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# Educator

# Story

Developing managers of  
the future with Revel  
CASS Business School

## Key Findings

In this diverse cohort of undergraduate Business Management students, introducing Revel in 2018 supported a positive teaching and learning experience by:

- **Flexible access** - providing students with a seamless, engaging learning resource that they could access at any time, place and on any device.
- **Structured, engaging learning** - offering students an easy, structured way of developing their understanding of key skills required to become effective managers in the future
- **Preparedness and knowledge acquisition** - delivering relevant learning outside of class to reinforce concepts covered in lectures

## About the Product

Revel replaces traditional texts with an engaging learning experience that prepares students for class.

It presents a seamless blend of author-created digital text, media, and assessment based on learning science. Students are able to read, practice, and study in one continuous experience — anytime, anywhere, on any device.

The assignability and tracking tools in Revel lets lecturers gauge their students' understanding and engagement in and out of the classroom. This visibility, paired with students' renewed energy for the material, empowers lecturers to spend class time on the meaningful instruction.

Title in use: Laurie J. Mullins Management and Organisational Behaviour (1<sup>st</sup> Edition in Revel)

## Summary

Introduction to Management is a first year undergraduate module taught face-to-face for students on the CASS BSc Business Management degree programme. Its purpose - to deliver the foundations of management and organisational behaviour theory that students will later go on to apply in their futures as managers.

In light of growing student numbers and changes to the programme of delivery, Dr Chung (Lecturer in Management), wanted to offer an accessible tool for students that would help foster independent study skills and improve preparedness for class, allowing tutors to spend more time critically reviewing application of theory to cases.

## Description of course

There were approximately 375 full-time students taking this core module 'Introduction to Management'. That represented an almost 100% increase in recruitment on the previous year. Of those students, almost 50% are international and English is not their first language.

The lecturer opted to use Revel with Management and Organisational Behaviour, written by Laurie J. Mullins with Gill Christy, because it offered a good range of themes and concepts that aligned to the learning outcomes of the module.

The 15 credit unit is taught intensively over the course of 11 weeks, with the first week taken up by the introduction to the learning and the last 2 weeks for revision preparation. The outcomes are assessed by a mid-term multiple choice exam and group oral presentation of a case study.

*"We introduce a large range of management topics in an 11 week course, of which students only have 8 weeks to intensively learn the content. Given that students have less tutorial time, Revel was a big part of the plan to help students become better at self-learning."*

Dr. D Chung

## Product Implementation

Dr. Chung chose to use Revel because she wanted to be able to provide an accessible, engaging resource that students could use at any time, in any place and most importantly would help students reinforce their understanding of management theory initially taught through their lectures. Following a consultation with Pearson, she was really encouraged by the presentation and structure of the content, its usability, the range of activities available and the fact that students could test their understanding of the theory through bite-sized, manageable learning.

More importantly, she was able to visualise how it could be used to address the following **challenges**:

- **Programme-wide change to delivery**

Due to planned reduction in allocated tutorial time each week, Dr Chung wanted to bridge the gap in contact time by implementing an engaging solution that would enable students to learn the background theory effectively in their own time. This would allow her to use class time differently to reinforce the theory, focusing on the practical application of theory to real life scenarios and cases.

- **Increase in student numbers**

As a result of successful recruitment onto the programme, student numbers had increased by approximately 100% on the previous year. Dr. Chung recognised that in order to effectively teach all 375 students, there would need extra support with their learning outside of class.

- **Transition to Higher Education and independent study skills**

Dr Chung acknowledged that across the landscape of Higher Education, there is a significant transition between learning at school and university. In addition to equipping students with a foundation in management theory, there is also a responsibility on both the lecturers and students to ensure they are developing independent study skills such as reading, preparation, note taking and contribution in class. Dr Chung felt that features in Revel could help address this challenge by:

- Assigning direct reading with deadlines in line with the syllabus to ensure students keep on track with their expected independent learning

*"I was concerned by the size of the student numbers because it was such a big group and you don't really have enough time in one hour every week to cover a lot of things in depth.*

*I thought that for many students having something they can learn from in their spare time, and would give them a depth of understanding, would be really helpful"*

Dr. D Chung



- Using notes and highlighting features to relate content to learning activities and outcomes
- Use the performance dashboard to track engagement against recommended reading hours and where required make interventions to support students.

