requirements. It currently has around 5,800 students across Engineering Sciences, Natural Sciences, Computer Sciences and Economics courses at Bachelors and Masters level, and there are 92 professors and 89 members of staff involved in research and teaching at the University.

The University has an interdisciplinary setup in which teaching focusses on the promotion of both individual strengths and social skills, such as team work. At Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences great importance is placed on practice-oriented learning, and the use of an interactive digital learning solution such as MindTap fits well with this approach.

WHAT IS MINDTAP?

MindTap is a digital learning solution that combines a range of content including readings, video content, activities and assessments into a single learning path. Lecturers can easily customise the content and add their own material so that MindTap aligns exactly with the way that they teach their course.

MindTap enables lecturers to monitor students’ progress and participation through instant feedback, auto-grading and real-time analytics.

Find out more by visiting cengage.co.uk/mindtap
As a new member of staff at Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences, Dr Christoph Harff, Professor for International Economics, needed to design a course for the cohort of 190 first-year students enrolled on his one semester Economics course for non-specialist students. He was seeking resources to use for his teaching that would help his students to actively engage with the course content, particularly as they were not from an Economics background and were taking the module as part of another degree.

Cengage's local Learning Consultant, Claudia Pfefferlein, met with Professor Harff to discuss his objectives and to establish what would be the most appropriate digital learning solution to meet his needs. Following this consultation, they agreed that MindTap Economics would be a good fit for his course. With limited time to prepare his course, Professor Harff saw a lot of potential added value in using MindTap which brings together a range of content, including readings, multimedia content, and assessment material. By combining relevant economics content with interactive exercises and activities in a single platform, MindTap enabled Professor Harff to save time in the preparation of their course materials.

The insights and analytics provided by MindTap also attracted Professor Harff to use MindTap for his Economics course as these enabled him to track his students’ participation and progress through the course and provide them with feedback.
Professor Harff did not make the use of MindTap mandatory for his students, but gave them the opportunity to gain extra credit by completing assignments within MindTap, which was integrated into their Learning Management System, Moodle.

Approximately two thirds of Professor Harff’s cohort (134 students) made use of MindTap Economics. Cengage surveyed 19 students and ran an in-depth focus group with 7 students to get an understanding of how they used the platform for their course.

Most students used MindTap following the lecture, undertaking assessment questions relating to the topic covered in the lecture to check and reinforce their understanding. Some students also worked with MindTap to prepare for the lecture, completing readings and watching video material, which made the content covered in Professor Harff’s lecture much easier to understand.

Students commented that it was particularly helpful to use the Aplia assessment questions within MindTap to prepare for their exam.

Professor Harff’s students spent an average of 4-6 hours per week working with their MindTap Economics course.

“How did the students make use of MindTap?”

‘MindTap is a collection of everything you need to be prepared for your course’

- Economics student, Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences
The students highlighted the features that they found the most useful and explained how they used these in their learning:

**Interactive Reader**
Students found it really helpful to be able to annotate the text, highlight key sections and insert notes.

**Video content**
Students commented that the Concept Clips videos were entertaining, fun to watch and made the key economics concepts easy to understand. Students found the problem walkthrough videos helpful for demonstrating the application of the chapter content.

**Aplia™ questions**
The students considered the Aplia questions to be the most helpful feature within MindTap. They commented that the real-world examples used within the Aplia questions improved their understanding of the course topics and they also felt better prepared for the exam after working through the Aplia assessment material.

**Pre- and post- reading assessments**
Students used these assessments to make sure that they understood the material covered in the chapter. Reviewing the chapter content in this way helped them to remember the key concepts.

**Flashcards**
Students said that the flashcards helped them to memorise key terms and they found these particularly useful for exam revision.
‘THE SYSTEM IS EXCELLENT AND WITHOUT DOUBT IT DOES EXACTLY WHAT IT PROMISES: IT SAVES ME TIME IN PREPARATION AND IN CREATING ASSIGNMENTS, GIVES FAST FEEDBACK AND WORKS RELIABLY.’ – PROFESSOR HARFF

INCREASING STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

One of Professor Harff’s key objectives was to encourage his first-year students to interact with the content on his Economics course. His students commented that the assessment material forced them to get involved with the course content and gave them an understanding of how to apply economic concepts. The relevant real-world examples in the Aplia assignments in particular helped them to get to grips with the key concepts.

