

## Digital Course Solution Increases Instructor Efficiency and Student Engagement

An important goal for Pace University has been to offer all of its core courses online, and in 2009, Public Speaking was one of two remaining courses that needed to be modified in order to meet this goal. Professor Maria Luskay was able to change that by creating a comprehensive online course with the tools she found in *Connect Lucas* and making the online section just as academically rigorous as the face-to-face course. As a result, her course became a model that was presented to the institution's Board of Trustees for what online teaching and learning can be.

### Institution Profile

Pace University has one campus in New York City, one in Westchester, and one in White Plains, New York. A private metropolitan university, Pace enrolls approximately 13,500 students annually and offers 27 undergraduate and graduate degrees, 47 master's degrees, and four doctoral degrees.

### Implementation

#### Course Description:

This course is designed to improve public speaking skills and reduce anxiety associated with speaking in public. Skills learned in the course will help students to develop an understanding of the group process, speech organization, delivery, and audience assessment. Students will gain the ability to communicate clearly and effectively, an essential element for success at Pace University and in any future career.

#### Course Grade:

- 65% of the final grade is based on three speeches
- 15% of the final grade is based on a final project
- 10% of the final grade is based unit quizzes
- 10% of the final grade is based on speech peer review

#### Digital Product in Use:

Connect® Lucas

#### Course Name:

Public Speaking

#### Course Type:

Online

#### Credit Hours:

Three

#### Textbook in Use:

*The Art of Public Speaking*  
by Lucas, 10e

#### Instructor Name:

Maria Luskay

#### Enrollment:

36/year (instructor total)  
100/year (university total)

#### Case Study Term:

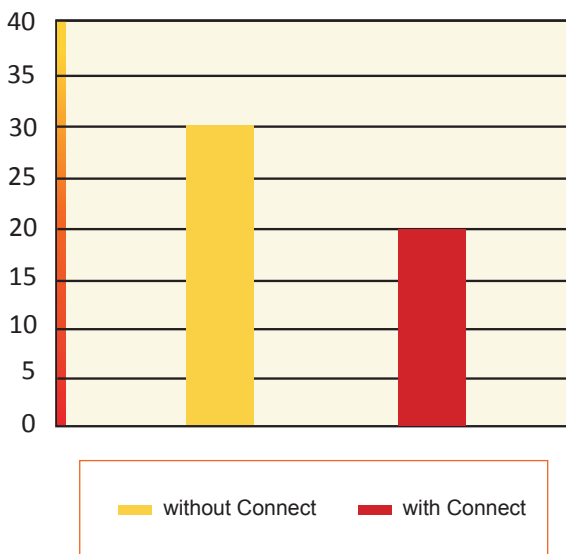
Fall 2009 - Spring 2011

*"The word is out that this is not an easy online class. It is no different than the lecture classes. All the requirements were kept exactly the same as the traditional class – the only difference is Connect.*

*Think of the students with disabilities who now have a way to use audible learning to assist them. The book is read to them, they hear the speeches. It's great."*

*- Professor Maria Luskay*

Figure 1 - Minutes Spent Grading Per Speech



## Implementation of McGraw-Hill Connect

Professor Luskay fully incorporates *Connect Lucas* into her online course. She assigns four speeches throughout the term, three of them counting towards the final grade. The first speech, which is a basic introduction speech, is required to show Professor Luskay that the student is technically able to upload videos, a key element of success in an online public speaking course. Each subsequent speech counts progressively more towards the final grade (15%, 20%, and 30% respectively). The final speech must also show an audience.

Professor Luskay uses the grading rubric in *Connect Lucas* to grade the speeches using pre-set and custom parameters. To ensure high quality speech recordings, she has added a technical component to the grading rubric to measure the quality of the recording. She recommends that students view the sample videos embedded in *Connect Lucas* to see examples of recorded speeches that meet both

technical and performance quality standards. She also requires students to use the Peer Review tool in place of traditional in-class participation. A student's level of feedback via Peer Review accounts for 10% of his/her final grade.

In addition to the speech component, Professor Luskay assigns one pre-made quiz in *Connect Lucas* each week. She requires students to use *Connect Plus* with the integrated eBook so all of the resources are together in one place. Since implementing *Connect Lucas* in 2009, it now only takes two hours to set up her course each term versus the couple of weeks it previously required.

## Results Achieved

Professor Luskay has realized significant time savings by using the Grading Rubric to quickly and consistently grade her students' recorded speeches. She has shaved off about 10 minutes from every speech review, while at the same time describing her feedback as more valuable and detailed for each student. Overall, she says this saves her over six hours of grading time per semester.

Yet Professor Luskay contends that the most significant benefit of using *Connect Lucas* is the ability to create and offer a Public Speaking course online that matches the traditional classroom course objective for objective. "Students are more afraid to speak in front of a camera than in person," she says, and they are more engaged since they "cannot hide in the back of the room!"

*"Connect Lucas allows us to give the students immediate feedback on the speech they've given. Students really like the platform, and I'm finding that they're learning just as much, if not more than they would in a traditional classroom. The neat thing about Connect Lucas is that they get to see themselves every time. In the classroom, you can't stop them in the middle of their presentation and say, 'You can't do that.' On video, you can give them instant feedback every step of the way."*

*- Professor Maria Luskay*

## Conclusion

Professor Luskay is very happy with *Connect Lucas* and recommends it to her colleagues. "It's an excellent resource; it changes the entire learning process. Students are already online all the time, and with this, they have so many resources at their fingertips that they haven't had before." Demand for the online Public Speaking course at Pace University is growing, so they will be offering additional sections with *Connect*.