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Special thanks to William Holt, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; Arlene Lundquist, Utica College; Mark Laumakis, San Diego State University and University of San Diego; Sean Reilley, Morehead State University; and Sue Spaulding, University of North Carolina–Charlotte.

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Where Learning Comes to Life: A Report on the Success of MyPsychLab in Higher Education Psychology Instruction

By Michelle D. Speckler

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Introduction

America's higher education industry is in crisis. Even with increased access to information technology, which many hoped would reduce the cost of delivering education, costs associated with higher education continue to outpace the rate of inflation.

What's at risk is more than just a larger slice of the consumer's pie. For many Americans, the American dream itself—the ability to educate our children so that they may achieve a level of success beyond our own—is becoming an increasingly distant possibility as colleges nationwide respond to the pressing issues of cost containment, competition, funding cutbacks, and declining revenue by raising tuition to record levels.¹

And yet cost is not the only obstacle contributing to the crisis. Student success—or the lack thereof—is another. The July 2005 edition of *The Learning Marketplace*, the electronic newsletter of the National Center for Academic Transformation, reports that 60 percent of students at public institutions fail to complete degrees within five years, and that 50 percent of those students leave school during their freshman year. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, nearly half of first-time students who leave their initial institutions by the end of their first year never return to higher education.

What's Gone Wrong?

It's been more than 25 years since information technology began permeating higher education. In that time, we have indeed seen that increases in academic productivity are possible through the integration of technology-rich educational environments and delivery systems. There is evidence of the same with regard to cost reduction and quality of service. Perhaps more important, however, is how the experiments of the past few decades have produced a disparity gulf that separates our expectations from the current reality. It turns out that where we are now is not the result of using or not using information technology in higher education. It is the result of *how* we use it. All too frequently universities facing

issues of increased costs, low pass rates, or large enrollments pin their hopes on solutions that are simply bolted onto the existing infrastructure. In these cases, expensive technologies are simply added on to existing teaching and learning models. In order to realize the potential of information technology for improving the quality of education, reducing cost, and increasing access, we need to rethink and reshape that model.

As long as we continue to replicate traditional approaches online we will once again find the “no significant difference” phenomenon vis-à-vis quality, and we will make only a negligible dent in the access problem rather than taking full advantage of the networked environment.

—Carol Twigg, President
National Center for Academic Transformation

This report will illustrate how one product, Allyn & Bacon's MyPsychLab™, has successfully reshaped how psychology is taught and learned in college psychology courses. Institutions are finding they can save money without jeopardizing quality. Faculty are finding more time for students and spending less time on mundane administrative tasks. Most important, students are more motivated to do more homework, they're retaining more knowledge, and they're passing their classes the first time around. This will illustrate that these things are not only possible; they're actually happening right now in the institutions cited within this report—and among approximately 850 other institutions around the nation. This is the power of MyPsychLab online courseware.

¹ The cost of attending a public four-year institution rose by 22 percent between 2001–2 and 2004–5, and tuition and fees for in-state students at the institutions grew by 33 percent, according to *Post-*

Taking Action

A college's purpose is not to transfer knowledge but to create environments and experiences that bring students to discover and construct knowledge for themselves, to make students members of communities of learners that make discoveries and solve problems. The college aims, in fact, to create a series of ever more powerful learning environments.²

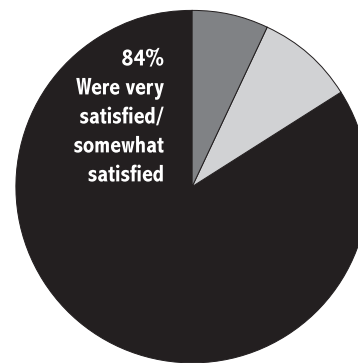
MyPsychLab (MPL) is an interactive and instructive courseware solution for introductory, social, and abnormal psychology classes, designed to work hand in hand with today's most comprehensive and popular psychology textbooks. (For a complete list of *Introductory*, *Abnormal*, and *Social Psychology* textbooks available for use with MPL, see <http://www.mypsychlab.com/books.html>.) Unlike other online products, MPL isn't an expensive add-on. It's a revolutionary new way of teaching and learning—and it works. Institutions across the country are reporting higher pass rates, more retention, and higher student satisfaction than in traditional courses.

What Makes MyPsychLab Different?