### Implementation

Reading was assigned weekly across the main body of teaching (8 weeks in total) in line with themes covered. The expectation was for students to have completed the reading and activities before class.

Along with the reading, end-of-chapter quizzes were also assigned for students to consolidate their understanding of the theory. To aid learning and engagement, students were given up to 3 attempts per question so that they could benefit from feedback to any incorrect answers. There were also a number of journal writing tasks available in each assignment to help foster critical writing skills.

Journal: Consider the statement: 'The human relations approach makes all the right noises with an emphasis on humane behaviour, considerate management and recognition of the informal organisation. However, it is more about what people would like to believe and ignores the realities of the actual working environment.' What is your opinion? To what extent have you experienced a genuine human relations approach in a work organisation?

No Submissions (146)

Submissions (26)

Oct 24 5:36 pm

I don't feel I have ever experienced a genuine human relations approach in a work organisation before. Most of my work have not been followed up or been given attention to by supervisors.

Oct 7 5:32 pm

I would tend to agree. I have experienced a genuine emphasis on humane behaviour in an organisation.

Oct 6 6:07 pm

I think that I do agree with the fact that Human relations are a vital part of any working environment, as humans (as creatures) need to be sociable in order to be fully content and happy, therefore for instance if one of the people in the workplace is bullied, he/she will not want to work as hard and therefore this will promote a very bad and toxic atmosphere at work. However I think that this greatly depends on the individual attitudes towards work and what motivates a particular employee. Some of the workers will not care as much about interpersonal relationships and more about the monetary reward of jobs, thus the example mentioned earlier will not impact them and their productivity as much. On the other hand, if a particular worker is more interested in social gain from work, rather than monetary, he/she will be impacted more by such a situation. Overall I think that the organisation should promote a sense of culture and unity as to help those specific employees. The benefit of it will be limited however it can still help improve the working experience for both the employees and the managers/bosses (as their subordinates will be more happy and so be willing to do more work)

### Example of Journal Writing Task

Dr. Chung also used the intuitive notes and highlights feature in Revel to signpost students to useful content in preparation for their mid-term exam:



7.1 Why do people do what they do?

The relationship between the organisation and its members is influenced by what motivates them to work and the rewards and fulfilment they derive from it. The more highly engaged and motivated the workforce, the more likely it is the organisation will be successful in achieving its goals and objectives. Motivation is at the root of all organisational activity.

Chapter 7: Work motivation and satisfaction

Watch this video and consider whether the strength of the work ethic in Japan and commitment to working long hours will mean that the cut in working hours is ineffective? How might a cut in working hours affect motivation?

Useful for exam

Chapter 7: Work motivation and satisfaction

Effective organisational performance is dependent upon human activity and the efforts of members of staff. The structure of the work organisation, styles of leadership and the design and content of jobs can have a significant effect on the attitude, motivation and satisfaction of staff. The manager needs to know how best to elicit the co-operation and motivation of staff, and direct their efforts to achieving the goals and objectives of the organisation.

Useful for exam

In order to ensure Revel was well used by students and provided a great learner experience Dr Chung decided to:

1.implement Revel using integration with the School’s Virtual Learning Environment - Moodle. This enabled seamless access for students in their VLE and Dr. Chung was able to link assigned reading in Revel to relevant parts and resources in the VLE course.

2. Provide students with an introduction to Revel by a consultant from Pearson who explained the value of Revel for their module, reinforcing Dr Chung’s expectations for the course. They were also shown how to make best use of the Revel app so that they could access their reading at any time and place.

