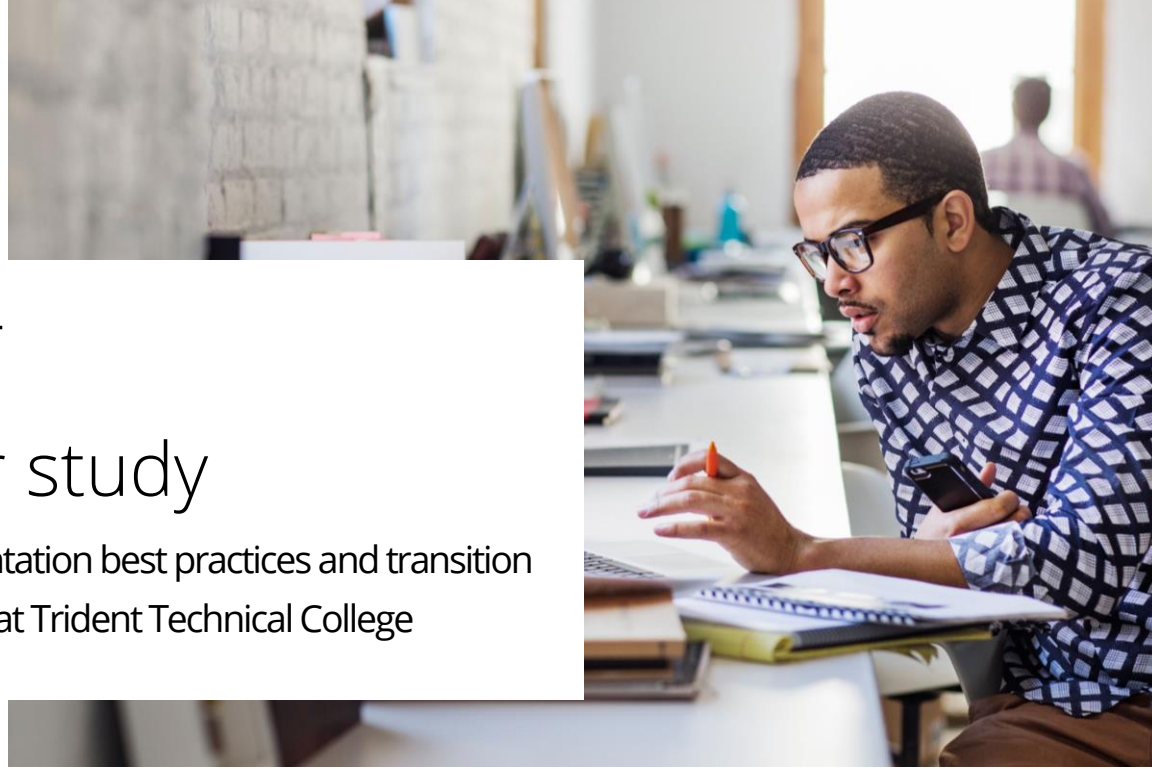# MyLab IT educator study

A look at implementation best practices and transition to LMS integration at Trident Technical College

Key findings:

- With a compressed, seven-week term and a new, high-enrollment, required First Year Experience Seminar using MyLab™ IT, the educator piloted Learning Management System integration to facilitate a seamless experience for students accessing course technology.

- In Spring 2019, Trident Tech will implement Pearson Inclusive Access in all application-based Information Systems courses as well as in the First Year Experience Seminar to give students day-one access to course materials.

- As a long-time user of MyLab IT, the educator has developed a number of implementation best practices using tools within the program (coordinator course, Project Creation Tool) in addition to outside resources.

