

California State University, Bakersfield Bakersfield, California

INSTRUCTORS Randi Brummett and Brooke Hughes

COURSE NAMES Developmental Reading and Writing, Composition, Humanities, Upper Division Writing Courses, Writing Across the Curriculum

CREDIT HOURS 5

COURSE FORMAT Online, hybrid

TEXTS Assorted with MyWritingLabPlus

CONTRIBUTION OF MYWRITINGLAB TO FINAL GRADE varies

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Improvement in final course grades; Improvement in pass rates and retention; Expedited progress to credit courses; Improved performance in subsequent courses

MYLAB USER SINCE 2005

AT CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, BAKERSFIELD, the typical student is a non-traditional student. The average age is 23, most students reside off-campus, and many students are balancing work and family responsibilities with their studies. In an enrollment of nearly 9,500 students, 38% are Hispanic American and, of those 3,000+ students, 73% are ESL or Generation 1.5. Nearly two-thirds of all freshmen admitted require English remediation. Despite successive budget cuts and strictly limited resources, CSUB nevertheless seeks to become the leading university in the California State University system.

In 2005, instructors Randi Brummett and Brooke Hughes, seeking improved learning outcomes for students and the most effective way to deploy limited space and instructional resources, tested five online learning programs from different publishers. Based on evaluations from both instructors and students, Brummett and Hughes adopted MyWritingLab (updated to MyWritingLabPlus in 2011) and began the process of course redesign. Brummett and Hughes chose to redesign their courses around MyWritingLab in order to:

- Deliver a consistent and high-quality learning experience for all students
- Reliably track student learning outcomes
- Address students' individual learning needs despite class sizes that exceeded optimal limits

Teaching and learning with MyWritingLab

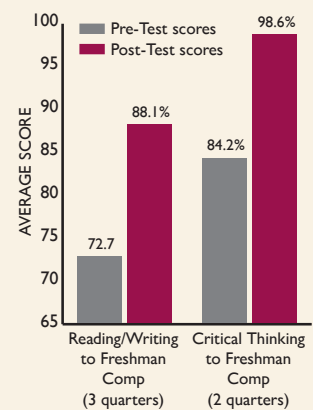
Beginning in 2006, Brummett and Hughes incorporated MyWritingLab in a range of courses, from developmental English to upper-division writing-intensive courses. In each case, strong student performance results and positive feedback from students and instructors led to an increased role for MyWritingLab over time. Here, some snapshots of their course redesign process:

READING AND WRITING

A developmental course

Beginning with one section in Fall 2007, MyWritingLab was integrated into all sections

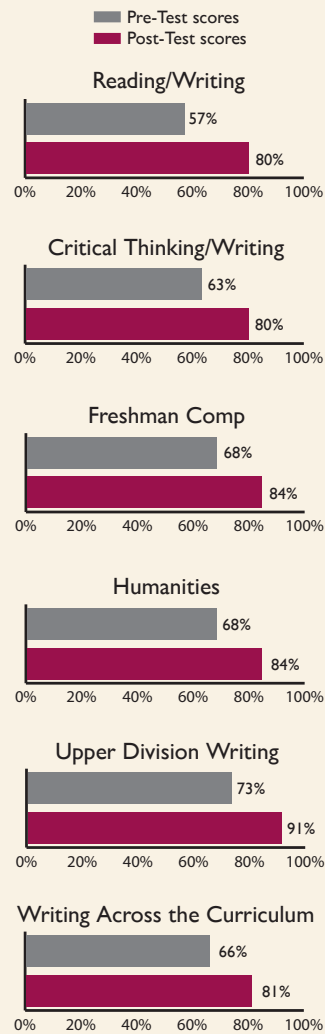
Average Retention (in %) of Students in English Courses 2006-2012



ANALYSIS

Retention rates improved significantly with the integration of MyWritingLab.

Pre-Test to Post-Test Comparison 2006-2012



ANALYSIS

Students improved average scores consistently across all levels.

by Spring 2008. Initially taught in a hybrid format, with MyWritingLab as the grammar workshop component, the course was further redesigned so that students work online independently in MyWritingLab to fulfill the grammar component. Students using MyWritingLab consistently improve an average of 24 points from Pre-Test to Post-Test. Commented Brummett and Hughes, "MyWritingLab allows us to deploy precious instruction resources almost surgically, to one student at a time and at the moment that students express the need. MyWritingLab helps us to transform the challenge of limited faculty into a real positive for both students and instructors."