The linchpin of MPL's success is its focus on the student. MPL is self-paced, deliverable anywhere with Web access, and adaptable to each student's level of knowledge. But perhaps most important, MPL provides learning in context. Unlike the traditional, lecture-based model of course delivery, wherein students are passive recipients of information, MPL enhances course delivery by actively engaging students in an experiential process of learning. And because the predominant vehicle for that learning is the Web, they also learn at the time, in the place, and according to the style and pace that best suit them. "MyPsychLab has revolutionized my classroom. My students have compared the MyPsychLab program to a PlayStation or Xbox that

Chart 1. Instructor Survey Results

From a spring 2005 survey of faculty using MyPsychLab



7% Were somewhat unsatisfied • 9% Were very unsatisfied

Overall Satisfaction Level of Faculty

is psychology based and they love it," says Teresa R. Stalvey, Behavioral Science Instructor at North Florida Community College.

Faculty also benefit from MPL. By transferring the tasks of content delivery, student assessment, and grading to a powerful suite of course management tools, MPL enables faculty to spend more time with students.

"After using MyPsychLab for two semesters I am a fan, an advocate, and a cheerleader," says Sue Spaulding,

secondary Institutions in the United States: Fall 2004 and Degrees and Other Awards Conferred: 2003–04, issued September 2005 by the U.S. Education Department. The report also states that, "driven largely by the significant cutbacks in state general fund expenditures on higher education during the early part of this decade, public four-year colleges

saw the biggest increases in student charges from 2001–2 to 2004–5." To read more, download the report at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2005/2005182.pdf>.

² Barr, R. B., & Tagg, J. (1995). From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm for Undergraduate Education. *Change*, Nov./Dec.

MyPsychLab provides the structural ease to allow me to be a more efficient faculty member.

—William Holt
University of Massachusetts–Dartmouth

General Psychology Lab Director/Lecturer at University of North Carolina–Charlotte. “Teaching large Introductory Psychology sections often feels like talking to an anonymous crowd. MyPsychLab allows a rich full-bodied experience I can share with my students. It enables more personal contact—especially the discussion boards. Although the addition of the MyPsychLab component required additional work for students, 72 percent felt it was a good addition to the class.”

For those with alternative learning needs—those with dyslexia, learning, or physical disabilities or for whom English is a second language—MyPsychLab offers a tremendous benefit: information provided via a wealth of media and sensory tools. The ability to hear words pronounced in the e-book and audio glossary means less struggling with the language. Videos are closed-captioned. And unlike real-time lectures, online lectures can be stopped, reviewed, rewound, and listened to again—as many times and at whatever pace the student needs to fully comprehend the material.

“MPL accommodates a variety of populations,” says William Holt, Professor of Psychology at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. “For students with special needs, I can create online quizzes with longer time limits without stigmatizing them or singling them out. For those with visual challenges, I can adapt the screen to a larger text or use the audio glossary.”

³ As reported by Core Technology Group, 2005. In 2004, Allyn & Bacon shipped 67,000 access codes and experienced an activation rate of slightly more than 30 percent, or 20,100 activations. In 2005, 85,000 access codes were shipped with an activation rate of slightly more than 45 percent, or 38,250 activations.

Instructors surveyed about their experience with MPL were overwhelmingly positive (see *Chart 1 at left*).

How MyPsychLab Works

Since its debut in fall 2003 nearly 105,000 students have used MPL or its product for Developmental Psychology, MyDevelopmentLab (MDL). Activation rates are steadily increasing by nearly 50 percent.³ And today, 35 percent of the nation’s colleges and universities—that’s more than 850 institutions of higher education—use MPL or MDL. (For more information about MDL and a complete list of textbooks available for use with it, see <http://www.mydevelopmentlab.com/> and <http://www.mydevelopmentlab.com/books.html>.)

The tools in MyPsychLab improve my teaching and make me more accessible to my students. My students benefit from it, too. It helps them study more efficiently via technologies that are a central part of their lives.

—Mark Laumakis
San Diego State University
and University of San Diego

One of the reasons MPL works so well for so many is its flexibility. The technology may be used as is or may be easily modified to fit an instructor’s individual style and needs. Combining an e-book, video, audio, multimedia simulations, research support, practice tests, exams, and more, MyPsychLab’s rich set of course materials and adaptable instructor tools make it easy to use the entire program or just a portion of it.

Customized student study plan. Generated from chapter pre-tests and post-tests, the study plan identifies and often links students directly to areas of weakness to help students focus their attention and efforts where they’re needed the most.

Hands-on activities. Students experience psychological phenomena firsthand through visual illusions, cognitive maps, memory retrieval exercises, and more to help them understand, learn, and retain key concepts.

