

School Name Hilbert College, Hamburg, NY  
Course Name College Writing (Composition) with co-requisite lab  
Course Format Co-requisite, hybrid

**Key Results** Students who passed the co-requisite Composition course had an average MyWritingLab score 41 percentage points higher than students who did not pass the course. There is a positive correlation between a student's MyWritingLab score and the average score they receive on writing assignments, suggesting that students who do well on MyWritingLab also do well on their essays.

**Submitted by**  
Emily Ryan-Radder, Writing Coordinator

**Course materials**  
*A Pocket Style Manual*, by Hacker; MyWritingLab

### Setting

Hilbert College is a private, 4-year liberal arts institution located in suburban Hamburg, ten miles south of Buffalo. The College enrolls approximately 1,100 students, half of whom receive Pell Grants. About one-third of entering students need some level of remediation in English.

College Writing is a 16-week, 3-credit course required for all students. By the completion of this course a student should: display college-level control of English usage; apply basic research methods to writing essays; display conscious control of paragraph and paper structure; and actively participate in all stages of the writing process.

### Challenges and Goals

Beginning in fall 2014, students who test at the developmental English level (based on Accuplacer scores) enroll in a College Writing (Composition) section that includes an additional day in the computer lab each week to work on grammar and mechanics skills. The primary goal of this initiative is to help students avoid developmental English classes altogether and give them a chance to succeed at the college-credit level with additional help. In fall 2014, one-third of Composition sections included the co-requisite lab.

These co-requisite sections are identical to the standard Composition course except for the third lab day; students do not earn additional credit hours for the lab day. Because these students would have typically enrolled in a developmental English class, we needed a way to offer sentence- and paragraph-level support along with instructional content. We

chose MyWritingLab to give “just in time” remediation to facilitate success for these students in a college-level course.

### Implementation

Every Friday, students attend a computer lab session for 75 minutes. They start by taking the Path Builder in the “Comprehensive” version of MyWritingLab and are assigned 33 topics in the Writing Skills Learning Path. Students may achieve mastery on topics via the Path Builder and modular-level Skills Checks, lessening their workload. When 70 percent mastery, or higher, is achieved on the topic post-tests, completion credit is earned. Students get two attempts to achieve mastery on each post-test, although I will occasionally reset their scores. I have kept the default topic content but removed the Write Drafting section. I expect students to spend at least one hour on MyWritingLab a week outside of the lab day.

Completion rates of MyWritingLab in our first semester were not optimal. Forty-three percent of students completed 70 percent or more of required MyWritingLab topics. A few critical changes to improve this metric were implemented the following semester:

- I re-weighted MyWritingLab to emphasize topic mastery (20 percent) over lab attendance (5 percent). Previously the value was 15 percent for topic mastery and 10 percent for attendance.
- I made some adjustments to better pace students through the content. Our first semester, students worked at their own pace; as a result, they did not accomplish enough (the average completion rate of 33 topics was 64 percent). To rectify this, I created a calendar, assigning 3–4 topics each week.
- In an attempt to flip the classroom and have students come to class more prepared and engaged, I asked students to work on MyWritingLab before class by reading the

*MyWritingLab helped me become a stronger writer because ...  
 “I learned that there are different ways and steps to revising and editing your paper.” —Student*

overviews and watching the Animations for assigned topics. At the beginning of the lab day, I now spend 10–15 minutes giving a mini-lesson and answering questions students have on the topics. In the future, I would like to require this pre-work.

In the fall 2015 semester, I plan to use prerequisites in the MyLab to ensure that students work through all parts of a topic in a logical order, giving them a better chance of understanding the material and scoring well on the assessment. I also plan to use a coordinator course in MyWritingLab to simplify course set-up, maintenance, and exporting of data.

**Assessments**

30 percent	Essays (3)
25 percent	MyWritingLab (20 percent MyWritingLab completion and mastery of topic post-tests (33) and 5 percent Computer lab attendance)
10 percent	Quizzes (15)
10 percent	Attendance
10 percent	Annotated bibliography
5 percent	Annotated bibliography presentation
5 percent	Homework/in-class assignments
5 percent	Class participation

**Results and Data**

In fall 2014, students who passed the course had an average MyWritingLab mastery completion score of 75 percent (score calculated by number of topics mastered divided by total number of topics assigned). In contrast, students who did not pass the course had an average MyWritingLab score of 34 percent, a difference of 41 percentage points (see Figure 1). From an observational standpoint, I noticed that the students who showed up to the lab day ready to do their MyWritingLab work were the students who did well in the course.

