



Pearson

Revel

**Innovating to improve student
experience and engagement with
reading**



Key Findings

- **Increase in student engagement and satisfaction:** the module lead reported that students appeared to engage more with reading than in the previous year. This was reportedly due to the individual access, interactivity, readability and also the fact that students enjoying using Revel.
- **Positive student experience:** students appeared to appreciate Revel in comparison to previously used textbooks and ebooks, particularly checking their knowledge along the way and that it made reading more manageable.
- **Engaging students with reading:** both the instructors and students appreciated the highlighting feature within Revel. For instructors, it gave them the opportunity to draw attention to the material they wanted students to focus on. For students, highlighting provided a clear direction for their reading effort and the personalisation required for consolidation and revision.
- **Digital innovation:** instructors were positive about their experience with Revel, they learnt how to implement technology effectively and felt that it “only had a positive impact on (students’) experience.”
- **Saves time:** the academic lead found that Revel helped save time for colleagues when supporting students in their pastoral care by giving them a reliable, robust resource to refer students to.

Overview

The institution featured in this educator story is a post-92 university in the south west of England, with over 30,700 students, 4,400 of them being international students. Pearson’s Revel was implemented for the first time in 2018 by the Associate Head of Department on the Introduction to Business and Management module. The teaching team found the experience to be a very positive one and reported many benefits in the first year of use, including:

- an increase in student engagement and satisfaction
- students demonstrated a preference for Revel over previously used print textbooks
- saving instructor’s valuable time when supporting students outside of lectures
- Pearson’s excellent customer support made the transition to digital simple and efficient for teachers and students

With a pass rate remaining comparable to other modules at the same level - around 85-90% - the experience staff and students had with Revel were overwhelmingly positive.

The Introduction to Business & Management accounted for 15 credits and had 850 full-time undergraduate first year students in 2018. The module had been using Management: An Introduction by David Boddy for a number of years. The majority of students came from an A-level background, but some also came from BTECs and other qualification backgrounds. Twenty-five percent of students were non-UK students speaking English as a second language.

Revel was used for the first time in 2018 in order to:

- improve student feedback on the course
- explore the impact of a digital resource on satisfaction and engagement
- Improve the student experience of transitioning from L1 to L2 when the amount of required reading increases.

The content of this Educatory Story is derived from an in-depth interview with the academic lead thinking carefully about personal, teacher and student experience or perceptions.



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Implementation

The institution invested in Revel and gave their students free access. They believed that Revel would be a more accessible and engaging experience for students on what can sometimes be a relatively unexciting module. With that in mind, they hoped it would encourage students to read more and provide them with a core resource to rely on to inform assessments.

Integrating Revel in place of a print book was the only change intended in the delivery of the modules. Chapters from Revel were assigned during the lectures and students were expected to have read them before the next class. The academic lead was able to add notes to Revel including guidance / instructions to students.

The teaching aim was to:

- avoid any uncertainty around required preparation for class
- highlight content included in assessment
- direct students to other, further reading.

The module consisted of traditional lectures and workshops. The lectures were designed to give an overview of key ideas and broad information. The workshops were about applying the material they learned in the lectures. Students worked in small groups with two hours to complete three to four activities, all overseen by a workshop tutor.

There were some difficulties in implementing Revel into workshops as the teaching team would have liked in order to make the module more interactive – ideally structuring workshops around activities and simulations in the platform. Unfortunately, the module resources were not scheduled for time to ensure enough computers would be available to all students in Technology-Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL) rooms, which have computers built into the tables.

Student Experience

The teaching team were looking for **innovative ways to engage students** in the new module which had only been running for one year. A student survey conducted mid-module (2017-18) indicated that students did not find the general content interesting. The academic lead found students did not appear to be connecting with the traditional textbook and therefore not engaging with the reading. This meant students ended up doing a lot of internet searches instead of referencing their textbook. However, after implementing Revel (2018-19), students indicated that it was a great fit and the academic lead felt it engaged students in a different way compared to the previous year. According to the academic lead, students were **more inclined to engage** because they found the platform **interesting** and more **readable**. The academic lead believes students thought the ability to **check their knowledge** along the way was very beneficial and that reading was more manageable.

"The feedback I got from students is that they found it really positive. They liked using the platform...I think they had quite a positive experience of it compared to traditional textbooks and...even to traditional ebooks."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

Overall, the impact of changing resources from a textbook to a more interactive experience of reading appeared to lead to an **increase in student engagement and satisfaction**. The academic lead reported that students engaged more with reading than in the previous year. This appeared to be due to the individual access, interactivity and how the text was laid out. The lead also believed they found the platform material to be a more enjoyable experience.

