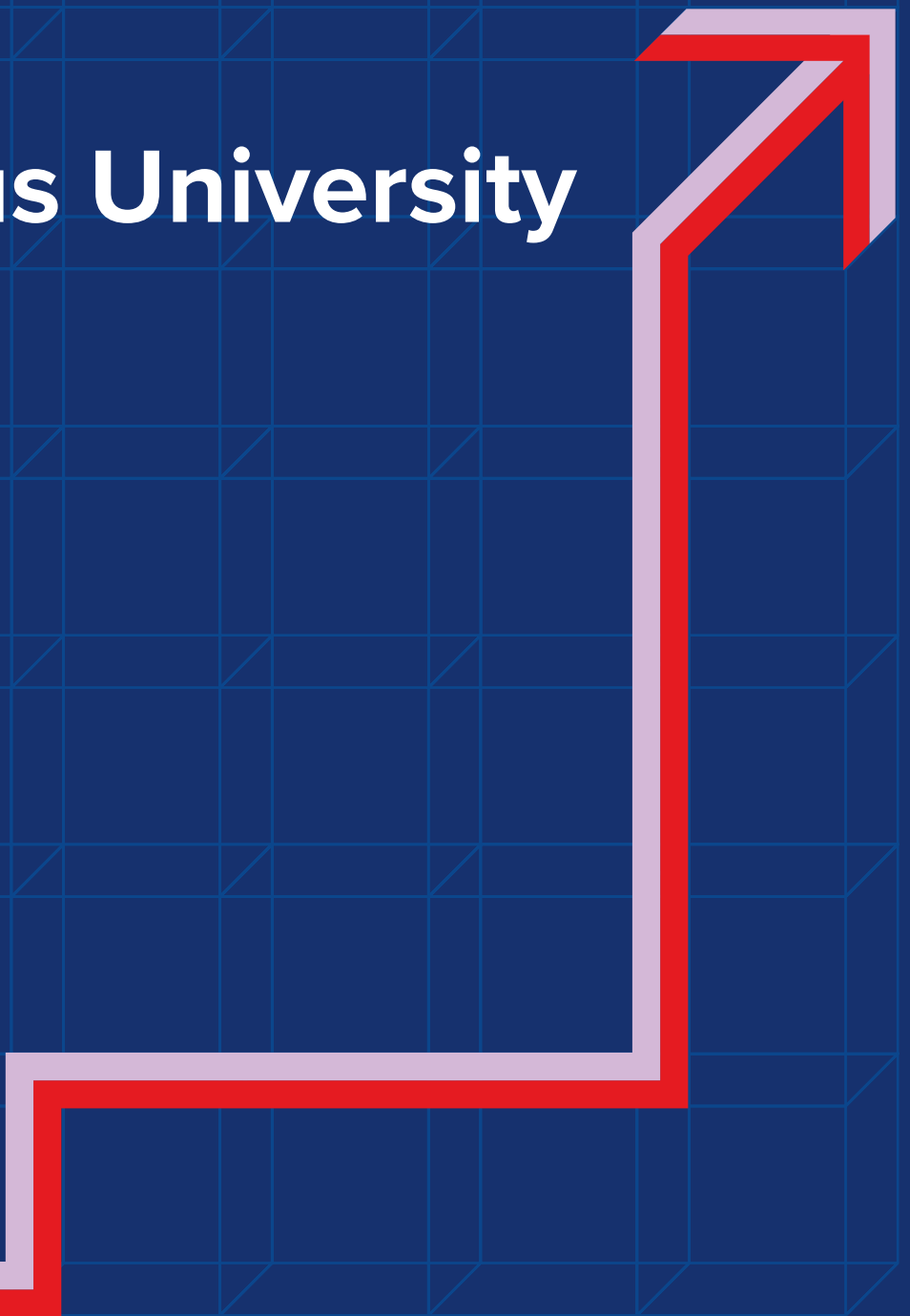


**Mc
Graw
Hill**

Case Study:

Erasmus University



Case Study Facts

Instructor: Celine Koning

Course: Business Administration

Cohort size: 1,400

Benefits and bonuses: Overcoming challenges through incentivisation

No matter what age your learners are, no matter what subject, and no matter whether you're teaching in a state-funded or a privately paid-for school, there are challenges to be faced; hurdles to overcome.

At Erasmus University in The Netherlands, Celine Koning had arguably more than most in her second-year Business Administration module, made of up of 1 international group of ~600 students and 1 Dutch group of ~800 students.

The course content is one obstacle. "It's considered a very hard course and traditionally has very low pass rates," she explained.

"It's not uncommon to see pass rates around 25% to 40% for this course."

