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Case Study:

# NEOMA Business School

# Case Study Facts

**Department:** Business School

**Instructor:** Laura Trinchera

**Digital Product in Use:** ALEKS

A final consideration for Laura hinged on logistics. For the undergraduate course Laura manages, there are fourteen different groups, with half taught in English and half taught in French. The courses are also taught across three different campuses and lectured by 4 different lecturers. Despite the fact they are taught in two languages, and despite the disparity in locations, Laura shared that all learners have to pass the same assessment at the end. Laura was keen to find a solution that could support her spectrum of learners and also ensure a consistency in their experience.

## The Institution

NEOMA Business School, a business school in France, offers a wide range of programs from Bachelor's degrees, Masters of Science to Executive Education.

## The Background

Laura began her journey with ALEKS with the Masters course she taught, before extending the use of it to her course in the Bachelors programme. Reflecting on what had prompted her to begin using it, Laura explained that it was the diversity of her cohort. She explained, "The learners in this course came from a range of different ability levels and different subject areas." Their capacity to understand core concepts essential for the course was impacted by this. Laura also explained that her students were from a broad spectrum of nationalities. "We have a number of students who completed their bachelor's degree in another language than the English and, whilst their English is great, they'll sometimes struggle with the subject vocabulary," she commented.

In addition to the piece around the diversity in her learners, Laura shared that some of her students would express their concern around their maths skills. "They are concerned that the course will rely on a lot of mathematics and, on account of that, they're nervous," she said. "They feel they cannot complete a course based on maths."

## The Solution and Structure

Laura was initially came across ALEKS at a conference and was immediately taken with how it would be useful in supporting the goals she had for the master course.

To begin with, Laura used ALEKS in a supplementary way, with it offered to students as an additional extra and a space for her learners to practice. She believed it could be used in a more integral way, though, and before the pandemic opted to make its use compulsory for the students in her bachelors course.

She uses the same structure today as she did then, with a three-hour window being expected to be completed each week in ALEKS and the course content being organized in 4 Learning Objectives. The time spent in ALEKS each week is tied to a Learning Objective. "For my course, which has ten sections, the learners will spend some time alone learning in ALEKS. Then they'll have face-to-face time with me or the team where we're very tutorial focused. We introduce new concepts and discuss together those concepts of the past Learning Objective that were not completely mastered by the students. The use of ALEKS reporting functionalities allows my team and I to tailor the face-to-face time to each group of learners."

When it comes to assessment, Laura shared that there are two ways for students to earn their scores: the final exam and continual assessment. The continual assessment piece is done in ALEKS. Since the pandemic, Laura has started using ALEKS for the final exam, too.

When it comes to encouraging motivation with ALEKS, Laura explains that time is one method she utilises. She shared that if her learners grasp the concepts within that Learning Objective in less time than the three hours, "then that is fine." On the flip side, Laura also highlighted that learners not spending the time in ALEKS get marked as absent.

Laura utilises competitions as part of her use of ALEKS, too. She sets up each class on a leaderboard, so that each class can see where they stand against the other classes in their year. Additionally, she also offers prizes for her learners. There are three prizes offered, with the first being awarded to the student achieving the highest grade in the shortest time, the second being given to the student with the highest overall grade, and there's also a final prize for the students who spend the most time in ALEKS "to reward student engagement regardless on the result"

**"They have a clear measure of that on the platform. They see the progression and they move through the learning objectives – for the online gamers, they can see what they're doing and they feel like it's a game!"**

## Reporting

Laura utilises the reporting functionality that sits within ALEKS to shape her course. She can see those who are engaging and those who aren't, something she describes as "so useful." She also highlighted that she'll ask her team to dig into the analysis the day before each lecture so they can get a picture on the percentage of learners who are grasping the concepts and those who are struggling.

## Outcomes and Results

The two methods of ensuring engagement with ALEKS have paid off, with the fail rates in the two of Laura's programmes declining over the years going from 12% to 3%. "The introduction of ALEKS really changed things," Laura commented.

Laura also believes that her learners enjoy using the platform. "They fully understand the potential it has, and they see how it helps them follow their own learning path," she said. Over the last cohort, 75% of her students spent more than 45 hours working on ALEKS during the term (13 weeks) and the 25% of the students who worked the more spent more than 81 hours on the same time period and the average time spent on ALEKS for a student in the cohort has been of 63 hours.

The fact they can see their progress is also a benefit, Laura said. For her learners, the fact ALEKS does resemble a game has really helped. She shared that it has supported their motivation and also admitted that they can get quite "addicted" to it!

## Benefits

From a teaching perspective, Laura shared that using ALEKS has meant that the time spent with her learners is focused on teaching them new concepts, "really teaching", in her words. From the student view, Laura believes that ALEKS gives them a place to learn where they have great support.

Wrapping up her experience with ALEKS, Laura highlighted that she really appreciates the personalisation ALEKS affords her and her learners. "It is so advantageous for the students to be following their own learning paths at their own speed across the topics."