E-book. A text-specific e-book that matches the exact layout of the printed textbook is included in each MyPsychLab course. The e-book is broken down into major topics and contains multimedia icons in the margins. By clicking on the icons, students link to MPL's Multimedia Library—and an innovative, hands-on learning experience that expands beyond a traditional textbook and into the realm of contextual learning.

Multimedia Library. Accessible from the e-book, an online version of the textbook, the library includes a host of multimedia resources—video lectures, audio clips, animations, biographies of notable contributors in the field, and simulations—designed to further illustrate key concepts and psychological principles

Pearson's Research Navigator. Complete with extensive help on the research process and four databases of credible and reliable source material—including the EBSCO Academic Journal and Abstract Database, The New York Times Search by Subject Archive, “Best of the Web” Link Library, and Financial Times Article Archive and Company Financials—Research Navigator helps students make the most of their research time.

The Psych Tutor Center. Students receive one-on-one study assistance from live tutors with M.A. degrees or higher in the areas they are tutoring. Assistance is

available via e-mail, phone, fax, and Web when students need it most—the evening.

Instructor support material. Text-specific materials including instructor's manuals, test banks, and Power-Point presentations simplify and enrich the teaching experience. Having all of these resources in one place makes preparing for class quick and easy.

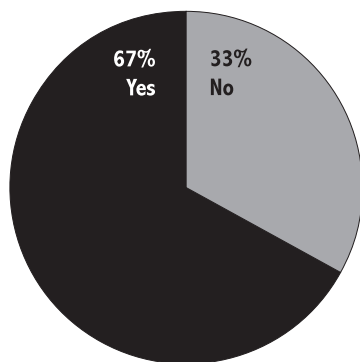
Support and the MyPsychLab Faculty Advocate Community

The traditional higher education model dictates that instructors teach courses without any interaction with other faculty. Who's doing what and how it's working are rarely addressed. MPL's Faculty Advocate Program is changing that. Built upon the proven effectiveness of peer-to-peer advising, the program offers access to a nationwide community of faculty advocates—instructors experienced in teaching with MyPsychLab—to advise and counsel psychology faculty currently using MPL and those interested in incorporating it into their courses.

In addition, the MPL Web site acts as a faculty information forum, in which an MPL administrator posts information relevant to the use of MPL and related courseware. Tips, techniques, technical issues, and new features are all showcased. As Holt says, “Faculty

Chart 2. Instructor Survey Results

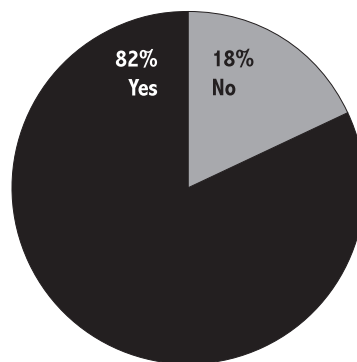
From a spring 2005 survey of faculty using MyPsychLab



Do you think MyPsychLab has a positive impact on student retention/success rates?

Chart 3. Instructor Survey Results

From a spring 2005 survey of faculty using MyPsychLab



Will you use MyPsychLab the next time you teach this course?

adopting MPL never have to feel as if they're without a friend again!"

Faculty advocates provide phone coaching and support, conduct campus demonstrations, and present MPL at conferences and workshops. As power users of MPL, faculty advocates also provide Allyn & Bacon with critical user information to steer upgrades and enhancements to the platform. Advocates and Allyn & Bacon staff meet formally and informally throughout the year in person and via telephone, e-mail, and online demonstrations.

Surveys indicate that faculty are unequivocal about their support for MyPsychLab (*see Charts 2 and 3 at left*).

Measurable Results: Higher Grades, Increased Satisfaction

A 2003 study by Hassan M. Selim⁴ concluded that the effectiveness of course-based Web sites relies on four factors: (1) The interactivity of the Web site such that the student can control when and where they engage in the activities; (2) The ability to complete the coursework quickly via animations and multimedia modules; (3) The ability to have course materials available anywhere at anytime, thereby increasing student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction; and (4) The ability to increase the student's productivity and effectiveness. MyPsychLab provides an easily implemented avenue to address all four of these factors.

Some of the most powerful examples of MyPsychLab's effectiveness in the classroom can be found in surveys and reports conducted by MPL instructors themselves. One such example was presented at the May 2004 American Psychological Society Conference by Arlene Lundquist and Melissa Curtis entitled, "Effectiveness of On-line vs. Traditional Study Materials in an Introductory Psychology Course."⁵

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of, and preference for using online versus traditional study materials in an introductory psychology

course. The sample comprised 56 students, two sections of the same class, taught by the same instructor. The teaching methods, assignments, and test content were the same for both sections. What differed were study materials and the method for taking quizzes.