The variation of the content within the platform including readings, videos and assessment material helped Professor Harff’s students to stay engaged. They also felt that the different media types within MindTap catered for different learning styles: the video material was especially helpful for visual learners, while the Readspeaker functionality (which enables students to listen to a section of the text read aloud) was beneficial for auditory learners.

Overall, the students commented that MindTap provided them with a structure and enabled them to learn independently throughout the semester rather than simply cramming for the exam.

‘MindTap helped me to better grasp the concepts in my course and to stay on track, pushing me to work consistently and regularly.’

- Economics student, Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences

THE RESULTS

Concept Clips Video

Mankiw Roadmap Video
THE RESULTS

USING DATA TO TRACK PERFORMANCE AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS

The auto-grading functionality and the instant feedback provided by MindTap gives students an insight into how they are performing. Professor Harff’s students commented that this information motivated them to take corrective action to address their areas of weakness and improve their performance.

Professor Harff also provided his students with a heat map of the class’ MindTap usage, showing how long students had spent within MindTap and the types of material that they were accessing. This enabled the students to compare their own usage of MindTap with their peers’ and encouraged them to make further use of the platform. Professor Harff also shared the class average grades provided by MindTap with his students and mentioned the top performing students, giving students an indication of their performance in relation to the rest of the class.

Professor Harff found that the analytics provided by MindTap gave him visibility of which subject areas his class as a whole were weaker on, and enabled him to address these in order to achieve a decent pass rate.

‘Having a constant review of how you are doing and knowing how you can improve motivated me personally to try and reach the set goals.’
- Economics student, Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences

cengage.co.uk/mindtap
SAVING THE LECTURER TIME IN SETTING AND GRADING ASSESSMENTS

With 190 students enrolled on his course, Professor Harff stated that one of his key challenges was having time to provide support to every student. The regular feedback available to students in MindTap gives them transparency about how they are doing, without the lecturer needing to look after each student individually.

MindTap also saved Professor Harff time in creating the material for his Economics exams; he used assessment questions from MindTap in combination with his own essay questions to make up his end of course exams.

A SINGLE PLATFORM PROVIDING ALL COURSE CONTENT

Professor Harff and his students commented that MindTap was a great solution for bringing together all the content required for the course into one single platform that they could access at their convenience.

However, with such a wealth of content and assessment options available within MindTap, Professor Harff and his students felt overwhelmed initially. To begin with Professor Harff assigned all of the available reading and Aplia assessment material to his students, however this proved to be too much of a heavy workload for them. After re-assessing what he wanted to achieve with MindTap, Professor Harff worked with Cengage’s Digital Solutions team to customise the material in the learning path, making the content much more manageable for his students.

‘It offers me so many learning resources to choose from, besides simply reading a book and going to lectures. Having everything I need in one place made me feel more organised and less stressed as I am preparing for my exams.’
- Economics student, Hamm-Lippstadt University of Applied Sciences
“THE HELP AND SUPPORT FROM CENGAGE WAS FAST AND VERY GOOD – I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS.”

- PROFESSOR HARFF

CONCLUSION

Professor Harff considers MindTap's combination of relevant content with multimedia and assessment materials to be of real added value to his Economics course: “I don't only want top content by a good author, but also something that makes life easier for me”.

Despite being initially overwhelmed by MindTap’s capabilities, Professor Harff regards MindTap as an excellent teaching and learning tool, which enables him to match the features to his teaching method and the learning objectives for his course. He plans to continue to use MindTap for his subsequent Economics course.

If you’d like to find out more about how MindTap can support you and your students, please contact your local Cengage representative through cengage.co.uk/contact-us or email us at emea.edureply@cengage.com

To read more case studies on our digital solutions, go to cengage.co.uk/studentoutcomes