School name: Trident Technical College, Charleston, SC

Course name: Microcomputer Spreadsheets (CPT 174)

Course format: Hybrid and online

Course materials: MyLab IT with Exploring Microsoft Excel 2016 Comprehensive by Poatsy, Mulbery, Davidson, and Grauer

Timeframe: Fall 2018

Educator: Barbara Fogle, Instructor

Results reported by: Sara Kasper, Pearson Results Manager

Setting

Locale: two-year, urban, public institution with four campuses in the tri-county area

Semester length: two seven-week terms

Programs of study: 150+

Fall 2018 enrollment: 12,148 (38% full-time students / 62% part-time students)

Ethnicity: 36% Caucasian, 36% Asian,11% Hispanic, 9% African-American, 8% Other

Full-time student retention rate: 61% (Fall 2016)

Age 24 or younger: 63% (Fall 2018)

Race/ethnicity: 59% White; 27% Black; 14% Other (Fall 2018)

About the course

This three-credit, seven-week course introduces the use of spreadsheet software which enables students to handle the numerous types of spreadsheet and accounting tasks found in a business environment. Topics include creating, editing, and using formulas, using functions, and producing graphs using Microsoft Excel. The course is required for many students within the Business Technology department, including those pursuing associate's degrees in Management and Information Systems.

Instructor Barbara Fogle has been a full-time lecturer for approximately 25 years at Trident Tech, routinely teaching a variety of microcomputer courses. She is currently the MyLab™ IT master course coordinator for five separate courses.

Challenges and Goals

MyLab IT has been in use at Trident Tech since 2010 in a handful of Information Systems courses, but due to the recent creation of a high-enrollment, required First Year Experience Seminar (IDS 109) covering topics of technology literacy through MyLab IT, Fogle realized there was a need for Learning Management System (LMS) integration. Trident Tech's compressed semester of two seven-week terms makes it imperative for students to have a seamless experience accessing their

course technology and waste no time logging in to begin their coursework. With LMS integration, students access MyLab IT through D2L (the LMS at Trident Tech), with a single sign-on. Additionally, grades easily transfer from MyLab to the LMS and do not have to be manually entered by instructors.

Before launching LMS integration in the First Year Experience Seminar, Fogle piloted it in the Microcomputer Spreadsheets course (CPT 174) using MyLab IT in Summer 2018. The pilot was a success, and Fogle continued LMS integration in all sections for Fall 2018. Fogle has seen a noticeable difference — "Using LMS integration, students are ready to go from day one with fewer problems. With a seven-week term, students can't afford to have issues that put them behind a week, or even a few days."

LMS integration has benefited both students and instructors, and beginning in Spring 2019, Trident Tech will take things a step further by implementing Pearson Inclusive Access in all application-based Information Systems courses as well as in the new, required First Year Experience Seminar. Inclusive Access will provide immediate access to digital course materials on day one as well as direct billing of course materials to students' financial accounts.

> "Using LMS integration, students are ready to go from day one with fewer problems. With a seven-week term, students can't afford to have issues that put them behind a week, or even a few days."
>
> —Barbara Fogle, Trident Technical College

Implementation

The hybrid Microcomputer Spreadsheets course meets once a week for three hours in a computer lab with the remainder of the course activities completed online. Attendance is not mandatory, but participation does count toward 10% of the course grade. Class time consists of lecture covering course concepts followed by hands-on completion of MyLab IT homework.

Orientation quiz

In order to build a strong foundation for working in MyLab IT, Fogle created an orientation quiz using students' frequently asked questions. The quiz must be completed before attempting any assignments; students have two attempts at completion and the highest score is recorded.

MyLab IT

In the abbreviated seven-week term, students are given approximately one assignment per week in MyLab IT.

- Skill-based Simulation Trainings are completed first to assist students in learning Excel. They do not count toward the course grade, but a minimum score of 71% is required before students may attempt the summative Grader Project. Students have unlimited attempts at completion, and learning aids — Read, Watch, Practice — are made available. Fogle has found that many students will use the learning aid "Read" to link directly to the portion of the eText that discusses the content being covered at that time, rather than reading the text in advance.
- Fogle manually checks the gradebook to ensure students are achieving 71% or higher on simulations, but will soon be using sequential modules in MyLab IT to enforce the passing score. This will automate this process, as the Grader Project will not be made available to the student unless a passing score is achieved.

- Grader Projects are scored; students have five attempts at completion with the highest score recorded. Multiple attempts allow students to improve their score while they continue to learn. A total of seven (7) Grader Projects are assigned. For hybrid students, Fogle goes over how to access the Grader Project Report in person; for online students, she posts videos that show the same steps.
- The hands-on, practical final exam is a modified Capstone Grader Project which covers the first four chapters of the text. Students have two attempts. As an incentive, Fogle allows students to bypass the final exam if they receive an A average on their Grader Projects.