Digging into why it is that the course poses such a challenge, Celine shared that the course relies on a lot of analytical skills. "Not all those students taking this course will be analytical—some may be looking to pursue Marketing and HR careers and their education paths up to this point may not have needed this level of analytics."

"There is a large group who find this course very difficult."

The course itself and the success of learners taking it isn't the only challenge. The volume of students enrolled—at over 1,400—also presents considerable issues from an administrative side of things.

Introducing new ways of teaching and new methods is going to cause extra work if there are just a handful of

learners, so Celine was acutely aware that she needed to avoid "a place where I was going to need to mark over 1,400 assignments and have 1,400 emails from students!"

Lastly, there is an issue of regulation. Celine was keen to put in place a structure for her course that would benefit all her Dutch and International learners, but in the Netherlands this isn't possible without sign-off from the exam regulatory bodies, and per law, instructors cannot force students to buy the material. She needed their approval to get the green light to set it up the way she wanted.

Regardless of the barriers, Celine was keen to push ahead as she believed in the value of the solution and its benefits for her students.

She put together a proposal for the exam regulatory body, got it approved, and then set up her course using McGraw Hill's Connect to give students a bonus point applicable in their final exam. In order to be eligible for the extra point, they needed to both pass the exam and have completed a specific amount of the weekly work set by Celine.

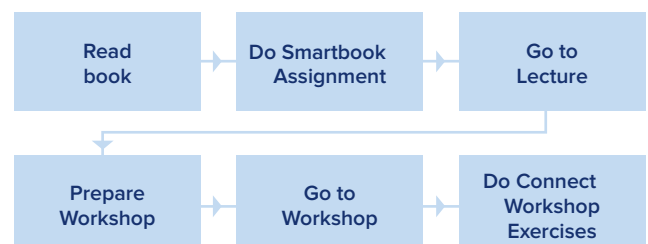
Her motivation for it all was based on the belief that the students "get the basics right so that they have the best chance of passing the course."

What this looks like

The vision Celine had for her course plays out over a seven-week window. Structurally, Celine explained that "every week before the lecture students have to do reading, the assignment which consists of SmartBook questions for one hour, and then they come to the lecture well prepared."

"What this means is that they're coming to class with the basics in their head, then we have the workshops they participate in and where we'll look at numerical exercises together. Then, lastly, they have study time in Connect."

Recommended Learning Path



Celine makes sure her learners are up-to-speed with the structure at the start of the course. She uses the image on the prior page to exemplify how it will work and “shows them the learning journey they need to be on to get the best results.”

An additional feature to facilitate enhanced outcomes

The assignment that forms the second part of the learning path above is something Celine is particularly passionate about. The time spent on this section is entirely optional for learners (a prerequisite for it being signed off by the examining body) but if they do complete it and if they pass their exam with a score of more than 5.5, then they are granted an additional bonus point on top of their final grade.

“What I really like for this is that it’s based on reward and effort—I’m not looking for right or wrong for this section. It’s about the effort being put in and the commitment,” Celine said.

To ensure it was fair, too, Celine allowed for one of the seven required assignments to be missed in case of personal reasons.

Feedback and Results

Celine’s colleague warned her that with change comes resistance and Celine vouched for this, sharing that her learners were initially concerned that the assignment was extra work they weren’t used to doing and work that they saw that their peers in the year ahead hadn’t had to do.

They also shared some feelings around being forced to buy access to the platform though Celine overcame this objection by explaining that they are investing in study materials to help their future careers.

“That changed throughout the course, though, and by the time they finished, they really liked it. In the course evaluation, the feedback showed they were appreciative of it. They could see the value.”

Results

Looking at the results, it is clear that the positive student feedback is aligned with engagement and outcomes. Focusing on engagement, it is pleasing to note that 80% of the learners enrolled in Connect completed 6 out of 7 SmartBook assignments with full marks.

When it comes to outcomes, Celine explained that she has two groups of learners: a group of 800 students made of Dutch students and a group of 600 who make up the international cohort. “There are differences in the entrance to the university which explains the difference in pass rates.”

Analysis has been undertaken into the difference in scores for learners with or without the bonus point. Across the two sets of data, there is an uplift of over 2 points for those learners who participated in the extra assignments and received the extra point. This rise shows that the extra effort put into their learning has been rewarded with scores exceeding the additional one point. In Celine’s words, “There’s a double effect at play here, where students are first getting a better grade because they’re better prepared, and then they get an additional point because they pass on account of their hard work.”