Students who feel like they have a favorable relationship with their instructor will do better. If I am only lecturing, where is the connection? MyPsychLab provides me with the flexibility and the time to interact with my students and build relationships.

—Arlene Lundquist
Utica College

Section A, the traditional group, received a study guide with solutions to additional quizzes/tests found in the textbook. They took open-book, paper/pencil quizzes given by the instructor (that were identical to those accessible through MyPsychLab). Section B received access to a Web site that provided additional study methods via MyPsychLab. The online supplement available to Section B provided quizzes with immediate analysis of student scores that generated a study plan for the student.

Not surprisingly, students in the online group reported greater satisfaction, more frequently accessed study materials, and earned higher overall grades. Satisfaction and access to study materials comparisons were statistically significant. Study results included the following:

- Students in **the MPL section reported using their study materials significantly more** than the WebCT (traditional) section with off-line study materials, both in the beginning of the semester ($t=2.025, p<.05$) and at the conclusion of the semester ($t=2.226, p<.05$).
- There was a **significant correlation between how much a student used their study materials and their final grade** in the class ($r=+.59, p<.001$).

⁴ Selim, H. M. (2003). An empirical investigation of student acceptance of course Web sites. *Computers & Education*, 40, 343-360.

⁵ For more information or to download the report, "Effectiveness of Online versus Traditional Study Materials in an Introductory Psychology Course," by Arlene R. Lundquist, Ph.D., and Melissa R. Curtis, Utica College, visit <http://www.mypsychlab.com/report.html>.

- Students in **the MPL section earned higher grades** than those in the WebCT section, with the difference approaching significance ($t=1.828, p=.07$).
- There were no differences in pre-test scores of the groups, but **the MPL section earned higher grades** than those in the WebCT group on the post-test ($t=1.809, p=.07$).
- Students reported **significantly greater satisfaction with materials provided in the MPL group** than the group using traditional offline materials ($t=2.025, p<.05$).

Sue Spaulding of University of North Carolina–Charlotte offers one of the most comprehensive MyPsychLab studies to date, “An Overview of MyLab Course Management and Learning Software with MPL Data Showing an Increase in Learning and Test Grades.” Results of Spaulding’s study were presented at the March 2006 Teaching and Learning with Technology Conference.⁶

For purposes of the study, Spaulding tracked student grades over the course of eight terms, comparing student grades in sections using MyPsychLab to those without the use of MyPsychLab. Her data—culled from a total of 4,896 students from fall 2001 through fall 2005—indicates **a 21 percent increase in As and Bs.** (See also Table 1 on this page for a breakdown of student

Table 1. Mean Exam Scores

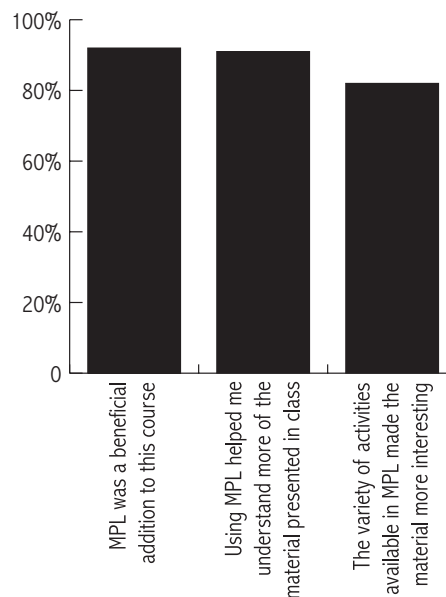
For UNCC students who completed required MPL activities and those who did not between fall 2003 and fall 2005 (all exempt students completed required MPL activities)

Terms	Group 1 Did Not Complete All MPL Activities	Completed All MPL Activities	
		Group 2 All Students	Group 3 W/O Exempt Students
Fall 2005	56.22	75.21*	72.37*
Spring 2005	50.72	75.71*	73.77*
Fall 2004	50.00	76.29*	73.52*
Spring 2004	49.39	74.76*	73.08*
Fall 2003	58.95	76.73*	74.75*

* Difference significant at the $p<.01$ level between those who completed all MPL assignments (Groups 2 and 3) and those who did not (Group 1).

