

**Mc  
Graw  
Hill**

Case Study:

# **Henley Business School**

## **Accounting Education**



# Case Study Facts

**Instructor:** Sue Blackett

**Course:** Accounting Education

**Cohort size:** 600

Sue Blackett, Associate Professor in Accounting Education at Henley Business School, was teaching a postgraduate course when she found out she would be leading a new, undergraduate module the next academic year. With almost six hundred learners to cater for, compared to the 10 to 15 in her Postgraduate course, Sue was acutely aware she needed something different.

“I needed a way to help me get to know and help me understand 600 students.”

As module convenor, Sue was looking for a solution that would afford her transparency into how well “they were taking on board the material, how they were taking the pieces and putting them together.”

“I wanted to basically see if they were understanding it.”

When she first heard of Connect Master through her McGraw Hill consultant, she was immediately interested. On top of the reporting functionality she was keen to dig into, she was also cognisant of the pressure of feedback and marking for a large cohort.

## Implementation

Set up of Connect Master was easy and Sue appreciated the support that teams at McGraw Hill were able to give her initially.

“The support was brilliant. I needed my hand holding a lot in the first year and Wes was very gracious in helping me to get to grips with it all. You need time to see how it fits with your style of teaching.”

Once she was set up, it was time for Sue to introduce her students to it. Sue explained that she employs a number of different strategies with the goal of getting learners engaged with both the structure of the course and the Connect platform itself.

Sue walks the students through the structure through a series of videos hosted on the university’s Learning Management System (LMS) which are designed to show students what they can expect each week. It’s there that she shows a video from McGraw Hill looking at what Connect Master is and how they can access it.

She also shows the relationship between the recorded lectures and the in-person workshops. “They are shown the timings of when things are going to happen. I also show them the relationship between these, the coursework, and the exam.”

Sue will also lean on feedback from learners from the prior year for that, knowing that students will be more receptive to their peers’ thoughts on it.

“Using Connect Master weekly helped me practice questions related to my course and know more about my mistakes. It also helped me practice more for...my exam...and last of all it taught me how to be time efficient as there is a limited time to answer all questions.”

– Student 1

“Connect Master has allowed me to gain a better understanding of the topics that we are studying.”

– Student 2



A last tactic Sue deploys is based on giving students the right amount of detail at the right time.

“I don’t want to put it all up as that might make students think they don’t need to come to the lectures.”

### Structure

For her undergraduate course, Sue blends the weekly recorded lectures with assignments in Connect Master. When the course finishes, she opens up the platform up so her learners can utilise it for their revision.

### Maintaining momentum

Past the initial implementation of Connect Master, Sue concentrates on keeping engagement as high as possible with her learners.

She created a leaderboard of the top scorers within the platform to motivate her learners, with Amazon vouchers being awarded to the top three users. She offered them unlimited tries that counted towards the scores. This had a positive impact on her students.

### Further Benefits

Sue utilises functionality within Connect Master such as the pre-built Multiple Choice Questions. These she flagged as useful “for getting students up-to-speed with the language and terms used.” She nodded to the fact the course is a first-year module for Business Management students, many of who are new to the

subject or “don’t have an interest in accounting.” Tools that support getting up-to-speed with specific phrases and concepts are an advantage.

Alongside the MCQs, Sue also shone a spotlight on the algorithmic questions within Connect Master. “Some learners will look to take shortcuts,” she says. “There will be an element of them sharing screens with each other from time to time.”

Algorithmic questions, which show different values for each learner, put an end to the circulating of answers on social platforms.

Sue highlighted lastly that, for her postgraduate course, she has used Connect to host online assessments. “Connect Master was absolutely brilliant for hosting tests and has been an absolute joy for the analytics.”

### The role of timely feedback

It’s commonly acknowledged that when it comes to feedback, timeliness is important. Quizzes within the Connect platform give learners immediate insight into what they’ve got wrong and signpost them to sections in the digital version of the book that correlate to the questions. Sue also highlighted that Connect Master has been beneficial when it comes to feedback for assessed work. “Typically this is now done within 48 hours as opposed to 15 days.”



## Results

When it comes to results, Sue explained that it hadn't been an easy feat to analyse engagement with Connect Master and final course grade on account of a lot of nicknames being used during registration. That said, Sue was able to see a correlation between those students who were in the top 5 to 10 users of Connect Master each week and higher exam scores.

At the other end of the attainment spectrum, Sue pointed at the students who scored between 30-39. 30 is the minimum score needed to pass and move into Year 2.

Low Engagement Score (40-49.5%)	1 student	Exam score: 39
Basic engagement score (29.5% - 39.5%)	3 students	Exam Scores: 35.5-38%
No engagement score (<29.5%)	27 students	Exam score: 30-39%

For Sue, this data “seems to suggest that low engagement with Connect Master may have contributed to low exam scores.”

## Summary

When it comes to her journey with Connect Master, Sue shared that it has been a positive one. “I like to try things out. The character of the student has changed completely over the last 15-20 years; even the things I was doing five years ago won't work now.”

“For the Undergraduate course, Connect Master has just taken the pressure off.”

“Not only that, but it improves my skills as a lecturer. It gets me to understand how to use digital resources.” The time-saving element is hard to brush under the carpet. **“Not having to mark 580 quizzes by hand is saving me hours—hours and hours,”** she said. “It would have taken at least two people and I'd never have been able to get feedback to the students in time.”

Sue shared that the benefits aren't solely sitting with her. “Students are developing skills too.” She highlighted that way the platform can be accessed anywhere – “on a bus” – helps them immerse themselves in their learning.



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