BK2107 Dutch students

Average final grade no bonus point	4.88	
Average final grade with bonus point	6.96	Difference in scores
		2.08

BT2107 International students

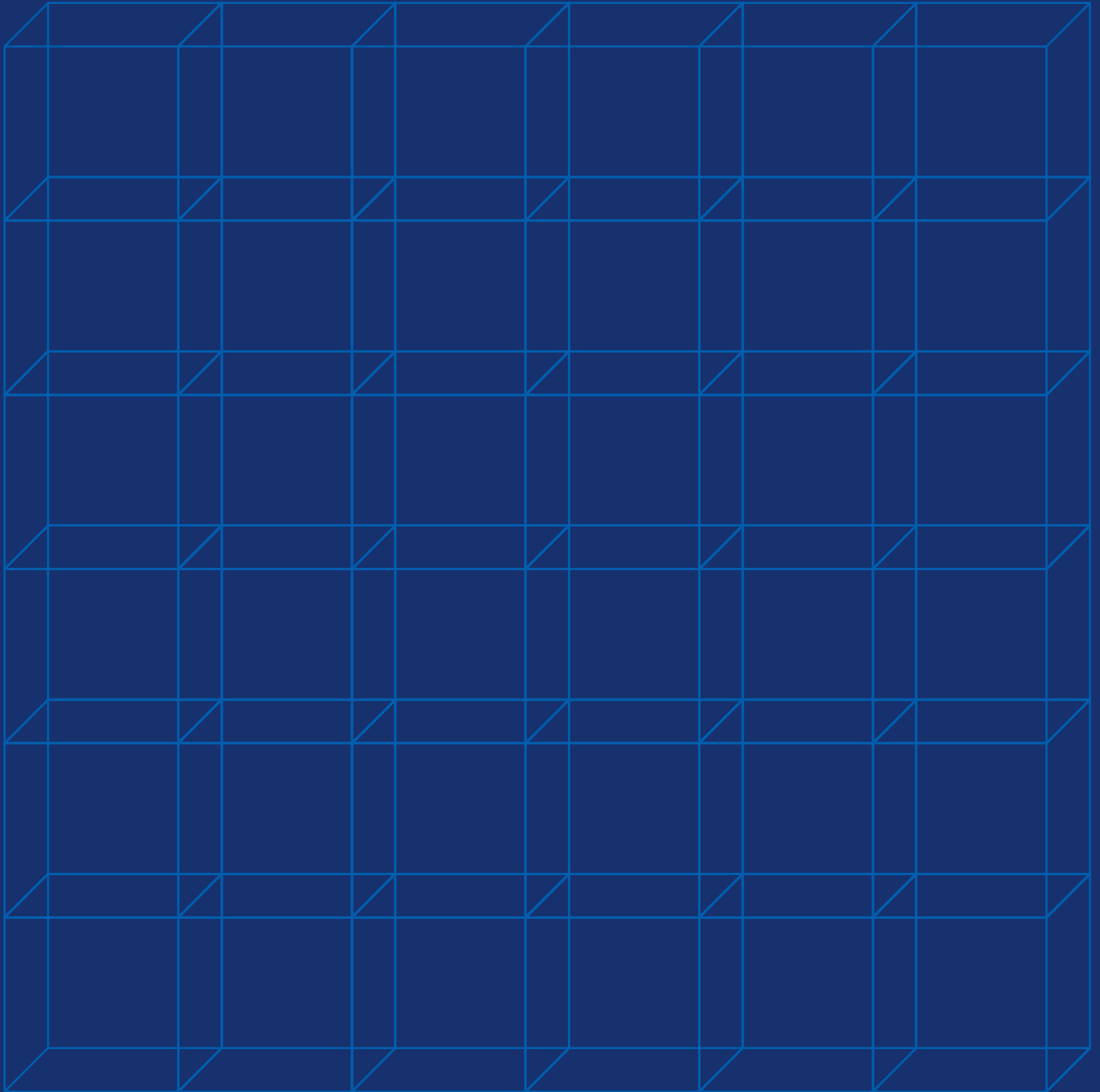
Average final grade no bonus point	4.86	Difference in scores
Average final grade with bonus point	7.38	2.52

Ruminating on the journey so far, Celine is grateful for the support from McGraw Hill and the flexibility of the platform.

“The support has been really important and I said that from the beginning. I knew I would need the support from the team at McGraw Hill and they have helped out constantly making sure it was going to work.”

“Next year I want to change it so the reading is after the lecture or before—depending on what the student wants to do. Feedback from some was that they would prefer to do this after.”

“I would recommend McGraw Hill because of the excellent support and the convenience of the platform. I know I can reach out to the team at McGraw Hill. Without this, I wouldn’t use it!”



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