

Revel Criminal Justice educator study

A look at student performance and engagement at Virginia Commonwealth University

Key findings:

- Students who earned a higher percentage of participation/Revel assignment points also earned a higher percentage of final exam/evaluation points and a higher overall final percentage of points in the course.
- The overall grade distribution for the course included a 96 percent pass rate with 77 students earning a C or above in the course.
- The pass rate (grade of A, B, or C) in the course was 96 percent, with 69 percent of students earning an A.

Setting

Locale: Virginia Commonwealth University is a public research institution located in Richmond, VA

Enrolment: approximately 31,000

Full-time students: 82%

In-state students: 85%

Full-time retention rate: 83%

Gender: 59% female

Ethnicity of students: 46% minority

Six-year graduation rate: 62%



School name: Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA



Course name: Principles of Criminal Investigations



Course format: Face to face



Course materials: Revel for Criminal Investigation: The Art and the Science by Lyman



Timeframe: Fall 2017



Educator: Dr. Chernoh M. Wurie, Instructor



Results reported by: Stephanie Fritson, Pearson Customer Outcomes Analytics Manager

About the course

Principles of Criminal Investigation requires students to develop a basic understanding of the elements that comprise criminal offenses; applicable investigation definitions; case studies; sex offenses; victim types; death scene investigations; crime scene investigations; various tools/weapons used, etc. In addition, the course presents students with the process on various types of investigations, court presentations, and types of criminal investigations units. This course also covers current crimes such as environmental crimes, archaeological sites, videotaping crime scenes, gangs, and drugs. Several case studies are detailed as well. At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to:

- Identify the proper procedures to investigate various types of offenses;
- Describe the proper techniques for crime scene investigations and preliminary investigation of various crimes;
- Describe the role of the first responders in the investigation of crimes/crime scenes;
- Differentiate between the proper techniques for interview of suspects and witnesses to criminal offenses;
- Describe the proper techniques for investigating various types of deaths; and
- Discuss the common mistakes made by investigative personnel during various types of investigations.

Challenges and Goals

Instructor Wurie decided to implement Revel after receiving feedback on his course evaluations indicating that his students wanted more online resources and engaging material. He reviewed several digital products and ultimately chose Revel because of its straightforward, practical, and hands-on nature. He also felt confident that his Pearson representative would assist with training and support as he integrated Revel into his course. Wurie hoped to

improve student engagement in course discussions and overall course performance by using Revel in his classes.

Implementation

Dr. Wurie taught two sections of Principles of Investigation in Fall 2017 and implemented Revel in both sections. Both classes were taught in a face-to-face format. Grades for the course were comprised of quizzes, participation/Revel assignments and quizzes, a final exam, and group work assignments with grades being assigned as follows:

A 90–100 | B 80–89 | C 70–79 | D 60–69 | F < 60

Quizzes

There were a total of five short in-class quizzes designed to assess students' understanding of the material covered in class. The quizzes were comprehensive in nature, and Wurie worked with students during each class session to address important key terms and theories that needed to be retained for the quizzes. The in-class quizzes were also designed as formative assessment of materials covered in the class. It was the students' responsibility to arrive promptly for the quizzes. If a student arrived late to class, he or she was not allowed to take the quiz.

Revel assignments and attendance/participation

In calculating attendance and participation grades (discussion), there were three online assignments due in Revel. The Revel assignments replaced class meetings, so on the days Revel assignments were due, the class did not meet in person. Attendance was not mandatory for the class but was worth 30 percent of the course grade. If a student missed three consecutive classes, they failed the course.

Group project

Students were required to complete a group project for the course. Groups were expected to present a comprehensive case to the class detailing an entire investigation that covered: type of crime, date and time crime committed, suspects, witnesses, how suspects and witnesses were developed, interviews and interrogations, and how the case was or will be solved. Groups were assigned during class at the beginning of the semester, and it was the responsibility of the group leader to communicate with the instructor regarding case assignments. The group project was worth 15 percent of the overall course grade.