"MyWritingLab has improved student performance by all the key measures: improved comprehension scores and final grades, improved retention, and more rapid progression from non-credit developmental courses to for-credit courses."

--Randi Brummett and Brooke Hughes

CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

A developmental course covering essay writing using rhetorical modes

MyWritingLab was introduced as a pilot in Winter 2008 and soon integrated into all sections as a replacement for a mini-lecture component that had proved difficult for many non-resident students to attend. Instead, students work independently in MyWritingLab, achieving mastery of the required grammar topics at their own pace with support, when needed, from instructors. Students using MyWritingLab improve an average of 17 points from Pre-Test to Post-Test.

"Students were previously required to attend ten mini-lectures on grammar topics," Brummett and Hughes noted, "but since they didn't find out about these mini-lectures until the first week of class, they often couldn't attend any of them due to schedule conflicts. Now, the students can do their grammar work on their own time, at their own pace."

MYWRITINGLABPLUS

A Humanities course offered to assist students with effective writing and grammar skills at any level. Students may elect to sign up or a faculty member may recommend students for the course.

Beginning in 2006, this course was redesigned to incorporate MyWritingLab in a fully online model. Students work independently on their MyWritingLab-generated personalized study plan with access to other resources, such as Pearson Tutor Services, offered through MyWritingLabPlus. Students using MyWritingLab in this Humanities course consistently record 16% mastery gains.

UPPER DIVISION WRITING

Writing-intensive courses varying in multiple disciplines at the Junior/Senior level

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Any courses and level outside of English, excluding upper division writing courses

Beginning in 2010, upper division writing and Writing Across the Curriculum courses began using MyWritingLabPlus. These courses use the program in a multitude of ways, varying in choice of topics, mastery level, and workload. Students using MyWritingLabPlus in upper division writing courses average an 18% gain from Pre-Test to Post-Test. Students in WAC courses using MyWritingLabPlus typically score a gain of 25% from Pre-Test to Post-Test.

Benefits of Redesign with MyWritingLab

- Since 2007, we've saved \$69,000 and 12,743 teaching and classroom hours.
- Overall, there is an average 17.5% improvement between Pre- and Post-Tests in all classes using MyWritingLab
- In developmental English, pass rate increased 9% and retention increased 11%
- Students are spending, on average, one less quarter in remediation
- Students who were in a redesigned developmental course have a 8% higher pass rate in Freshman Composition than students who were in a traditional developmental course.

Brummett and Hughes report, "We work closely with faculty to track student performance results as well as qualitative measures of MyWritingLab's effectiveness. MyWritingLab has improved student performance by all the key measures: improved comprehension scores and final grades, improved retention, and more rapid progression from non-credit developmental courses to for-credit courses. Qualitatively, instructors report a great deal of satisfaction with MyWritingLab. Instructors can use class time more productively, can monitor students' progress more closely, and can provide immediate assistance when students need help. Students gain immeasurably by taking responsibility for their own learning process. And perhaps most importantly, with MyWritingLab, students are writing better papers."

MyWritingLabPlus and Writing Across the Curriculum

Brummett and Hughes are partnering with faculty across the university to offer customized MyWritingLab support to students. Instructors can elect either of two models. They can ask students to sign up for the Humanities course or elect to incorporate a MyWritingLab component into their existing course. For instructors who choose the incorporated option, Brummett and Hughes train the instructor and assist him/her in creating a custom course in MyWritingLab for students. Many more faculty across campus are now involved with and trained in MyWritingLab. Brummett and Hughes explain, "More instructor involvement helps with time management, speeds up solutions when students reach roadblocks, and motivates both students and instructors. Some faculty members were initially reluctant to adopt a technology resource, but students loved MyWritingLab so much that instructors fed off students' enthusiasm and transitioned with ease."