Table 2. Student Survey Results

Percentage of students responding strongly agree/agree to the below questions. Students were surveyed by Sue Spaulding at UNCC between fall 2003–fall 2005.



scores from 2003–2005 comparing those completing MPL activities to those not.)

What’s more, Spaulding’s students in sections using MyPsychLab gave the following responses on end-of-term surveys (see also Table 2 on this page):

- Overall, MPL was a beneficial addition to this course: **91.8 percent**
- Using MPL helped me understand more of the material presented in this class: **90.6 percent**
- The variety of activities available in MPL made the material more interesting: **82.3 percent**

Responsive Customer Service

Faculty users of MyPsychLab can be confident that they’ll receive top-notch customer service for both their own technical questions and those of their students.

⁶ For more information about the report or to download the PowerPoint presentation, see http://www.mypsychlab.com/TLT_ppt.html.

“The product support is terrific!” says Sue Spaulding. “It’s some of the best of any product that I’ve ever used. I send an e-mail or call them and they solve the problem immediately. It’s the same for both myself and my students—the support personnel are both patient and knowledgeable.”

The grades on the first test are amazing! The students who have taken the test so far are scoring in the 80s, 90s, and some have made 100. I'm thrilled!

—Kathy Manuel
Bossier Parish Community College

What Students Are Saying

Students don’t just learn more psychology with MPL; they learn how to learn—and enjoy learning more. Students from around the nation surveyed by Allyn & Bacon about their experience with MPL said the following (see also Charts 4–7 at right):

“MyPsychLab is a great learning tool!”

—Christina, Pensacola Junior College

“I like the fact that there are activities (like the simulations) and practice tests. They help you better understand the concepts and prepare you for the actual exam. This is definitely better than using a regular textbook.”

—Alyssa, Boston College

“Each time I used MyPsychLab my grade improved. It was obvious what chapters I studied for using the program and which ones I did not. MyPsychLab was a very beneficial and key element in helping me to understand this class.”

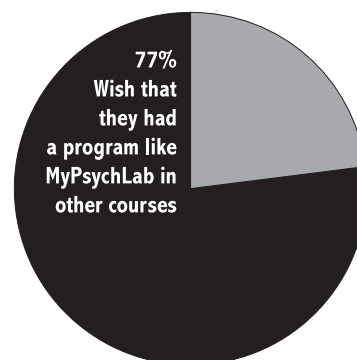
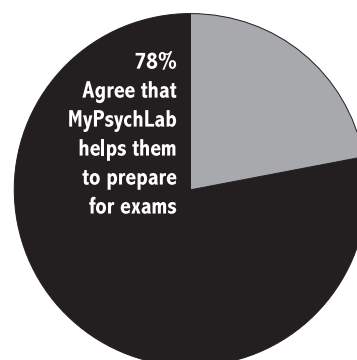
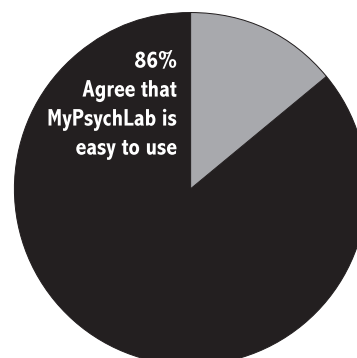
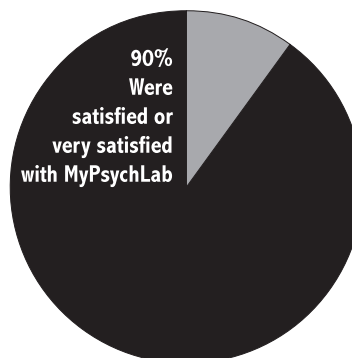
—(Student), University of North Carolina–Charlotte

“Not only is [MPL] easy to use but it also keeps me interested in the material. I have used the pre- and post-tests for every chapter thus far.”

—Sarah, Northern Essex Community College

Charts 4–7. Student Survey Results

From a December 2005 national survey of students using MyPsychLab (conducted by Allyn & Bacon)



Case Studies

We interviewed five instructors from six higher education institutions around the country. Each institution currently uses MyPsychLab in a manner deemed most suitable to the institution and its students. Some use MPL as the sole teaching tool, while some have integrated MPL into comprehensive teaching and learning redesign projects. Others are offering MPL as a student option in hybrid formats of lectures and online content.

The initial reasons for implementing MyPsychLab differ among instructors. Many hoped to improve the quality of learning—such as by boosting pass rates and increasing retention; some were interested in reducing the cost of textbooks and other materials for their students. Some instructors needed help managing class sizes that had grown beyond capacity; still another sought a vehicle for moving more of the course online.

