

Revel Personal Finance educator study examines student performance and test scores at North Georgia Technical College

Key Findings

- Chapter test scores and final course scores improved significantly after implementation of Revel.
- Students completing most Revel assignments earned chapter test scores 10 percentage points higher than students who skipped more than one Revel assignment.
- On an end-of-semester survey, 100% of respondents agreed that the “read a little, do a little” interactive approach of Revel helped them learn and retain the material better than they would have with a traditional textbook.

Study Specifics

School name: North Georgia Technical College, Clarkesville, GA

Course name: Personal Finance

Course format: Online

Course materials: Revel for *Personal Finance Experience* by Pratt, Weitzel, and Rhodes

Timeframe: Fall 2018

Educator: Tim Green, Professor

Results reported by: Candace Cooney, Pearson Results Manager

Setting

- Locale: small, two-year, technical, rural, three-campus institution in northern Georgia
- Enrollment: more than 2,000 students
- Full-time retention rate: 50%
- Three-year graduation rate: 30%
- Ethnicity of students: 87% Caucasian, 6% African-American, 4% Hispanic, 3% Other

About the Course

Personal Finance is a one-semester, three-credit course, offered twice per year and open to all students. It is required of students pursuing an accounting degree or accounting diploma as one of three accounting electives. The course introduces students to the practical applications of concepts and techniques used to manage personal finance. Topics include cash management, time value of money, credit, major purchasing decisions, insurance, investments, retirement, and estate planning.

Challenges and Goals

Prior to implementing Revel™ in his course, Green had been using a print text/digital program combination that his students found challenging. After reviewing a few sections of Revel *Personal Finance Experience* before its national release, Green felt his students would relate to the easy-to-read presentation of the concepts paired with animations of key concepts and narrated videos. With basic concepts explained at an appropriate level and resources that address the different learning styles of his students, he hoped Revel would help students retain the information better. In Fall 2018, Green class tested Revel with his online section.

Implementation

As a fully-digital program, Revel presents an affordable option to print textbooks, although students always have the option to purchase a print book as a companion for the online learning experience in Revel. On a Fall 2018 end-of-semester survey of Green's students, students were asked about using Revel as a textbook replacement:

- Initially, 67% of respondents indicated they were apprehensive about not having a print text and using only Revel for reading assignments.
- As the semester progressed, 100% of respondents reported being comfortable using Revel for reading.
- Said one student, *"I didn't have a physical textbook, so I could bring my work anywhere because it's all online!"*

Students use Revel for reading, understanding content, and quizzing. On the student survey, 40% of respondents said they spent 2–3 hours per week working in Revel, while 47% spent more than three hours each week working in Revel. The unique Revel approach of reading chapter content followed by immediate assessment was widely seen as beneficial by students on the survey:

- 100% of respondents agreed that Revel practice questions at the end of each section allowed them to check their understanding of what they just read before moving on to the next section of new material.

Revel offers a mobile app so students can read, practice, and study anytime and anywhere, allowing them to access course materials, including the full text, on their tablet or mobile phone, offline and online. While most students used a laptop for Revel, 40% of respondents on the student survey specified that they also used their mobile phone or tablet to access Revel throughout the semester. Additionally, Revel is designed to keep students engaged as they read through each chapter, integrating videos, interactives, and assessments directly into the author-created narrative.

- 73% of respondents on the student survey indicated they always or usually clicked on the embedded media as they were reading along in Revel.
- 100% of respondents agreed that the "read a little, do a little" interactive approach of Revel helped them learn and retain the material better than they would have with a traditional textbook.

Weekly Revel assignments consist of the following exercises and assessments, worth a combined 30% of the final course grade:

End-of-chapter homework: Students complete approximately four pre-built assignments per chapter, with each module in the chapter concluding with homework exercises. These 14 homework assignments, comprised of 52 total individual exercise modules, allow Green's students to check their understanding at regular intervals before moving on.