Writing Across the Curriculum faculty evaluations of MyWritingLab:

HISTORY DEPARTMENT:

"This is just what my students needed in this course. The combination of MyWritingLab and PearsonTutor Services is invaluable."

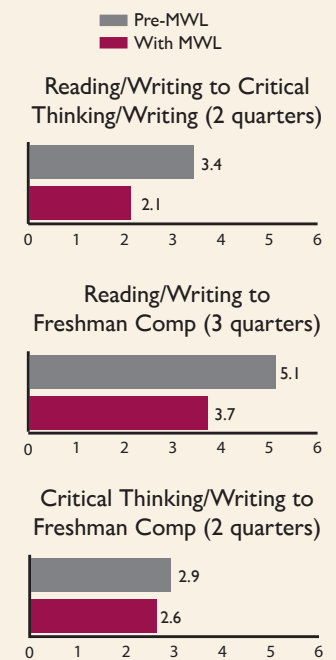
GEOLOGY DEPARTMENT:

"Ever since my students enrolled in Humanities with MyWritingLab, their writing has improved, and it takes me less time to mark up their papers."

PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT:

"It's been a long time since my students have had an English course. MyWritingLab is a good way for them to get that information quickly and painlessly."

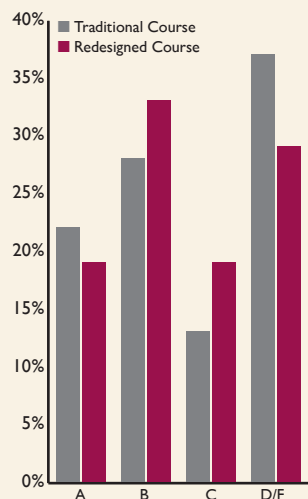
Average Length of Time (in Quarters) Students Spend in English Courses 2006-2012



ANALYSIS

Students progressed more rapidly from non-credit developmental courses to for-credit courses with the integration of MyWritingLab, saving one quarter on average.

Preparedness for Freshman Composition: Grades Comparison between Traditional Course and Redesigned Course with MyWritingLab 2006-2011



ANALYSIS

Overall pass rates increased and the percentage of Ds and Fs dropped significantly in the redesigned course with MyWritingLab.

“Grade inflation was an issue in the traditional course,” state Brummett and Hughes. “For example, students achieved 10% of their grade merely by registering. In the redesigned course, grades are based solely on students’ achieving the desired learning outcomes. Therefore, grades in the redesigned course are a true measure of students’ performance and a much more reliable indicator of their performance in subsequent, for-credit courses.”

BUSINESS DEPARTMENT:

“My students frequently would tell me how easy MyWritingLab was to use and how much they learned from it. I could definitely see an improvement in the first three weeks of them working in MyWritingLab.”

“Since the university elected to make MyWritingLabPlus available to all students, we’re thrilled to see that 57% of students are using MyWritingLabPlus either in a course or on their own to become better writers.”

—Randi Brummett and Brooke Hughes

MyWritingLabPlus in use university-wide

Brummett and Hughes have expanded the use of MyWritingLab at CSUB, customizing curricula to meet student and instructor needs. In 2011, CSUB elected to adopt MyWritingLabPlus university-wide, giving students customized fee-based access to MyWritingLabPlus. All CSUB students have access to MyWritingLabPlus. In Winter 2012, the MyWritingLabPlus Headquarters opened, staffed by four assistants and open to all students, faculty, and staff five days a week.

Brummett and Hughes report, “The MyWritingLabPlus Headquarters gives us a base for outreach into the entire university community. Since the university elected to make MyWritingLabPlus available to all students, we’re thrilled to see that 57% of students are using MyWritingLabPlus either in a course or on their own to become better writers. We’re excited to facilitate that process.”

CONCLUSION

“We began using MyWritingLab in the English department. Gradually we’ve expanded our focus, partnering with faculty in departments across the university from Music to Business, Chemistry to Social Work. We’ve trained 30% of CSUB faculty to use MyWritingLab and have experienced outstanding success in writing across the curriculum. The student success alone is remarkable, but we are also realizing significant cost savings for the university at the same time that we are accommodating more students—all as a direct result of our using MyWritingLab.”

—Randi Brummett and Brooke Hughes

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