

Product Used **MyMathLab**
 Course Name **Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics**
 Credit Hours **Zero**



KEY TAKE-AWAY

By redesigning a gateway course into self-paced, mastery-learning modules using MyMathLab, Cabrini College helps students both persevere and pass the course. Acquired study skills and gained confidence support students throughout their college careers.

Textbook in Use

Basic Mathematics, 10e, Marvin L. Bittenger

Course Implementation

Course Design

Faculty at Cabrini College sought a way to address varying levels of course preparedness among developmental math students. In spring 2007, Cabrini College piloted MyMathLab in one section of Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics, a self-paced class for students placed in the lowest track of the school's three math sequences. By fall 2007, a MyMathLab-enabled, lab-based model of the course had been fully implemented in all four course sections, taught by three instructors.

Students meet three times per week for a total of 3.75 hours and complete MyMathLab assignments both in and outside the classroom. Chapter pre- and posttests are taken in class or in a proctored testing center. Classroom coaches provide tutoring during class, and students are urged to visit Cabrini's Math Resource Center for additional tutoring outside of class.

Assessments

Homework is assigned for each section of covered material. Students may complete homework in class or at home. They are given unlimited attempts and must earn at least 75 percent before they may advance to the next assignment.

To pass the course, students must earn at least 75 percent on each of the seven chapter tests and on the final exam. Students have three chances to pass the final exam. All assessments are conducted in MyMathLab either in the classroom or in a proctored exam center.

Use of MyMathLab

MyMathLab is used for homework assignments as well as tests. Homework assignments use MyMathLab's Help Me Solve This, View an Example, and Ask My Instructor features. When available, students also access videos. The coordinator course feature is also used.

Use of MyMathLab contributes 78 percent to a student's final course grade.

Results and Data

Redesigning the Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics with MyMathLab had an immediate and positive impact on both retention and student success rates—and over time, the gains have continued to increase.

Table 1 shows that the average pass rate in 2006 (before implementation) was 64 percent; in 2007, the first year of implementation, the average pass rate rose to 77 percent; and by 2009, it had increased again, to 79 percent.

Academic Year	Pass Rate
2006	64.3%
2007	77.1%
2008	76.3%
2009	79.4%

Table 1. Pass Rates by Academic Year
(n = 155)

MyMathLab teaches students to learn independently. The confidence they gain by learning fundamental math skills in this manner not only helps them in the Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics course but transitions with them to future, more advanced math classes as well.

—Darla Nagy, Instructor
Cabrini College

The Student Experience

MyMathLab's many interactive features enable students who need them the most to get immediate feedback and step-by-step assistance and support during the learning process.

- “I have never felt more comfortable in a math class. I can go at my own pace, and no one knows what mistakes I'm making and how long it's taking me to do each section.”
- “If I don't understand the sums I'm working on, I can put the problems in an email to my professor. I also like the examples that show me how the problems are done.”
- “MyMathLab was extremely beneficial for me. I was able to rework problems as many times as I needed to, whenever I wanted, and get immediate feedback. The Help Me Solve This feature was also very useful. It was like having a teacher with me, ready to answer any questions, 24-7.”
- “Taking Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics was the first time I ever felt happy about math. Finally, I could approach math the way I wanted to: without experiencing intimidation by other students who understood the material. I could go as slow or as fast as I wanted and had multiple chances to take a test. For the first time ever, I felt supported in a math class and that I had the potential to do well.”
- “Until taking this course, I never thought I had really mastered all of the skills I needed to succeed in math classes to come. But after this class, I feel I have the building blocks I need to achieve in math courses to come. I would definitely recommend this course.”

Conclusions

Because Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics serves as a bridge to higher-level math classes, the skills and habits learned within it lay the foundation for the rest of a student's college career. In addition to improving students' math skills, using MyMathLab in this self-paced environment helps students learn time management skills, build self-confidence, and draw the connection between time on task and achievement.

Submitted by Diane Devanney, Math Specialist
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