Putting It All Together end-of-chapter mini simulations: Students are given the opportunity to apply what they learned in the chapter while making real-world financial decisions. They are presented with a scenario and goal and are tasked with making decisions based on chapter concepts. Students complete 12 simulations in total, and have three attempts at submission for each. On the student survey:

- 100% of respondents agreed that the mini simulations allowed them to apply what they learned while making real-world financial decisions.
- Said one student, *"The simulations were a benefit, and being able to do the simulation over to see how different choices changed the outcome was helpful."*

Chapter tests: One test per chapter (14 total) is assigned after the chapter has been read and both homework and simulations are completed. Each test is comprised of 10 multiple-choice questions.

Following a Pearson best practice, Green utilizes the Revel Performance Dashboard to monitor class and individual student achievement. When students contact him with questions or issues, he is able to use the dashboard to get a snapshot of their activity and progress to inform a meaningful conversation.

Assessments

- 70% Revel chapter tests (14)
- 30% Revel assignments: chapter homework (14) and simulations (12)

Results and Data

After implementing Revel in Fall 2018, Green saw homework, chapter test, and final course scores improve significantly compared to the previous semester. Data from figure 1 indicate:

- Average homework scores increased nine percentage points.
- Average chapter test scores increased 19 percentage points.
- Average final course scores increased 17 percentage points.

Homework, chapter test, and final course scores before and after Revel implementation

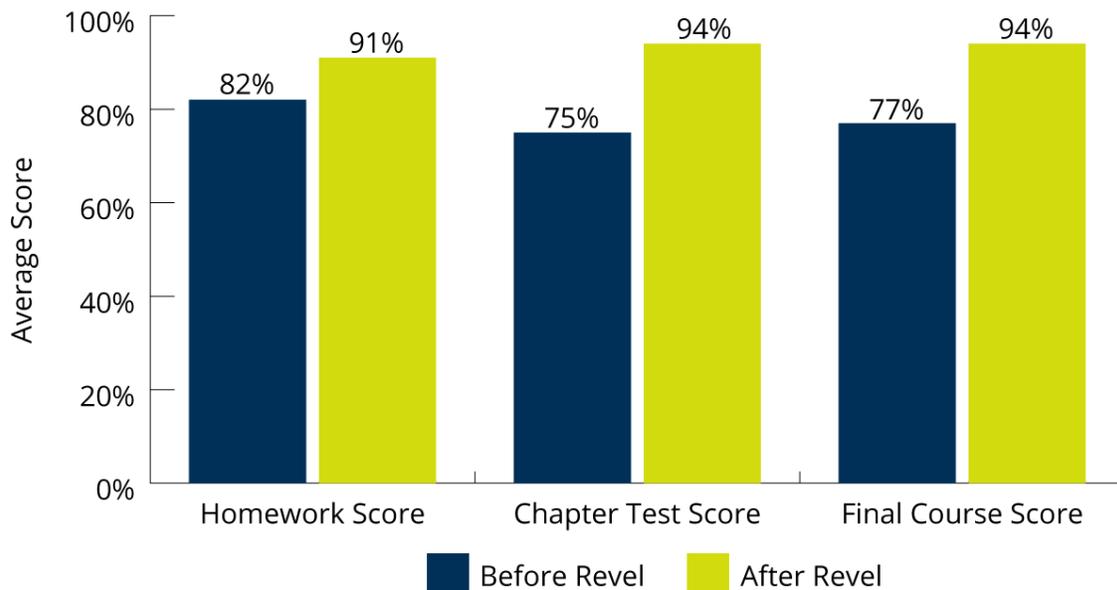


Figure 1. Average Homework, Chapter Test, and Final Course Scores Before ($n=60$) and After ($n=70$) Implementation of Revel, Fall 2018

Students were placed into two groups based on their completion of Revel assignments. Data in figure 2 show:

- Students who completed most assignments (skipped one or fewer assignments) earned average chapter test scores 10 percentage points higher than students who skipped more than one assignment.

