

California State University at Bakersfield Bakersfield, California

INSTRUCTORS Professor Randi Brummett de Leon; Professor Brooke Hughes

COURSE English 50 Basic Skills

LEVEL Basic reading and writing skills

TEXT No textbook; readings vary by instructor

TERMS COVERED Summer 2008, Summer 2009

CONTRIBUTION OF MYWRITINGLAB TO FINAL GRADE 5%

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Student performance

COURSE STRUCTURE: Part lecture/part lab

A non-traditional campus population, a flexible online learning environment

CSUB is a proudly non-traditional campus with a vision to become the leading university in the California State University system. The student population is diverse and 46% of students are older than 24. Only a tiny fraction of active students reside on campus—many are juggling work and family responsibilities as they pursue their degrees. Almost half of all students taking courses in the English department are ESL/Generation 1.5 students.

English 50 is a summer class for first-time freshmen that is paid for through multiple grants. Students accepted into the CSUB Summer Bridge Program are eligible to take English 50. The Basic Skills course is intended to enable students to engage

Students using MyWritingLab improved an average **26.57 points** from pre-test to post-test in **just four weeks.**

college-level materials capably and to communicate their ideas effectively through enhanced reading and writing skills. The course format called for students to meet in-class with tutors four days a week to cover any topics the instructor chose. This format presented challenges, namely:

- What was the most effective use of time with the tutors?
- How could the instruction be made consistent for all students?
- And how could less-prepared students be given additional instruction?

Professors Brummett and Hughes decided that integrating MyWritingLab into the Basic Skills course could help address these and perhaps other challenges.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

“As a Spanish

speaker, it helps

me better

understand the

English language.”

“I liked seeing

what my

problem areas

are in my writing.”

STUDENT FEEDBACK

“I felt proud
when I finished all of
my required topics.
I didn’t think I could
do it, but now
I know I can!!”
“The instructions were
very clear—so
even though there
wasn’t an instruc-
tor, I always knew
what to do.”

Implementing MyWritingLab

In summer 2008, Professors Brummett and Hughes introduced MyWritingLab as a tutoring component in English 50. Each course instructor was paired with a tutor trained in MyWritingLab; the tutors provided support for students working in the computer lab. In summer 2009, students’ lab time increased from two days a week to four days a week except for two of the five classes who alternated days because of limited space.

For English 50, students took the MyWritingLab diagnostic test on sentence-level grammar and then worked through ten topics in MyWritingLab, completing the Recall and Apply exercises. Sample topics are verbs, pronouns, and fragments. At the end of the four-week course, students took the diagnostic post-test. MyWritingLab contributes 5% to students’ final grade; other components of students’ final grade are journals, quizzes, class participation, essays, and final exam.

RESULTS

In summer 2009, out of a total of 209 enrolled students, 144 completed ten topics in MyWritingLab. Students’ average diagnostic pre-test score was 55.31%, average Recall score was 85.63%, average Apply score was 85.82%, and average post-test diagnostic score was 81.88%. Students using MyWritingLab improved an average 26.57 points from pre-test to post-test in just four weeks.

Students’ average diagnostic pre-test score was 55.31%,
average Recall score was 85.63%, average
Apply score was 85.82%, and average post-test
Diagnostic score was 81.88%

CONCLUSIONS

MyWritingLab has been used successfully for two summers and the English 50 instructors will meet in January or February to discuss plans for summer 2010.

Because the entire English 50 course must be taught in just fifteen class meetings over four weeks, the instructors commented that MyWritingLab was a tremendous help. Since MyWritingLab gave students intensive, customized instruction in grammar, instructors were freed to use scarce teaching time to cover other essential material.

Professors Brummett and Hughes also noted that ESL/Generation 1.5 students were particularly well-served by MyWritingLab. “These students typically need more grammar practice and review,” commented Professor Brummett and Hughes, “In our experience, ESL/Generation 1.5 students work harder at MyWritingLab and are able to succeed because MyWritingLab enables them to proceed at their own pace, not the pace of the entire class.”

PEARSON

www.pearsonhighered.com/english

For a product tour or to find out more, please visit www.mywritinglab.com