

School Name [Baton Rouge Community College, Baton Rouge, LA](#)
 Course Name [Introduction to Criminal Justice](#)
 Course Format [Online](#)

Key Result Students who used CourseConnect succeeded with an average final grade of 82 percent compared with an average final grade of 16 percent among students who did not use CourseConnect.

Submitted by

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Course materials

Criminal Justice Today by Schmallegger with CourseConnect Criminal Justice

I built my own online courses and have tried every available online course solution. CourseConnect is designed precisely the way I would design my own course, but with a depth and richness of media assets I couldn't possibly assemble on my own. As an experienced instructor, I appreciate how easy it is to customize and adapt CourseConnect to make courses my own. As a department chair, I need to ensure that students have a consistent, high-quality learning experience in every section of every course we offer. With CourseConnect, I know that every instructor—from first-time adjuncts to the most seasoned professor—has a complete, well-designed course ready to go.

Implementation

CourseConnect's Lesson Presentation/Discussion/Assignment/Quiz structure mirrors the way I prefer to teach my courses; I believe this is the most effective model to stimulate active learning. A single, one-hour lecture bores students and delivers much more content than students can absorb in a single session. The CourseConnect Lesson Presentations are chunked into 8 to 12-minute sections, and this is ideal. CourseConnect Lesson Presentations accommodate to students' attention spans—they deliver dynamic, engaging segments. Likewise, the Discussion Board offers a stepped learning approach where students and I work through concepts a manageable section at a time. Students are not just memorizing definitions of key concepts; they are acquiring an entire specialized vocabulary that enables them to understand and describe concepts with precision. In their Discussion Board postings, students synthesize and communicate their understanding of the concepts of criminal justice. The CourseConnect assignments

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do not ask for simple recall; rather they ask students to engage deeply with the course material. The quizzes provide students with a measure of how well they are mastering the course content throughout the entire term.

I love the CourseConnect Study Guide because of its ingenious design. For the students who use it (and I strongly encourage all of my students to use the Study Guide), the Study Guide enables a continuous check on mastery. Typically, students spend a good deal of their study time reviewing what they already know—because that's more comfortable. But studying what we already know doesn't stretch us into new learning! The Study Guide uses a completely intuitive color coding to nudge students toward the material they most need to focus on. Concepts the student understands display as green. The Study Guide points students toward the yellow and red areas so that study time is spent most effectively. When all of the chapter areas show green, students know that they've mastered the lesson content and are ready to move forward.

Assessments

40 percent	Tests
27 percent	Assignments
22 percent	Discussion boards
11 percent	Quizzes

“Students’ mastery of key concepts and success in subsequent courses are powerful validations of CourseConnect.”

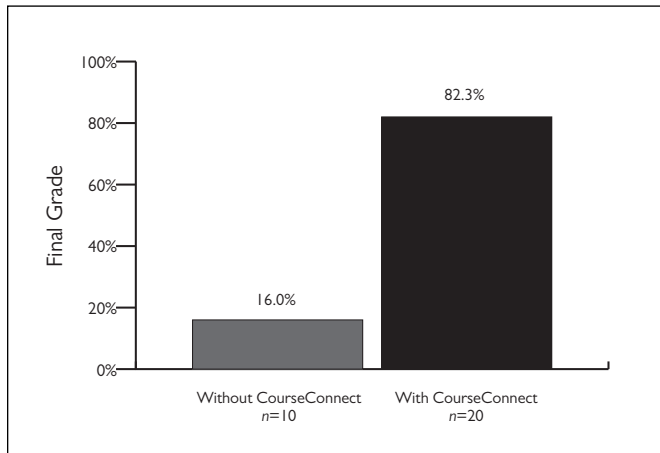


Figure 1. Average Final Grade with and without CourseConnect, Summer 2013

Results and data

I encourage my students in the strongest possible terms to purchase the CourseConnect access code. Unfortunately, a number of students attempt the course with just the text or with no course materials at all. Without an access code, students may attempt the assessments but cannot gain access to the Learning Presentations or the Study Guide; in other words, they are missing all of the meat of the course—and their final grades are predictably poor. I plan to show my students the comparative final grade results they can expect at the start of each term. Those students who use CourseConnect succeed in the course (figure 1). CourseConnect is a small investment that pays big dividends in learning.

The student experience

- “What I liked most about my CourseConnect course was the Check Your Understanding quizzes and the Study Guide.”
- “I appreciated CourseConnect’s easy, 24/7 access and also the convenience of having all of the links for the course in one place.”

“Students are not just memorizing definitions of key concepts; they are acquiring an entire specialized vocabulary that enables them to understand and describe concepts with precision.”

Conclusion

Being the department chair gives me a wide view of students’ progress and performance. Students who use CourseConnect in an online course perform better in subsequent courses—whether those courses are online or on-ground. Students who use CourseConnect possess a familiarity and facility with both the specialized vocabulary and the concepts of criminal justice. Preparing Discussion Board posts and responding to posts from fellow students and the instructor really helps students to cement their understanding and to communicate that knowledge. CourseConnect fosters active learning in a way that students are able to retain and access terms, ideas, and processes in subsequent courses. Students’ mastery of key concepts and success in subsequent courses are a powerful validation of CourseConnect.