What all of the instructors have in common is dedication—they care deeply about their students and are willing to put in the time and the energy to ensure that their students succeed—not just in psychology but also in learning. Each of the instructors interviewed agreed that MyPsychLab has helped them do just that.

Morehead State University **Sean P. Reilley, Assistant Professor of Psychology**

Sean Reilley has been teaching Introductory Psychology at Morehead State University (MSU) since fall of 2002. Although it is a demanding class, Introduction to Psychology is one of MSU's most popular courses among psychology and nonpsychology majors alike—approximately 1,100–1,400 students per year enroll. But as commonly happens in introductory classes, it experiences a high rate of course withdrawals and grades below C. With the help of MyPsychLab (MPL), Reilley aims to change that.

By augmenting lectures and hard-copy textbooks with technology-based, out-of-class activities, MPL serves as the linchpin to Reilley's redesign. Practice quizzes and immediate feedback offer a mastery learning opportu-

There is a positive correlation between my students' use of MyPsychLab tools and them having a better attitude about the course and being better prepared for the exams.

—Sean Reilley
Morehead State University

ity outside the restraints of traditional class time, and make MPL a driving force in helping Reilley to target the following three goals:

- Enhance students' preparation for exams
- Enhance students' attitudes toward learning both in and outside of class without reducing the difficulty of the class
- Increase retention, illustrated by increased pass rates and decreased drop/fail/withdrawal rates

“Through the use of MPL, I've introduced my students to the relationship between working harder and accomplishing more,” says Reilley. “Hopefully they're taking away broader study skills that will pan out in other classes, as well as in their lives after college.” With MPL, Reilley's students receive more feedback before each test—at a minimum 130 practice questions. Students learn exactly where they need to improve and are able to take steps earlier to improve their performance.

“MPL helps me get students to learn to plan ahead and practice with the material in a way that will likely help them throughout college,” says Reilley. He's raised his retention and grade expectations for his students and they've responded. “Both formal and informal surveys suggest to me that the redesign is working.” On the average, students report that the addition of pre-test,

post-test, and online quizzes makes the course more difficult, but that they are reading the text more and that they value the text more. They report working harder and that the overall excellence of the course and the teacher is better than when instruction was not augmented with MPL.

“Ultimately, the responsibility for doing well lies in the hands of the students,” says Reilley. “You can lead students to resources to help them, but it is up to them.” With its wide range of mastery learning tools and activities, MPL provides Reilley’s students the resources they need—and more—to succeed.

San Diego State University and University of San Diego Mark A. Laumakis, Lecturer

In spring 2004, change—big change—had Mark Laumakis in its sights. Already teaching an Introduction to Psychology class, a Developmental Psychopathology class and an Abnormal Psychology class at San Diego State University, he had agreed to pick up the fall 2004 Introduction to Psychology section, a behemoth of a class serving more than 500 students.

The challenge now was clear: Find a product to help an instructor with a limited technical background manage an overwhelming number of students in a manner consistent with his methods and personal style. He wasn’t overly optimistic. But then he found MyPsychLab (MPL). MPL not only met his needs, it also offered a surprisingly wide selection of textbook offerings from which to choose. He’s been hooked ever since.

MPL’s Web interface enabled the kind of contact and one-on-one communication that some students are reticent to initiate in person—making it especially

appropriate and helpful in Laumakis’s large sections that might otherwise feel impersonal and in which students can easily get lost. “Beyond the bells and whistles,” says Laumakis, “MPL offers a new way to help students learn via the Internet. It’s their technology, what they’ve grown up with and how best to engage them.”

In addition to offering office hours, Laumakis has been able to enhance his accessibility to students through MPL’s user-friendly e-mail, online chat, and discussion board features. In fact, the students have been so receptive to online instructor/student communication that Laumakis is presently considering moving some of his real-time office hours to electronic form.

A major focus for Laumakis is the concept of active learning—actively engaging students in the learning process. Laumakis is pleased to report that MPL has provided his students with the tools to take responsibility for their outside class work. Through online quizzes, pre-tests, and post-tests students receive immediate feedback. Both the students and the instructor know immediately what topics need work. “When the instructor is working harder than the students, there’s a problem,” says Laumakis. “MPL provides a solution to that dynamic by shifting the responsibility for learning to the student. I’ve seen it over and over again: if they show up, they will learn.”

