School Name	West Chester University of Pennsylvania, West Chester, PA
Course Name	Composition I and II
Course Format	Face-to-face

Key Results   After working through the MyWritingLab Learning Path modules, students averaged ten percentage points higher on the post-assessment, showing substantial improvement from the Path Builder diagnostic to the Mastery Check.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Writing Today, Brief Edition, Johnson-Sheehan and Paine with MyWritingLab (Composition I); Custom course pack with MyWritingLab (Composition II)

Setting

In Composition I, students learn what it means to be an effective writer, developing the skills to communicate clearly, to respond thoughtfully to issues of diversity, and to think critically and analytically. In Composition II, students use writing to critically analyze, make sense of, and communicate experience, and to construct a more advanced, research-based argument. Both courses prepare students to become competent academic writers, use efficient and effective research techniques, and employ MLA documentation style.

Challenges and Goals

I adopted MyWritingLab because it solves a number of course challenges. It places students' own writing at the heart of the course, both at home and during class discussions. Also, it affords students multiple opportunities to receive feedback on their writing: from peers, Pearson tutors, and the instructor. Finally, completing the MyWritingLab Learning Path exercises improves students understanding of and ability to use written academic English.

Implementation

Although MyWritingLab assessments are technically only a small percentage of students' final grades, the program is at the center of how I both teach and manage the courses. I post all assignments in MyWritingLab; students complete and submit all exercises, quizzes, informal writing, peer review, outlines, drafts, and revisions in MyWritingLab. Likewise, I use MyWritingLab to deliver feedback to students on their work

and to respond to their questions. The only hard copies that students submit are the final drafts of their major papers.

In both courses, students first take the Path Builder diagnostic in MyWritingLab. Then, I assign four of eight modules on the Learning Path. Both courses cover Composing Clear and Effective Sentences; Using Punctuation, Mechanics, and Spelling; and Improving Language and Style. In Composition I, I also require Writing and the Writing Process, and I assign the Conducting Research and Documenting Sources module in Composition II. Students are given three chances to score above 80 percent on the post-tests. In both courses, the average of the post-tests counts toward course grades; however, the Mastery Check serves as the final exam. While I do not set hard due dates for MyWritingLab assignments, students must complete the Learning Path by the end of the term, so I provide a pacing guide to help them work through their topics in a timely manner.

In Composition I, students must seek feedback from an outside tutor, either through Pearson Tutor Services or our school's writing center. In Composition II, using a tutor is not required, but students who provide documentation of their work with a tutor receive extra points. A valuable part of MyWritingLab, the Pearson Tutor Services gives students the opportunity to submit three papers for review by qualified writing experts and receive substantive, concrete feedback.

Assessments
Composition I/Effective Writing

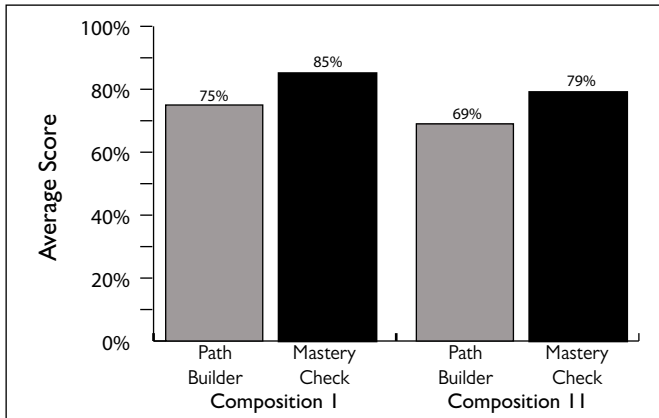|	
62.5 percent	Papers (4)
10 percent	Attendance and participation
7.2 percent	MyWritingLab post-tests (36)
6 percent	Non-paper assignments (12)
5 percent	Grammar quizzes (2)
5 percent	MyWritingLab Mastery Check
4.3 percent	Final portfolio

Figure 1. Pre- and Post-Assessment Scores in Composition I, Spring 2014 (*n* = 49) and Composition II, Spring 2014 (*n* = 43)
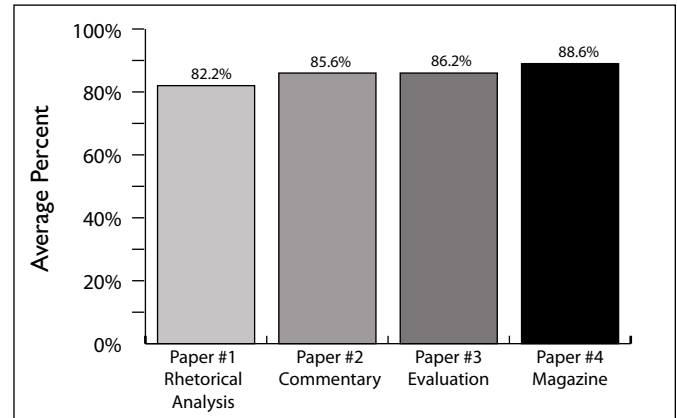

Figure 2. Composition I Writing Assignments, Spring 2014 (*n* = 49)

Composition II/Critical Writing and Research

62.5 percent	Papers (4)
10 percent	Attendance and participation
10 percent	Quizzes (2)
5 percent	MyWritingLab Mastery Check
4 percent	Outlines, rough drafts, peer reviews
3.5 percent	MyWritingLab post-tests (34)
3 percent	Research proposal, annotated bibliography, notecards
2 percent	Final portfolio

Results and Data

Comparison of student scores in both courses from our most recent semester show clearly that students strengthened their writing and grammar skills, with post-test scores increasing an average of 10 percentage points from the pre-test scores (Figure 1).

These gains from pre-test to post-test indicate that students are improving their foundational writing skills, and they also correlate to a steady rise in students' paper grades over the term (Figure 2).

Best Practices

Fundamental to MyWritingLab's effectiveness is how it facilitates giving students feedback on their writing. By the time students write a final draft of each paper, they have received considerable feedback—from me on their outline, from peer reviews, and from Pearson Tutor Services. Students come to see how a text can evolve from start to finish.

Since transitioning from MyCompLab to MyWritingLab, I have especially enjoyed using the Item Analysis feature of MyWritingLab's Gradebook, one of my favorite features. By simply clicking the "IA" button next to any assignment, I see a quick overview of how students performed, question by question. I use this Item Analysis right before class to focus the class discussion on wherever students need the most help.

The grammar component in MyWritingLab is exceptionally well done—students master grammar concepts by completing their personalized Learning Path. And while students may not appreciate this at first, the data shows that they are clearly improving their grammar skills from the beginning to the end of the semester.

The Student Experience

Some students complain that MyWritingLab seems time-consuming or tedious. However, one student clearly gets the reason I assign the MyWritingLab Learning Path: "I thought the post-tests on MyWritingLab were just busywork, but they did help improve my writing."

Conclusion

My message to instructors considering MyWritingLab is that, in terms of both instructional materials and course management, its real power is allowing students to have consistent, ongoing interaction with their own writing. MyWritingLab helps students succeed at both of my goals—strengthening grammar and study skills and also producing clear, effective writing.