



WileyPLUS with ORION

CASE STUDY

Newcastle University
Semester 1 2015

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Case Study:

Instructors at Newcastle University use WileyPLUS with ORION adaptive learning to efficiently support their diverse cohort of Biomedical students.

Background

This study was conducted by Wiley to examine the efficacy of WileyPLUS with ORION in the Biomedical Science course at the University of Newcastle during Semester 1 2015.

Biomedical Science is a first-year course with an enrolment of approximately 650 students across two campuses – Callaghan and Ourimbah. It is a core subject for a number of degree pathways including biomedical science, speech pathology, podiatry, physiotherapy and nutrition.

Instructors Dr Karen Mate and Dr Judith Weidenhofer deliver the course via three lectures per week plus tutorials and have recently introduced a blended learning approach, incorporating digital resources. Both instructors indicate that diversity in the backgrounds and entry-level skills of students in a large cohort is a key challenge in teaching this course.

“With our number of students we need ways to direct them to assistance without having to highlight where to get help based on individual topics.”

Dr Karen Mate, Instructor

Rationale for adopting

Instructor Karen Mate's intention in approaching digital solutions was to provide students of various backgrounds and skills with an online resource that “has good information, which students can work through at their own pace, and use as much or as little as they need to.”

WileyPLUS with ORION met this requirement, with additional motivators for adoption including its sophisticated ORION adaptive learning engine, a competitive and fixed price point for students, and the offer of local Australian support for both instructors and students.

“The support that's available with WileyPLUS is absolutely invaluable and makes it that much easier to use.”

Dr Karen Mate

Resources used

Wiley text *Principles of Anatomy and Physiology 14th edition* by Tortora was used in conjunction with WileyPLUS with ORION for this course in Semester 1 2015.

Wiley provided Single Sign On integration of WileyPLUS with ORION into Blackboard, enabling students to access the e-Textbook from the homepage of the Learning Management System. The course was structured week-by-week within Blackboard. Each weekly folder contained links to the relevant reading in the e-Textbook, homework assignments to be completed within WileyPLUS, and the relevant practice questions in ORION.

Both instructors attributed the significant student uptake of WileyPLUS with ORION to this integrated approach. Students were encouraged to use the ORION adaptive learning tool to test their proficiency before and after lectures, and during study.

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Instructor Evaluation

WileyPLUS with ORION helped address the instructors' key challenge of catering to a diverse student cohort by providing a resource which created a personalised study experience for the student, targeted to their individual level of proficiency at any point in the course.

“ When students expressed concern about how well they were doing, ORION was a resource we pointed them to for more help. ”

Dr Judith Weidenhofer, Instructor

ORION is considered the greatest asset to students as it helps them to identify problem areas and address them independently, with adaptive practice and feedback. Other attractive features include the intuitive, easy-to-use layout, the ability to set assignments and access to local training and support; “for students, the local support – having an Australian number to call – made a huge difference.”

Overall the instructors consider WileyPLUS with ORION to be a useful and beneficial tool for students, and capable of supporting them to achieve their goals. They would both recommend WileyPLUS with ORION to a colleague.

“ The students who have used it have achieved their goal – whether that goal was to pass the course or to get an HD in the course. Those who used it regularly have done really well – some extremely well. ”

Dr Karen Mate

Student Evaluation

Biomedical Science student Taylor used WileyPLUS with ORION regularly throughout the semester and more intensively leading up to assessments.

Taylor says the step-by-step structure of WileyPLUS with ORION enabled her to transition from secondary school to the more independent study demands of university, and to absorb large amounts of complex course content: “Going from the HSC to starting uni, there’s a lot more work to do from home and it’s challenging to wrap your head around concepts:

“ I was definitely overwhelmed when we first started. WileyPLUS was good because it gave me a structure and a way to approach the topics. It helped keep me motivated. ”

She also found the ORION adaptive learning tool valuable; “ORION tells you what you need to work on as you’re going through it. You’re able to see where you went wrong and revise the knowledge you were supposed to know for that question. For me ORION was a supportive tool for learning and a great tool for revision.” “It’s like a virtual teacher!”

“I think WileyPLUS with ORION did help me improve my outcomes. Others in my cohort who used it also claim that their marks were better than prior to using it. It does make a difference. I would definitely use it again.”

For more information on WileyPLUS with ORION or to express your interest in adopting it for your course visit wileydigitalsolutions.com.au/orion

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