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth William Holt, Professor of Psychology

A veteran of the college classroom for more than 35 years, William Holt, Professor of Psychology at University of Massachusetts (UMass) Dartmouth, cites MyPsychLab (MPL) and its related products as a solution to the most pressing challenges of teaching today: increased class sizes and an increased number of failure/withdrawal/drop grades. “Good students will always succeed,” he says. “But the growing impersonality of today’s higher education experience is leaving some students alienated.”

Holt uses MyDevelopmentLab (MDL), a version of MyPsychLab specifically tailored to teach Developmental Psychology. He phased MDL into his classroom over the course of 3 to 4 semesters, starting in 2004. “All I have to do is demonstrate what MDL is, how it works and its content, and it sells itself,” says Holt. “Once students see what they can get out of it, they’re sold.”

None of the technology at the foundation of MyPsychLab is too complex for any computer—or any person.

—Mark Laumakis
San Diego State University
and University of San Diego

Finally we have the technology to ensure that students master the material before they move on.

—William Holt
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Holt describes some of the numerous advantages of teaching with MDL—features of the program that offer benefits to both student and instructor.

- *Regular, more efficient communication with students.* “I can change or add assignments, test dates or readings online,” says Holt. “Between the Web site and e-mail, I know my students will receive the changes.” What’s more, Holt can organize the messages he receives and sends within MDL’s message center, thus keeping all of his messages relevant for a given section accessible. “My office hours are rarely used, but I receive literally hundreds of e-mails from students with questions.”
- *Immediate feedback for tests and quizzes.* Once a student submits an online quiz, the grade is automatically assigned and recorded in the gradebook. The student gets immediate feedback with both the student’s answer and the correct one. “Timed tests ensure that students aren’t just sitting at their computers with the text open on their laps,” says Holt. “MDL also enables me to force students to finish a quiz once it has been started, to create a different quiz for each student, and to scramble the answers each time a quiz is generated.”
- *A broad range of convenient and credible supplemental reading sources.* “With a click of my mouse I can assign research articles from the Allyn & Bacon supersite included within MDL, current topics from the APA or other relevant organizations’ Web sites, or full-length articles from a variety of sources via the Research Navigator,” says Holt.
- *Group cooperation and discussion capabilities.* UMass Dartmouth’s diverse student population

comprises 60 percent commuters and many who leave school after classes to work long hours. In the past, student collaboration was either done in class or not at all. “MDL enables me to divide my class into groups and create a unique e-mail ring, chat room, and discussion board for each group,” says Holt. “Students can e-mail each other, go online to discuss their assignment, or use the discussion board to share information.”

- *Safety net for students experiencing difficulty.* An instructor using MDL can track what activities a student has attempted and how long the student spent on them. “By checking the pre- and post-test results for each chapter, I can see immediately if a student is having trouble,” says Holt.

“MPL and its related products offer everything a student needs to succeed—thereby freeing me to introduce them to timely, stimulating topics we might not otherwise have time for,” says Holt. “It enables me to recapture smaller-class concepts with even more students, who are more far flung, and from more diverse backgrounds. That’s the future of higher education.”

University of North Carolina—Charlotte **Sue Spaulding, General Psychology Lab Director/Lecturer**

You could call Sue Spaulding, Lecturer and Lab Director at University of North Carolina—Charlotte, an early adopter. As early as fall 2003—MyPsychLab’s (MPL) debut semester—she was already hooked.

“I wanted to teach via interactive learning activities because these are the types of activities my students grew up with,” says Spaulding. “They’re a visual generation. And I want them to succeed.” With MyPsychLab, they do. Spaulding’s Introduction to Psychology drop/failure rate has declined from 27 percent to 17 percent, and the number of As and Bs have increased.

Introduction to Psychology is a large—even intimidating—class, frequently with as many as 250 students. MPL enables Spaulding to have much more personal contact with her students. “Students are more willing to e-mail than to phone or come to office hours,” she says. “MPL has greatly improved instructor/student communication, student satisfaction and in turn, student performance.”

Some students tell Spaulding that they enrolled in her

class specifically because she offers MPL. “Students really like the instant feedback of the activities, as well as the instant gratification MPL offers with grades,” she says. “Most times, my section grades are up in less than 24 hours.”

Perhaps more important is what students take away after the class is over. “My students are learning how to learn, how to study, and that you can learn things in other places besides books,” says Spaulding. “Students who’ve used MPL are more willing to explore other avenues of information. They become active participants in an exciting, experiential learning process that continues outside the four walls of the classroom.”

It’s extremely user friendly and easy to modify. There’s no need to be a technical person.