Final exam

There was one final exam/final comprehensive evaluation. The exam/evaluation was twofold: the first section consisted of a written exercise wherein students read and responded to approximately five questions. These questions tested student knowledge of class materials. The second section was comprised of students being paired up to respond to several scenarios. Once in pairs, the first participant read two scenarios and recorded his or her partner's responses. The same process was completed until each partner had answered at least two scenarios.

Make-up policy

Students who missed an exam/quiz without a legitimate excuse automatically received a zero for that assessment. Make-up exams/quizzes were given only to students with legitimate excuses and only if they notified Dr. Wurie in advance. Missed or excused exams/quizzes were addressed on a case-by-case basis, with Wurie making the final decision on what justified a legitimate excuse. Make-up exams/quizzes were in the same format as the original assessment but contained different questions than the one administered in class. Make-up exams/quizzes had to be taken no later than 48 hours after the scheduled date.



Assessments

- 35% Quizzes (5 total)
- 30% Participation/Revel assignments and quizzes
- 20% Final exam
- 15% Group work assignments

Results and Data

Results indicate that students who earned a higher percentage of total participation/Revel assignment points also earned a higher percentage of final exam/evaluation points. The correlation between student performance on participation/Revel assignments and the final exam/evaluation was strong ($r(80)=.67$, $p<.001$).

Students who earned a higher percentage of total participation/Revel assignment points also earned a higher overall final percentage of points in the course. The correlation between student performance on participation/Revel assignments and the overall percentage of total points earned was very strong ($r(80)=.84$, $p<.001$). Participation/Revel scores made up 30 percent of the final course grade, influencing this relationship.

The overall grade distribution for the course included a 96 percent pass rate with 77 students earning a C or above in the course.

In Fall 2017, students completed a voluntary, end-of-semester survey (26 percent response rate), regarding their experience using Revel.

A summary of student responses is shown below:

- I prefer using Revel over a traditional textbook. – 67%
- Experiencing the text through Revel helped me feel more engaged with the course content than a traditional textbook. – 71%
- Revel is a good value for the money. – 76%
- Completing Revel reading and quizzes better prepared me for class. – 90%

The Student Experience

As mentioned earlier, in Fall 2017 students in Dr. Wurie's Principles of Criminal Investigation course completed a voluntary, end-of-semester survey (21 participants), providing valuable insight on their experience using Revel in the course.

100 percent of respondents were able to log in to Revel the first week of class.

91 percent of respondents found completing the readings and assignments in Revel "very easy" or "easy."

86 percent of respondents rated their overall experience with Revel as "very good" or "good."

Student survey comments regarding their Revel experience included:

"Having the text on my phone was amazing. I actually read the book because it was on my phone. "

"Revel was easy to use and the interactive examples were helpful."

"I found the glossary and the table of contents to be the most useful features of Revel. They gave you instant access to whatever you wanted to find."

"I think it is awesome that you have access to Revel on your smartphone, since I am always on the run and can look at things I may need to be reminded about right in my hands instead of pulling out my laptop."

Conclusion

Dr. Wurie implemented Revel in his Principles of Investigation course with the goal of improving student engagement and performance. Results indicate students who earned a higher percentage of total participation/Revel assignment points also earned a higher percentage of final exam/evaluation points and a higher overall final percentage of points in the course. The pass rate (grade of A, B, or C) in the course was 96 percent, with 69 percent of students earning an A.

On a voluntary end-of-semester survey, 71 percent of student respondents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that experiencing the text through Revel helped them feel more engaged with the course content than a traditional text and 90 percent strongly agreed or agreed that completing Revel readings and quizzes better prepared them for class.

Wurie believes Revel has improved student performance and engagement in his course, and he will continue to utilize Revel in future terms, making adjustments as necessary based on continuing student results.

Learn more about Revel Criminal Justice

Learn more about how Revel Criminal Justice could benefit your course by visiting:

<https://www.pearsonhighered.com/revel/educators/browse-products/disciplines/criminal-justice.html>