Riverside Community College District — Riverside, CA

Product Used	MyMathLab
Course Name	Beginning Algebra
Credit Hours	Four

KEY TAKE-AWAY

MyMathLab's intuitive interface and ease of use mean a fast learning curve for both traditional and nontraditional students. Because RCCD's course lives online, enrollment caps can be lifted without stretching resources, thereby saving money and serving more students.

TWO YEAR • MORE THAN 20,000 STUDENTS

Textbook in Use

Introductory Algebra, 10e, Marvin L. Bittinger

Course Implementation

Course Design

The lab-enabled Beginning Algebra course meets two days a week for two hours each day. The first hour consists of classroom lecture; the second hour takes place in a Math Learning Center (computer lab), where students work on MyMathLab assignments. Students may receive extra help at optional weekly study group sessions in the Math Learning Center.

Assessments

10 percent — Homework
Students complete required weekly homework assignments on their own time at home or in the Math Learning Center. They may redo missed questions as many times as they choose.

10 percent — Lab assignments
Students have required weekly lab assignments.

15 percent — Quizzes
Students complete a weekly quiz by using MyMathLab. Quizzes are taken during lab time with the instructor. As quizzes are designed largely to reinforce practice, students may retake quizzes up to three times; they may take quizzes after class up until midnight that night on their own or in advance of class time. Most instructors encourage students to work together and ask questions during quizzes.

45 percent — Tests
Students take four proctored tests each semester. Tests are scheduled over a week-long period and are taken via MyMathLab the Math Learning Center.

20 percent — Final exam
The final exam is a paper-and-pencil exam.

Use of MyMathLab

Homework, lab assignments, quizzes, and tests are created and completed using MyMathLab. In addition, the coordinator course function is employed to ensure standardization across sections. Because all assignments, lectures, and test schedules are the same, the department can compare and assess results; and can easily and effectively implement departmentwide changes.

Use of MyMathLab contributes 80 percent to a student's final course grade.

Results and Data

Pamela Whelchel, associate professor of mathematics and cocoordinator of the Math Learning Center at Riverside Community College District (RCCD) has compared final exam scores across the course formats offered at the college. (See Figure 1.)

A brief explanation of the course categories in Figure 1: Hybrid courses meet for two hours a week for lecture, and students use MyMathLab to complete assignments on their own time. Lab-enabled courses meet for two hours a week for lecture and two hours a week in the Math Learning

In math, the key to success is practice. Traditionally delivered courses don't offer the amount of practice students need; MyMathLab does—and then some. I've tried lots of other programs. MyMathLab is superior to them all.

—Pamela Whelchel, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Cocoordinator of the Math Learning Center
Riverside Community College

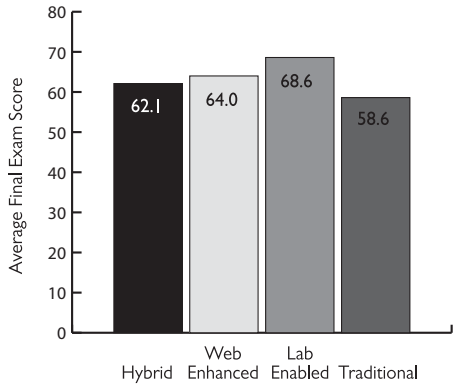

Figure 1. Comparison of Fall 2009 Average Final Exam Scores by Course Format

Center; students use MyMathLab to complete assignments. Web-enhanced courses are generally smaller than lab-enabled courses and have a similar format but are more flexible in their delivery in that they meet for lecture and/or computer work and use MyMathLab to complete some or all assignments. Traditional courses do not use MyMathLab at all.

Whelchel's data show that students in the lab-enabled courses earn higher average final exam scores on the department's common final than do students in any of the other Beginning Algebra course formats. Whelchel also reports an ability to successfully serve more students in the lab-enabled course than in the other Beginning Algebra course formats.

The Student Experience

Both Whelchel and her students appreciate the increased opportunities for communication and collaboration in the lab-enabled formats. "There is definitely more interaction in the computer lab," says Whelchel. "Students then take the communication further with MyMathLab's Ask My Instructor feature."

As a community college, RCCD receives both traditional and nontraditional students. Students are from all along the continuum of knowledge and skill sets. MyMathLab appeals to them all.

- "MyMathLab is awesome. I am slowly overcoming my math phobia. The book at our fingertips is truly convenient."
- "At 45 years of age, I have overcome my math anxiety with the help of MyMathLab. I can continue my education and achieve my goals. I encourage others who have given up their dream of a bachelor's degree because they couldn't get through the math to try again using MyMathLab."
- "I like that when doing homework assignments, if you don't understand the question, you can see how a similar problem is worked out. That's helpful."
- "I enjoy MyMathLab. I'm able to take my time and learn according to *my* ability rather than someone else's."

Conclusions

Final exam scores and final course grades indicate that students are learning more in the MyMathLab + lab-enabled course format. "Students in the lab-enabled format get more practice than the other students do," says Whelchel. "They no longer copy written assignments from their peers, and they are more prepared for exams."

The lab-enabled courses benefit the college, too. "Instead of a traditional cap of 45 students, these courses have a cap of 60 students," says Whelchel. "For every three courses taught in this format, the college saves one full class cost."

Future plans include offering more sections using MyMathLab and the lab-enabled format.

Submitted by Pamela Whelchel, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Cocoordinator of the Math Learning Center
Riverside Community College District