



## How Revel helps students come to class prepared

This study was conducted with a professor in the Economics department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). The professor is a full-time faculty member with many years of Principles of Economics teaching experience. They have utilized Revel: *Microeconomics Interactive*, 1st Edition in their Principles of Microeconomics course for approximately two years.

In addition to speaking with the professor to gain insight into how they implement Revel and their perception of how it benefits them and their students, we also surveyed their students to better understand their perspectives.

### Implementation

Revel is integrated within UNCG's learning management system, Canvas, allowing students to seamlessly navigate between the two while also syncing grades from Revel directly into Canvas. The professor typically assigns one to two modules (chapters) per week to prepare students and reduce cognitive load during class. Before class, students must read all the sections within the module, completing embedded assessments along the way that include multiple-choice questions or graphs. By the end of the week, students are required to complete all the end of section knowledge "Checks" and a "Chapter Workout" located at the end of the chapter. All are designed to help students understand where they may have knowledge gaps and strengthen topic mastery.

While the professor acknowledges this can be perceived as a lot of work for students, general feedback from students regarding this has been, "I hate that I have to do so many questions in the chapter and it takes me a lot of time, but I know it's actually really good for me because otherwise I wouldn't bother reading the book. I know I am learning a lot more as a result of using Revel."

## Benefits

With traditional learning materials, and even with eTextbooks alone, there are two separate spaces for learning, one for reading and one for homework.

According to the professor, students typically start with their homework because that is where they accrue their points. If they get stuck, they search their textbook for the answer to only that question. They very rarely systematically go through their chapter from start to finish, which is “the way you’re supposed to learn the material and the way it’s supposed to be presented.”

**With Revel, the homework is embedded directly into the textbook, ensuring that students complete the reading, and it requires subsequent low-stakes mini- assessments along the way to gauge their understanding of concepts.**

This structure resonates with many of the students, with one student commenting, “It’s a great layout. I like the questions within the passages because it helps me confirm the knowledge I already have.” Another agrees, saying, “It has been the most helpful textbook and has helped me pace and test my understanding.”

“Our catch phrase is ‘The textbook is the homework. The homework is the textbook,’” says the professor. “And the thing the students absolutely love is the fact that I’m giving them 30% of their grade for reading the book and answering the questions as they go through the book.”

Prior to adopting Revel and partnering with Pearson, the professor created their own websites for the course. With one of these websites, the institution conducted a small-scale study where they required some students to go through their material before class, while the other group was only required to go

through those materials by the end of the semester. Results showed that the average students (not the highest or lowest performing) increased their performance on their exam scores by 3% when they completed the material before coming to class.

According to the professor, “That was part of what really got me excited about using Revel. I know the structure works. I know my website works... That’s something Revel and the Economics Interactive textbook in particular offers that no other product offers in this space right now; the ability to guarantee that your students have read the book before they come to class and read it in a way that you know they’ve done it critically enough that they’re correctly answering questions about what they’ve read.”

“Bringing this incentive structure into congruence with the actual reading has had a profound effect on students’ ability to learn and retain information rather than the sort of hodgepodge of randomly searching for answers in the book with no sort of systematic organization of what they are looking for.”

One student echoed this sentiment saying, “I feel like (Revel) is more effective and efficient in helping someone understand what’s going to be talked about and, therefore, prepares them for when they go to class.”

This guarantee that your students have read the book also shows the students that they are paying for materials that they will be required to utilize in the course. “At least with Revel they see the value proposition because they’re actually using what they are buying,” says the professor.

The COVID pandemic really impacted how students interact with their course materials. Fortifying study skills and acclimating students to what it means to participate in one’s education are areas Revel can positively impact, according to the professor. “I think Revel is even more important post-COVID. I think it’s superior to anything else out there because it gets students to read. But the other thing is that I think Revel forces students to get back into what it looks like to have better study habits and be in a regular reading routine. It helps them get reoriented and back on the education track more quickly.”

Many of the students commented on how engaging the textbook was and how that encouraged them to read the text, with one student saying, “It’s the best textbook I’ve ever read because there is no fluff and it’s easy to read. You actually want to read it, and it’s easy to understand.”

“(Revel) is more effective and efficient in helping someone understand what’s going to be talked about and, therefore, prepares them for when they go to class.”



**Inclusive Access (IA) has benefited the professor’s most in need students.** They find that because the students who most often struggle in their courses are those who are on financial aid and come from lower socioeconomic status, IA allows them to get their course materials on time without having to wait for financial aid to go through, two or even three weeks after the course started. “You’ve got the most at-risk students not getting their access codes until weeks after the class started, and often those students on financial aid are experiencing higher prices from the bookstore, but Inclusive Access solves all of that. It’s the greatest thing in the world.”

Revel's analytics help the professor determine which students are struggling and which are falling behind on their work in an intuitive, easy-to-distinguish way. The course analytics feature allows them to reach out to students early to prevent the semester from going on too long and missing an opportunity to help a student be more successful in the course. "I think it's very helpful. Plus, the fact that it is so well packaged makes instructors a lot more likely to use those analytic tools."

### Advice

For those instructors considering a variety of platforms, the professor encourages them to consider the importance of students reading before class.

**Not only does it prepare them for active participation during class, but it also gives them an understanding of where they may be struggling,**

so they can ask questions or make sure to pay extra attention to that point in the lecture. "I would ask them how important it is to them that their students come to class having already read the material, so once you start lecturing their cognitive load is going to be reduced, and they're going to have a better opportunity to retain what you are teaching them," says the professor. "Perhaps even more importantly than having them go through the material in advance, they know the material they don't quite understand and what they thought was pretty easy."

### What makes this title unique?

The first textbook of its kind, *(Micro/Macro) Economics Interactive* offers students a way to engage with the reading through videos and interactive graphs, while pausing for embedded assessments to address knowledge gaps along the way. These assessments, called Explain It, Graph It, Explore It, Apply It, Review It, and Check That I've Got It, keep students actively participating in their learning, giving them low-stakes points throughout the reading process and ensuring student buy-in.

"That is somewhere Revel really shines. There is a value proposition because what you don't get with a lot of these Open Access materials is the incentive structures to get students to read. You don't get the grading platform.

You don't get the ability to give credit to students for doing the reading. With Open Access, there is no way to ensure students are looking at any of it."

The distinctive interactive graphs give students the opportunity to take control of their own learning and ensure they have topic mastery when it comes to how to analyze a graph gained through interactive features and formative feedback.

One student commented on how helpful these graphs are when it comes to tackling more in-depth concepts saying, “The interactive and buildable graphs make it easier to learn and understand difficult concepts and topics.”

The opening videos are placed at the beginning of each chapter, and they feature the authors. To bring a touch of real-world applicability and relatability, the authors reference personal experiences that pertain to what students will be learning in the chapter.

A student explained what they liked best about Revel, and in this title, are, “The opening videos because they gave us a preview of what we would be learning.” The closing videos are placed at the end of each chapter, where students are asked to think about the author’s experience from the opening video and apply what they learned throughout the chapter, answering related embedded questions to encourage engagement and reflection.

“It’s the best textbook I’ve ever read because there is no fluff and it’s easy to read. You actually want to read it, and it’s easy to understand.”

