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**STAMFORD
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY
SIMNET
CASE STUDY**

McGraw-Hill



Case Study Facts

Course: Business Math Prep

Instructor: David Van Brecht,
Business Lecturer



Digital Product in Use:
SIMnet

Number of Students: 160
student per semester, three
semesters

“It’s a great product for supporting multi-paced learning.”

Stamford International University strives towards the provision of innovative and interactive learning and delivering superior employability outcomes to its graduates. The institution focuses on core principles of Innovative Learning, Industry Linkages, International Perspective, and Integrity. The four principles are embedded deeply in the university’s strategy so that graduates are provided superior outcomes and become ready to excel in their careers and their lives with deep commitments to local and global citizenship.

The Challenge

The challenges facing David and his team on this course prior to the implementation of SIMnet three years ago were multifaceted.

The first challenge David was looking to solve was one common across Higher Education Institutes worldwide: the problem of diverse skill sets in a cohort. For David, this was something he was keen to rectify quickly. He explained, “Some students would be fairly proficient with Excel when they joined the course, and others would have seldom used a computer.”

A second challenge hung on the issue of language, with many students not speaking English fluently. “It’s hard to teach when half of your students may be struggling to understand what you are saying,” David added.

The third challenge was time-management for David and the teaching team. He wanted his students to be practicing as much as possible in Excel, but admitted that finding the time to look over the volume of work would be a hard feat to pull off. As David commented, “grading 160 spreadsheets just isn’t feasible.”

The fourth, and last, challenge that David and his team needed to solve was around exam security. David expanded by explaining that, prior to the move to SIMnet, it was a struggle knowing which assignments were original and which ones were plagiarised. “Students sharing assignments is a major problem for educators globally,” David added.

The Solution

The solution David and his team were looking for needed to be robust, as demonstrated by the number of issues it needed to solve. So it is pleasing to note that as soon as the McGraw-Hill consultant showed them SIMnet, they were sold. “Since seeing it, we knew we wanted it right away,” he said, adding further, “I haven’t found a similar product from other providers.”

Explaining what most appealed to them, David explained that it was clear that it would be a lot easier for students to use than the solution they had in place at the time. He also liked the fact it could easily be paired with the flipped classroom model he has in place.

“Our flipped classroom sees our students doing prep work ahead of the class. Then we have a two hour class together, by which point they should be fairly competent, but if they’re not, we can work through issues and problems together and can offer hands on support. After class, students will do a quiz to reinforce their learning.”

It wasn’t just the capacity to be folded into a flipped learning approach that David and the team liked, though. It was the fact it could solve the challenge around language and ability levels, too. “SIMNet means that the students can be working at their own pace and in their own time,” he said, adding, “And if they’re struggling to follow the language, then because they’re able to work at their own speed, they can spend a little more time translating it if needed.”

“It’s a great product for supporting multi-paced learning,” David Van Brecht.

David is also able to give more complex assignments to the students who are stronger in their skills level which keeps them motivated and engaged, and can also spend time supporting those who may be struggling with specific concepts.

The final challenge around exam security was also helped through the introduction of SIMnet. “If they try and upload someone else’s spreadsheet now, the system won’t let them,” he says. “If I wasn’t using SIMNet, this would be very hard to manage.”

The Results

The results David has seen since moving to SIMnet have been good to see on a number of levels.

Framing this in a chronological perspective, David explained that he found the implementation and set-up of SIMnet easy to manage.

“I did the set-up myself using the manual and it didn’t take long,” he commented.

He’s pleased with the transparency in structure now, too. “I build the course ahead of time and it’s clear from the calendar functionality what needs to be done and when.”

Past the initial set-up and looking to how well the new platform was received by students, David is delighted. “You can see students are engaged when they’re with me. No student is on their mobile or on social media – they’re working on the simulations and they’re helping each other. If you walk past the room, you’ll see the students really trying, and that’s great. **SIMnet really works!**”

And, lastly, on the outcomes they’ve seen with SIMnet, it is more good news. “From the moment we started using SIMnet, we’ve seen higher pass rates, and those pass rates have been consistent,” David says.

80%  **83-85%**

The course scores have increased from 80% to between 83-85% since the introduction of SIMnet.

Conclusion

With a rise in scores, higher engagement, easy set-up, and the answer to a real range of challenges, SIMnet has been instrumental in supporting David and his colleagues, as well as the students on this course. “The biggest thing for me,” said David, “Is that it drives student engagement and that students like it. It’s practical, it’s hands on, and it’s a great way to teach in this day and age.” With such positive commentary and results, it makes sense that the team at Stamford are exploring further ways to embed SIMnet into their courses moving forward.

For more information on SIMnet please visit
mheducation.sg

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At McGraw-Hill, we believe our contribution to creating a brighter future lies with our deep understanding of how learning happens and how the mind develops. Based on this, we develop methods to make the learning process more effective, and we apply all of this to creating digital and print solutions that empower educators and propel learners on a path toward success.