MyLab IT best practices

Use of MyLab IT Project Creation Tool

Starting in Fall 2017, using the Project Creation Tool in MyLab IT, Fogle modified the existing MyLab IT Grader Project instructions to include information as to why students are doing a particular task in order to make it more relevant. Says Fogle, "I have found that by adding the 'why,' students have a better understanding of the overall concept of the tasks they're performing." She believes that clarifying the instructions in this way helps learners better retain information. (For assistance using the Project Creation Tool, please contact Pearson IT Faculty Advisor Alan.Shapiro@pearson.com.)

Use of MyLab coordinator course

Fogle brings consistency to course sections and simplifies course start-up for adjuncts by creating a master course in MyLab IT and copying the coordinator course to create member sections.

Additional tools and best practices

Use of Snagit

Fogle has recently been using the screen-capture software Snagit to create and share individual videos for her students when they are struggling with a

particular concept. "I wanted to move away from text-based emails and instead show my students how to do something." This has been especially useful for her online students.

Use of an avatar

To help her students have the best experience possible, Fogle incorporates an avatar from sitepal.com in her MyLab IT course to keep students on task and alert them to key course communications. To sound approachable, Fogle uses her own voice for the avatar. Each week, the avatar reminds students of MyLab IT assignment due dates and even changes appearance to identify course updates and additions. The avatar covers frequently asked questions and identifies common errors students might make on more challenging content. Fogle has found that the avatar provides an important visual/audio cue that students appreciate, and it has also helped reduce repetitive student questions.

Use of D2L Intelligent Agents

An added benefit of having LMS integration has been Fogle's use of [Intelligent Agents](#) in D2L that allow her to set up automated email alerts to students regarding MyLab IT. As soon as a student logs in to D2L, Fogle cues an Intelligent Agent to email the student informing them not to buy a MyLab IT access code, as it will be provided to them. If a student doesn't access course content by a certain date, Fogle has the Intelligent Agent send out an email reminder of the work due. If a certain score is not achieved on a Grader Project, Fogle has prompted the Intelligent Agent to automatically email specific resources such as links to videos to help the student improve.

Assessments
- 63%   MyLab IT Grader Projects (7)
- 20%   Final exam
- 10%   Class participation
- 7%   Orientation quiz

Results and Data

The final exam for the course is a modified Capstone Grader Project for Excel Chapters 1–4. Students are able to bypass the final exam if they received an A average on their seven Grader Projects. In the second seven-week term of Fall 2018, 28 students completed the course. Four students who did not complete the course or take the final exam were removed for the purpose of this analysis.

In Fall 2018, 50% of students received an A letter grade on their Grader Projects and bypassed the final exam. All of these students received an A final course letter grade.

Of the 14 students who took the final exam, 13 passed (93% pass rate). One student received an A in the course, seven received a B in the course, and five received a C in the course.

Only one student who took the final exam did not pass and received a course letter grade of D.

In total, the course pass rate was 96%.

The Student Experience

To gather student feedback on MyLab IT, an optional survey was sent at the end of Fall 2018. Although the response rate was too low to include summary data, open-ended comments on the benefits of MyLab IT included the following:

> "It was extremely helpful to see my mistakes and fix them myself."
>
> "Helped break down the lessons. The videos were very helpful as well."
>
> "[Simulation Trainings] taught me how to perform the task I needed to. I learn more by seeing and [completing activities] hands on."
>
> "I love the fact that you get five attempts [on Grader Projects]."

Conclusion

As a long-time user of MyLab IT, Fogle is finding new ways to improve the teaching and learning experience. LMS integration proved to be a success, giving students seamless access to their MyLab IT course materials. For the new, high-enrollment First Year Experience Seminar, LMS integration is critical for Fogle to be able to easily transfer grades at the end of the semester. Fogle and her Trident Tech colleagues are excited to launch Inclusive Access in Spring 2019 in all application-based Information Systems courses as well as in the First Year Experience Seminar to give students day-one access to course materials and direct billing of course material fees.