—Sue Spaulding
University of North Carolina–Charlotte

Utica College

Arlene Lundquist, Associate Professor of Psychology

Utica College (UC) enrolls just over 2,500 full- and part-time students, a population of which are learning disabled. In 2002 Utica College was pleased to receive an Adapting Curriculum for Student Success (ACSS) grant—a three-year, \$335,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education “to improve the quality of and access to education for students with disabilities.”

UC’s goal was to provide funding to faculty who sought to transform their courses in a way that would make them more accessible to students with disabilities. Then, rather than create stigmatized courses, UC created ACSS faculty thereby following a model in which students with learning disabilities have the option to enroll in courses with ACSS faculty who offer multiple modes for learning—but none of the stigmatization of “special” classes, tutors, or materials.

More students get As when I use MyPsychLab.

—Arlene Lundquist
Utica College

Selecting MyPsychLab (MPL) as an online learning tool for her classes was the obvious choice. “It’s tremendously user-friendly,” says Arlene Lundquist, Associate Professor of Psychology at Utica College. The wide variety of multimedia learning tools—from an auditory glossary to interactive quizzes to video clips—means more opportunities for more types of students. “But the real deciding factor was the technical support,” she says. “The Allyn & Bacon MPL representative not only trained me on how to set it up, but also came to my class to demonstrate it to the students. The representative answered all my students’ questions, made me look good, and most important, established an environment of safety and confidence.”

Lundquist uses MPL largely as a vehicle to motivate her students. Coupled with her teaching methodology, MPL’s online quizzes become learning tools versus simply ways to achieve a grade. In this manner, she finds that students are compelled to actively learn—both the subject at hand and how to take responsibility for their own learning. “Students are motivated when they feel they have control over their grades and when they feel competent. MPL offers students myriad ways to feel capable of doing and learning the work.”

With students doing their part and MPL doing its part, Lundquist’s classroom time is freed up. The flexibility allows her to do more interactive, engaging—active learning—activities in the classroom instead of lecturing. She can now connect with the students, interact with them, and create relationships. “MPL could work for anybody,” Lundquist says. “But with my teaching style and personality, it more than works—it’s perfect.”

Conclusion

Since 2003, nearly 105,000 students have achieved greater success in psychology with the help of MyPsychLab's revolutionary format for teaching and learning. Users testify to MyPsychLab's dependable and easy-to-use online homework, guided solutions, multimedia, tests, and e-books that put the focus where it needs to be: on the student. MyPsychLab's emphasis on self-motivation, positive reinforcement, and personal accountability means that MyPsychLab teaches students more than just psychology. It empowers them to succeed.

The instructors interviewed for this paper selected MyPsychLab for a variety of reasons, ranging from overwhelming class sizes to disappointing pass rates to concerns about just how much of the material their students were retaining. Some implement the full range of MyPsychLab features; others use only a few. No matter what the reason for using MyPsychLab or the level of use, all are realizing success.

For those in the industry, MyPsychLab's impact comes as little surprise. In her seminal 2000 monograph entitled *Innovations in Online Learning: Moving Beyond No Significant Difference*, Carol Twigg, President of the National Center for Academic Transformation, outlined five key features that contribute to both the quality of student learning and substantial cost reduction. Those familiar with MyPsychLab recognize those five concepts as the essential building blocks of the program.

MyPsychLab is a wonderful technological tool to keep students engaged in the course material content beyond the walls of the classroom.

—Larry Thomas
Blinn College

The results from using MyPsychLab over the last three years have shown that students appreciate the interface: course satisfaction is increased and course performance was affected in a very positive direction.

—Sue Spaulding
University of North Carolina–Charlotte

1. An initial assessment of each student's knowledge/skill level and preferred learning style
2. An array of high-quality, interactive learning materials and activities
3. Individualized study plans
4. Built-in, continuous assessment to provide instantaneous feedback
5. Appropriate, varied kinds of human interaction when needed

The response to MyPsychLab speaks for itself. "Every student loved the auditory definitions, the videos, and the e-book," says Kathy Manuel, Bossier Parish Community College. "They loved the pre- and post-tests... There isn't one thing they didn't like... This has been the best decision I've made on a textbook!"

To naysayers who still cling to outmoded models of higher education, this 1977 quote by Ken Olsen, President, Chairman, and Founder of Digital Equipment Corp., best expresses the need to constantly rethink our assumptions: "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home." For those who are ready to think creatively, Allyn & Bacon is ready to provide the training, the support, and the broadest range of titles—when and where they are needed.

For more information, visit MyPsychLab online at www.mypsychlab.com.