"(Students) were far more willing to engage with reading and using academic resources...I think it definitely had a positive impact in terms of accessibility, in terms of readability and engagement."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department



Additionally, new tools supported the renewed effort to engage students with reading. Both the instructors and students appreciated the highlighting feature. For instructors, highlighting parts of the text and adding notes gave them the opportunity to engage and develop students' reading and its application. They were able to highlight and draw attention to the material they wanted students to focus on. It enabled them to let students know what was most relevant for class and assessment preparation. For students, **highlighting provided a clear direction for their reading effort** and also personalization in terms of highlighting interesting or relevant material for reference at a later date e.g. exams.

"I think they liked the additional functionality. They liked that I could highlight and comment on particular parts."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

The academic lead believes students liked the way the text was displayed in Revel and felt that it lent itself to a **more enjoyable reading experience**. Further, students liked the ability to test their understanding of content along the way. Compared to traditional shared ebooks, which only allowed up to 20 users at a time leaving other students to wait in line, Revel proved to be a refreshing, personal experience.

"(Students) felt positive about how it broke down the text, so rather than just being confronted with pages and pages of text...it was more manageable...They liked the interactivity of the models and the little quizzes, so that they were able to sort of check their knowledge as they went along...They felt that on a purely sort of instrumental level, they liked that they all had individual access to this textbook." - **Academic lead / Associate Head of Department**

The instant access provided an **anytime, anywhere availability** which seamlessly accommodated personal needs and time constraints. Further, having individual access meant the text was **personalised** for each student. They were able to highlight content they felt was important and could return to it later for reference.

Instructor Experience and Perception

Digital Innovation. The academic lead felt that Revel provided an opportunity to be **innovative** and move towards a blended way of learning which is increasingly important across institutions and something students increasingly expect. Revel was a great opportunity to try different things and determine what kind of impact it would have on the students and course delivery. Through the use of Revel they learned a lot about how to implement the technology in effective ways.

"I think students reacted positively to it and staff reacted positively to it, and it gave us the opportunity to try out something new...it had a lot of different functions, and I could only see those being improved, given the opportunity to integrate it more into the classroom."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

Revel turned out to be a very **accessible, reader friendly** way to **support both lecturer and student preparation** during the module. The academic lead reported it saved time because teachers were able to support students easily by referring them back to material which had already been lectured on during class. It allowed teachers to direct students to a helpful and **reliable resource they trusted**, while also providing a valuable tool for teachers' lesson preparation.

"I think it allowed me to save time...It gave (students) a much better resource to go back to if they were having trouble understanding something. It was definitely a useful tool in terms of addressing students' questions and areas of confusion."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

"I think staff enjoyed it as well. I think it was useful for them, not only in terms of preparing themselves for tutorials...I think it was a really positive tool for their teaching... a lot more convenient and easier to use than a traditional textbook."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

Value for money - a return on investment. The academic lead would recommend Revel to other colleagues following their positive experience and believes it is worth the investment. Acknowledging that while there are financial considerations for all institutions when deciding to fund any digital resources, in the opinion of the academic lead at this institution it is worth the investment.

"If (other universities) ask me whether it's worth them paying for it, I would say yes...it fulfils quite a few challenges for us (and the students) felt they were getting extra from their first semester... If they ask me whether it's worth them paying for it, I'd say yes."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

The value of customer support. The teaching team found that Pearson consultants were essential in providing a smooth process for training the teaching team and implementing Revel. Pearson helped both staff and students understand how to register and about the benefits of Revel. The consultants also assisted by providing instructions on how Revel worked, how to use the data that was generated and ongoing support throughout the semester. Having limited time to dedicate to a new resource, the academic lead found that the Pearson team were very helpful in streamlining Revel integration, offering support to ease the burden on himself.

"Pearson were good in supporting...giving half-hour talks to staff and students about how to register and what they might want to do and what the benefits would be. Getting them online was relatively straightforward....The team at Revel were really good and really responsive...The support offered by Pearson was really, really good."

- Academic lead / Associate Head of Department

Conclusion

The academic lead and teaching team found that Revel brought many benefits to their 'Introduction to Business and Management' module. They felt it added value and saved instructors time, seemingly increasing engagement with reading and student satisfaction through features such as highlighting. The digital experience compared positively to traditional textbooks and the service Pearson provided contributed to the overall feeling that Revel provided value for money for both instructors and students.