



Helping students establish
professional skills and reducing
administrative burden



Pearson

About Pearson Career Success (PCS)

Pearson Career Success is a centralized learning experience that helps students discover their best career options and the skills required for the various career paths. In addition, PCS helps students develop professional and interpersonal skills through instruction and practice and demonstrate their skills effectively to prospective employers.

PCS includes assessments on college and career readiness and on the mindset necessary to succeed professionally. Also, PCS provides practical, expert instruction on key career development topics like: creating effective resumes and e-portfolios; preparing for interviewing and networking; and preparing candidates to showcase their qualifications and competencies through work artifacts and digital credentials on skills such as communication, collaboration and teamwork, and leadership.

Challenges and goals

Instructor Dean Le Blanc previously taught a career course at the college and felt the course was lacking the vital digital components necessary for professional and personal success in the modern age. He found himself searching for another option that was more robust, ensured an excellent student experience, and was a good value both in terms of content and price point. For his students he hoped to find a program that would help with skills such as time management, note-taking, test-taking, and goal setting. He believes sharpening these skills is beneficial to all his students, but especially those that have never been exposed to these types of skills.

Le Blanc and fellow colleagues decided to select the Pearson Career Success course because it allowed students to maximize the reach and effectiveness of their online presence, as well as the good value provided for both himself and students alike. Further, he felt it would help students determine academic goals and aid student transition into career readiness.

After the initial decision was made to utilize PCS, goals shifted to helping students create a customized academic plan. Further, Le Blanc and colleagues wanted to find ways to differentiate themselves from other programs at the institution. To help this aim, they introduced the PCS badging credentials. Not only did this make their program unique, but it also was another way to add value to the course without being a financial burden for students or time burden for Le Blanc.



Key findings

Dean Le Blanc, an instructor at Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), has found Pearson Career Success to be very beneficial in his Supply Chain Management and Individualized Technical Studies programs. He believes Pearson Career Success has added value to the course by:

- Setting students up for success in a competitive hiring environment through helping them understand their strengths and weaknesses, build a stand-out resume, hone interviewing and networking skills, and establish a digital brand
- Helping students determine goals and graduation path early on in their academic careers
- Saving instructors time grading and providing feedback, and students time completing and submitting assignments
- Offering the institution a way to differentiate itself by providing badging opportunities to students at no extra cost

Implementation of Pearson Career Success

The Supply Chain program is offered in the fall and spring while the Individualized Technical Studies is in the spring, fall and summer. Both programs are 100% online. There are about 90 students enrolled in the programs per year, with the institution as a whole enrolling around 27,000–30,000 students. Currently, Le Blanc is the only instructor utilizing PCS at MATC, with PCS being a required 3 credit course. PCS has been offered at the institution for a year and a half, with the last 6 months solely being a first-semester course. This allows students time to build their e-portfolio and compile a roadmap for their academic career.

Another change made over the last 6 months has been the integration of the software within Blackboard. This has simplified Le Blanc and his students' access to the software. Students login to Blackboard to complete and submit their assignments, and the instructor is able to grade and provide feedback. LeBlanc states "It has made my job a bit easier and simpler in terms of grading."

In order to help students who are struggling with the technological aspect of navigating the software, he offers a 4-hour, in-person lab at the beginning of each semester. Further, he makes sure to be available to students through in-person meetings, Google hangouts, and conferences if any student has technological or content concerns throughout the 16-week semester.

Currently, Le Blanc finds that he utilizes around 80–90% of the content, though he does not use the assessment component. He assigns many activities from each module and as students show proficiency they progress through the different competencies.

I think the big thing for me is ease and efficiency of administration because there are a lot of students. The programs are growing, and for me to provide feedback and a one-on-one experience, which takes a lot of time to administer, is important. Anything Pearson can provide for me to help create some efficiency is another way to add value and be able to spend more time with student feedback along the way.

— Dean Le Blanc,
instructor at Milwaukee Area
Technical College (MATC)

Instructor experience and perception

Le Blanc notes many benefits to implementing the PCS course. He feels it helps him as an instructor, as well as the institution as a whole, accomplish many of their goals. Most importantly, he believes it helps students accomplish their goals: "I think the program itself is very robust. They get a really good breadth of knowledge in terms of what it is going to take to be competitive in this new employment economy where you need to be connected digitally, understand your strengths and weaknesses, and communicate and articulate effectively what you know and how you are best going to provide value to those organizations that you are looking to work for."

According to Le Blanc, students are responding extremely positively to PCS. He noted most students find it useful because this course is the first time they have been exposed to resume building, academic degree planning, and e-portfolios. The most stimulating module appears to be the Research Careers and Programs: students feel it gives them the opportunity early on to determine if this academic program and potential career path is right for them. He believes determining that in the first semester is extremely beneficial for students.

Le Blanc believes PCS helps students with employability, especially those never before exposed to the components necessary to successfully stand out to obtain a desired career. It sharpens their interviewing skills and the look of their resume and digital branding, and it teaches them the principles of professional social networking, all of which promote confidence in students when seeking employment.

Le Blanc has been very pleased with the customer support received from Pearson. He feels it has done a great job administering and facilitating meetings and discussions to optimize their use of PCS. He believes the partnership has been a beneficial one and looks forward to continuing to work with Pearson in the future.

Last, Le Blanc's says, "the badging has gone over really well." The micro-credentials, or badges, have added a lot of merit to the course, and students appear to enjoy the challenge. Not only does it improve the course, but it also makes MATC stand out amongst other institutions.

I think this is setting them up really well to be more successful and happier about a career path they know they are going to be in for an extended period of time.

— Dean Le Blanc,
instructor at Milwaukee Area
Technical College (MATC)





Conclusion

Overall, Le Blanc feels the incorporation of PCS into their Supply Chain and Individualized Technical Studies programs has added a lot of value for himself as well as students. Students acquire a wide breadth of knowledge to help them gain confidence and be successful in a competitive hiring environment. Le Blanc himself has noted a decrease in time spent grading assignments and providing feedback, while the institution has differentiated itself through badging. Le Blanc hopes to eventually incorporate PCS into the onboarding process for all students to help set them up for success in their academic and professional career.



We talk about differentiating our program with other institutions, the fact that you can earn those embedded badges in this Pearson Foliotek platform is a huge selling point.

— Dean Le Blanc,
instructor at Milwaukee Area
Technical College (MATC)



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