

Product Used **MyMathLab**  
 Course Names **Prealgebra, Elementary Algebra, Intermediate Algebra**  
 Credit Hours **Five**



**KEY**  
TAKE-AWAY

By using MyMathLab to ensure that students master developmental math concepts before advancing in either the course or the sequence, Triton College helps more students both complete their courses and do better on their final exams.

**Textbooks in Use**

*Prealgebra*, 5e, Elayn Martin-Gay; *Elementary and Intermediate Algebra*, 5e, Marvin L. Bittinger, David J. Ellenbogen, Barbara L. Johnson

**Course Implementation**

**Course Design**

Mathematics faculty at Triton College piloted MyMathLab four years ago in two classes. Today, all developmental students are required to use MyMathLab for all homework and some online testing.

All homework is completed online and outside of class. Instructors may reserve the computer lab to give online tests and quizzes. At least 35 percent of all testing must be proctored.

**Assessments**

Instructors may vary the weight assigned to homework and assessments. In addition, several instructors offer extra credit to students who complete practice tests with scores of 80 or above. The following is a rough guide.

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 20 percent | Homework   |
| 20 percent | Quizzes  |
| 30 percent | Tests<br><i>Online and on ground</i>               |
| 30 percent | Departmental final exam<br><i>Paper-and-pencil</i> |

**Use of MyMathLab**

MyMathLab is used for homework, unproctored quizzes, proctored tests and quizzes, and prerequisites, including practice tests and study plan exercises. Some instructors also assign custom MyMathLab exercises.

Use of MyMathLab contributes 25–75 percent of a student’s final course grade.

**Results and Data**

Table 1 illustrates that since full implementation of MyMathLab, the numbers of students completing Prealgebra, Elementary Algebra, and Intermediate Algebra each semester have increased. And their success continues in subsequent classes. “It’s like a domino effect,” says Ellen O’Connell, mathematics department chair. “Students in subsequent courses have an advantage over other students, since they are already familiar with MyMathLab.”

In addition, O’Connell reports that in the past four semesters, average departmental final exam scores in each course have increased. “They sneak up a few points each semester,” she says.

TWO YEAR • 10,000–20,000 STUDENTS

*Practice, practice, practice. Students can redo problems until they get them right. There is a direct correlation between students who take advantage of this opportunity and those who successfully pass the course.*

—Ellen O’Connell, Chair, Mathematics Department  
Triton College

|  | Prealgebra   |              |              | Elementary Algebra |              |              | Intermediate Algebra |              |              |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
|  | Took Final   | 10th day     | Retention    | Took Final         | 10th day     | Retention    | Took Final           | 10th day     | Retention    |
| Fall 2004                              | 207          | 495          | 41.8%        | 356                | 605          | 58.8%        | 169                  | 397          | 42.5%        |
| Spring 2005                            | 166          | 264          | 62.9%        | 255                | 416          | 61.3%        | 172                  | 324          | 53.0%        |
| Fall 2005                              | 260          | 387          | 67.2%        | 388                | 601          | 64.6%        | 198                  | 339          | 58.4%        |
| Spring 2006                            | 160          | 295          | 54.2%        | 283                | 471          | 60.1%        | 211                  | 352          | 59.9%        |
| <b>Total Before Redesign</b>           | <b>793</b>   | <b>1,441</b> | <b>56.5%</b> | <b>1,282</b>       | <b>2,093</b> | <b>61.2%</b> | <b>750</b>           | <b>1,412</b> | <b>53.5%</b> |
| Fall 2008                              | 339          | 559          | 60.6%        | 387                | 562          | 68.9%        | 307                  | 450          | 68.2%        |
| Spring 2009                            | 242          | 418          | 57.9%        | 427                | 555          | 76.9%        | 242                  | 350          | 69.1%        |
| Fall 2009                              | 428          | 712          | 60.1%        | 480                | 666          | 72.0%        | 299                  | 465          | 64.3%        |
| Spring 2010                            | 294          | 522          | 56.3%        | 515                | 704          | 73.2%        | 297                  | 450          | 66.0%        |
| <b>Total After Full Implementation</b> | <b>1,303</b> | <b>2,211</b> | <b>58.7%</b> | <b>1,809</b>       | <b>2,487</b> | <b>72.8%</b> | <b>1,145</b>         | <b>1,715</b> | <b>66.9%</b> |

Table 1. Comparison of Retention Rates before and after Developmental Math Sequence Redesign with MyMathLab ( $n = 11,359$ )

## The Student Experience

“With a few exceptions, students love using MyMathLab,” says O’Connell. “They like the online homework, and they really use the Gradebook button, always checking to see how they are doing in the class.”

O’Connell also reports that students enjoy and use the help offered by MyMathLab’s many interactive resources. “I tell my students that I expect to see nothing less than 100 percent on their homework because I know they can repeat the problem as many times as they need to master it.”

## Conclusions

Faculty are unanimously in agreement about MyMathLab’s efficacy. “Probably the greatest impact has been for faculty and the reduced time spent grading homework papers,” says O’Connell. “Previously, some faculty didn’t assign as much homework as the students need because of the time it would take to grade that much homework. Faculty don’t shy away anymore from assigning as much homework as needed, and our students are more prepared.”

Triton College currently uses MyMathLab in every course for which the program is available—from the Developmental Math sequence through the Calculus series. Future plans include utilizing the program’s coordinator course feature to help manage the department’s 60–70 adjuncts.

Submitted by Ellen O’Connell, Ph.D., Chair, Mathematics Department  
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