

Shelton State Community College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama

TEXT Resources for Writers with Readings, 2/e
Resources for Writers with Readings, 3/e

INSTRUCTORS Professor Richard (Ric) Dice, Instructor
Professor Janice Filer, Chair of Language and Communications

COURSE English 093: Basic English 1 and 2 covering sentence-level writing

A Call for Change

IN 2005, students in Shelton State's mainstream composition courses were not succeeding. Instructors found them unprepared to craft essay-length work; indeed, many students struggled to create sound sentences. Students' grasp of basic grammar was inadequate. Clearly, significant changes were needed to improve student outcomes.

In response, the instructors in SSCC's English department undertook a restructuring and standardization of developmental English courses and enlisted Pearson's MyWritingLab as the engine and cornerstone of the program. Standardization of

"MyWritingLab is a really valuable tool. I was trained in the sciences so I have a healthy respect for data and MyWritingLab offers a great way to keep score on student outcomes. It's just a superior way to teach the subject."

—Professor Richard Dice

SSCC's two semester-length developmental writing courses, Basic English 1 and 2, began in late 2005; full implementation across all sections was achieved in 2007 and continues today.

Basic English 1 and 2 are now taught in a laboratory environment, and all classes use MyWritingLab daily. MyWritingLab comprises 25% of the course grade: 5% of the grade is the pre-diagnostic test and 20% is the final test on grammar. Additionally, students use MyWritingLab each day to work on their individualized student learning plans—specific grammar exercises designed to prepare students to succeed on the final exam.

RESULTS

Comparison of pre- and post-test scores

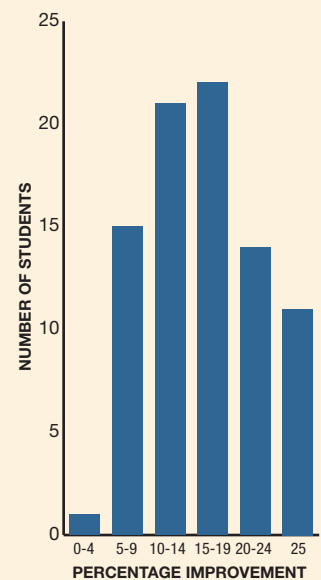
In 2007, with the start of full standardization, pre- and post-diagnostic results from MyWritingLab were analyzed. Eighty-six students in five classes participated. Of the 84 students completing the course (only 2 students failed to complete the course), 97.6% showed improvement. Students improved their average diagnostic test scores from 64% (pre-test) to 79.4% (post-test), an increase of over 15%.

Professor Dice explains, "MyWritingLab is a really valuable tool. I was trained in the sciences so I have a healthy respect for data and MyWritingLab offers a great way to keep score on student outcomes. It's just a superior way to teach the subject."

Breakdown of Results (all classes) Pre to Post Diagnostic

Percentage Improvement	# of Students
+ 0-4	1
+5-9	15
+10-14	21
+15-19	22
+20-24	14
+25	11

97.6% of Students Improved



Of the **44**
students who
completed English 101
using MyWritingLab,
75% passed.
College-wide
passing rates for
English 101 without
MyWritingLab were
only **51%**

RESULTS

Follow-up Study

Six classes of students who successfully completed English 093 were tracked through English 101, the department's mainstream composition course. Fifty-seven students enrolled in English 101. Of the forty-four students who completed English 101 and received a letter grade, thirty-three passed for a success rate of 75%; eleven failed (19%). These figures compared favorably to the college-wide student success rates for English 101 of 51% passing and 27% failing.

"I'm surprised each semester when I pull the data that students have improved as much as they do. And the results clearly document MyWritingLab's effectiveness because I haven't changed my teaching approach. I'm really acting now as an administrator for MyWritingLab," asserted Professor Dice.

Course Administration Transformed

Instructors note that administering the course is a pleasure with MyWritingLab. Professor Dice notes, "We've gone from workbooks—really deadly—to CD-based instruction to the online tools offered by MyWritingLab—just a huge advancement." Students appreciate the change, too. It was not uncommon for students to doze off

"I'm surprised each semester when I pull the data that students have improved as much as they do. And the results clearly document MyWritingLab's effectiveness because I haven't changed my teaching approach. I'm really acting now as an administrator for MyWritingLab."

—Professor Richard Dice

during workbook-based drill exercises. Now, with MyWritingLab, students work at their own pace, progressing through a learning plan completely customized to their individual needs by MyWritingLab.

There are other benefits as well. Professor Janice Filer, chair of Language and Communications, notes that the self-guided nature of MyWritingLab gives her flexibility in staffing. She can augment the English department teaching staff with content specialists, trained to administer MyWritingLab. This enables Professor Filer to offer lab-based sections of Basic English to even small numbers of students who would otherwise be closed out of the classes they need due to insufficient enrollment numbers.

Analysis

Without question, students' writing has improved. Professor Dice asserts, "You sense the students' excitement when they can write the thoughts they imagine. Without a grasp of basic grammar and construction, students would self-edit and dumb down their thoughts to a rudimentary expression they could put down on paper. After working with MyWritingLab, students are confident enough in basic grammar and construction to truly express their thoughts and engage in writing worthy of their imaginations."

PEARSON

www.pearsonhighered.com/english

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