There was a significant positive correlation found,  $r=.70$ ,  $p<.01$ , between a student’s MyWritingLab mastery completion score and the average score they received on three essays and an annotated bibliography. This strong positive relationship suggests that students who do well on MyWritingLab also do well writing their essays. (See Figure 2.)

As mentioned in the Implementation section, it is a departmental goal to see better completion rates of MyWritingLab work moving forward. We hope that tweaking our MyWritingLab implementation will improve mastery completion rates in fall 2015, as this is a departmental goal.

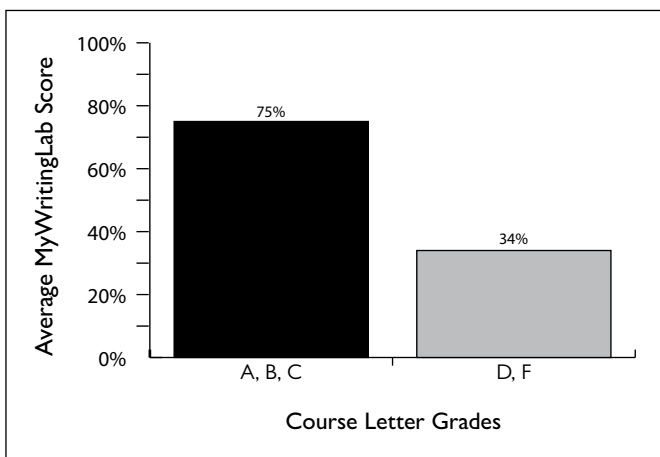


Figure 1. Average MyWritingLab Mastery Completion Scores as Grouped by Letter Grade Received: A, B, C (n=24); D, F (n= 10), Fall 2014

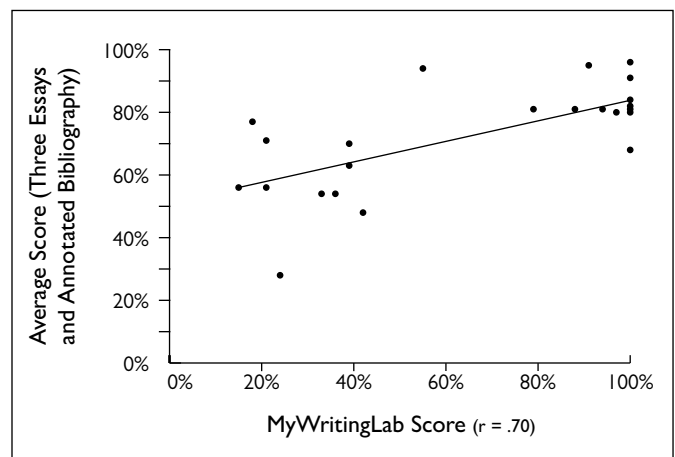


Figure 2. Correlation of MyWritingLab Mastery Completion Score to Average of Three Essays and Annotated Bibliography, Fall 2014 (n = 24)

## The Student Experience

The following student quotes are excerpted from a spring 2015 survey conducted in the co-requisite section of Composition:

If you could give one piece of advice to students taking the course next semester, what would it be?

- “Keep up with your work and see the instructor when you need help.”
- “Take your time and look at the material given to you so (that) you can understand the content.”
- “Make sure you go to the lab because it is very helpful.”
- “Take the Path Builder seriously.”

If there is one thing about the lab you would keep for students next semester, what would it be and why?

- “The flexible pace...”
- “The software because it actually helps a lot.”

Overall, do you believe attending lab enabled you to become a stronger writer this semester?

- “Yes, because I am able to write better papers in the future.”
- “Yes, because I learned so much from the lab.”
- “Yes, I learned that there are different ways and steps to revising and editing your paper.”

## Conclusion

Our department is intentional in its effort to make sure that all our students get the options they need to succeed in Composition. We feel that MyWritingLab is a very good option for most of our students. The positive results we’ve seen are encouraging, and we need to continue to reinforce its importance to students in the co-requisite sections. For the students who are not yet ready to take the co-requisite version of Freshman Composition, we plan to offer a developmental integrated reading and writing course with MySkillsLab in fall 2015.

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Implementation and results case studies share actual implementation practices and evaluate possible relationships between program implementation and student performance. The findings are not meant to imply causality or generalizability within or beyond these instances. Rather, they can begin to provide informed considerations for implementation and adaptation decisions in other user contexts. For this case study, mixed-methods designs were applied, and the data collected included qualitative data from interviews, quantitative program usage analytics, and performance data. Open-ended interviews were used to guide data collection.