Part of the rationale for using Revel was to drive engagement with reading and was set as a key measure of success. Dr. Chung frequently viewed the dashboard to monitor engagement to see whether it was meeting expectations. In a mid point review with Pearson Digital Solutions Consultant, it was identified that **over 75% of students were engaging with Revel on a weekly basis**, with some students spending up to three hours on their reading.

*“I think for some of the students, they were coming to me and saying they were doing all the reading and have done all the quizzes”*

Why did the university fund access to Revel for all their students?

Challenge

Increased number of students and reduced contact time, meant that other support would have to be put in place to ensure students remain on track with learning outside of class.

Solution

The lecturer and other members of faculty agreed that Revel would provide students with structured reading outside of class so they would be better prepared for learning in lectures and tutorials.

Impact

Revel delivered seamless access to relevant content in an intensively taught module, allowing students to keep pace with the learning through the 8 weeks of teaching.



## Instructor Experience and Perception

### Engagement and Motivation

Dr Chung acknowledged that in order to be successful, students have to engage with reading, attend lectures and contribute in tutorials. In part it is the duty of lecturers to set that expectation from the start but having a resource that makes those tasks more accessible is key. She added *“I thought the interface was very nice and much easier to use than other electronic resources, and much easier and better for students than having to wait to check a book out on hold in the library”*

Being unable to gain insight on to how much students were doing outside of class in previous years, she was encouraged by the fact she could see a large proportion of students engaged and reading what has been assigned through the performance dashboard. She also felt that having an online resource for students where English is not their first language and often struggle with listening, provided an opportunity to catch up with what is covered in class.

### Achievement

While it has been difficult to correlate engagement in Revel with achievement, Dr Chung felt that student performance compared with the previous year, with some really encouraging demonstrations of theory in their assessed group presentations. While she explained that achievement on the module varied as a whole, she strongly argued that those who had engaged with all of the reading and activity outside of class, including Revel, are those students who achieved highest. In the review meeting with Pearson, she had identified those who were performing well on the module were highly engaged with Revel via the dashboard.

### Ease of use

Revel offers an intuitive interface which allows lecturers to assign reading and activities for students very easily. Coupled with Pearson VLE integration services, Dr Chung was able to insert Revel into her VLE course at pertinent points so that Revel appeared to be an organic part of the student learning journey.

Students also reported that they found it very easy to use and navigate and the ability to be able to read from their mobile devices via the app was useful.





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*“Choosing sections, putting them on to Moodle with the link was very easy. I thought the interface on my side was easy. I also think from a reader’s experience perspective, it was probably very easy to use. This was clear in the feedback session we conducted with students”*

— Dr Chung, CASS Business School

## Conclusion

Revel has offered students an engaging and accessible means of keeping pace with the intensive nature of the module outside of class. Moreover, it has enabled the lecturer to identify how well students are engaging with core theory and provide a resource that will help them hone the skills, knowledge and attributes they will need in studying more complex areas of management and their future careers as managers.

Students who reported having a positive experience of Revel purported it offered clear practical guidance on how to be perfect managers in the future. Additionally, they also felt reading through Revel was easy to follow, well structured and enjoyed the ability to do their reading in their own time and at their own pace using any device.

*“Revel was a big piece of the plan of ensuring that students have that engagement outside of class”*

— Dr Chung, CASS Business School

## Next Steps

Following this first year of trialing Revel, Dr Chung would like to explore further ways of embedding Revel deeper into the tapestry of the module, aligning and signposting content more closely to summative assessments to drive engagement. This will involve reviewing the content and breaking it down in to more pertinent bitesize, manageable reading assignments.

Dr Chung will also explore how she can leverage the writing tasks in Revel to help students develop critical thinking skills in the application of management theory, and is considering assigning credit for participation in shared writing activities that can be discussed in tutorials.

*“Students really did have to do, in my opinion, more learning on their own. They were expected to do a lot more revision and reading and reviewing on their own, because they just didn't have any time to do that in small group*



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*sessions. And I think in that sense, Revel played a big part in supporting them with that”*

— Dr Chung, CASS Business School