For students, the formative Revel assignments are intended to help them identify where they are in terms of successfully completing summative course assessments. Data suggest that if students are not successfully completing the Revel assignments, they may not be aware of potential gaps in their content knowledge until they complete the chapter tests.

Average chapter test score and Revel completion

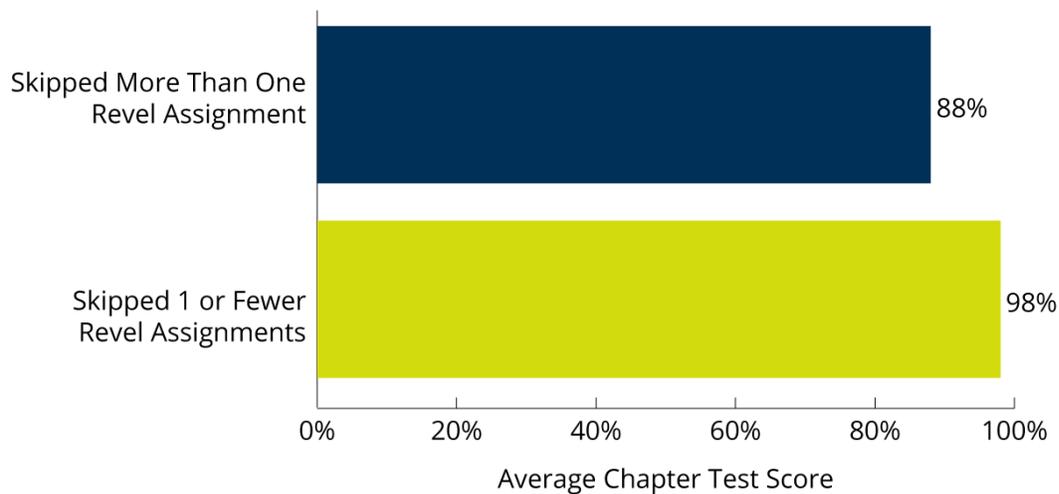


Figure 2. Average Chapter Test Score Based on Revel Assignment Completion, Fall 2018 (n=70)

The Student Experience

“I enjoyed being able to move from reading, to videos, to practice questions, and back to reading. It helped keep me better focused.”

—Student, North Georgia Technical College

Responses from the Fall 2018 end-of-semester survey of Green’s students indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of Revel.

- 100% of respondents agreed that the “read a little, do a little” interactive approach of Revel helped them learn and retain the material better than they would have with a traditional textbook.
- 80% of respondents said they prefer the interactivity of Revel to a regular printed textbook.
- 100% of respondents would recommend Revel to another student.

Student responses to the question “What were the benefits of Revel?” included:

- *“I enjoyed being able to move from reading, to videos, to practice questions, and back to reading. It helped keep me better focused.”*
- *“Being able to test my knowledge before class to see what I was struggling to understand.”*

- *"It was all online, you never have to dig for a book!"*
- *"The benefits of Revel for me were getting to see videos as well as text about certain sections. It helped to see two different views or explanations."*
- *"Using an interactive program ensures that there is more convenience when accessing the material."*

Conclusion

Green initially reviewed Revel in hopes of finding more accessible course materials for his Personal Finance course. Encouraged by what he reviewed, he adopted the program the following semester. On the student survey, students revealed an appreciation for the change in course format, indicating a strong preference for the interactivity of Revel compared to a traditional print textbook. In addition, Revel's "read a little, do a little" approach breaks the material down into smaller pieces, so students are less likely to be distracted and more likely to complete the reading before attempting the practice questions and other assignments. Survey respondents unanimously agreed that this format was more engaging than a print text and helped them retain the information better. Data from Green's course also confirms that Revel was an improvement, as both chapter test and final course scores improved significantly over the previous semester.