

## California State University at Bakersfield Bakersfield, California

**INSTRUCTORS** Professor Randi Brummett de Leon; Professor Brooke Hughes

**COURSE** Humanities/Behavioral Sciences 277/477 Intensive Writing Lab

**LEVEL** College Level Writing

**TEXT** English Simplified, 10/e, by Blanche Ellsworth and John A. Higgins

**TERMS COVERED** Winter 2008-Fall 2008

**CONTRIBUTION OF MYWRITINGLAB TO FINAL GRADE** 100%

**TYPES OF DATA REPORTED** Student outcomes

**COURSE STRUCTURE** Online

### A non-traditional campus population, a flexible online learning environment

CSUB IS A PROUDLY NON-TRADITIONAL CAMPUS with a vision to become the leading university in the California State University system. The student population is diverse and 46% of students are older than 24. Only a tiny fraction of active students reside on campus—many are juggling work and family responsibilities as they pursue their degrees. Almost half of all students taking courses in the English department are ESL/Generation 1.5 students.

Professors Brummett and Hughes, having used MyWritingLab successfully in both developmental and mainstream English department courses, sought to make MyWritingLab’s flexible, immersive writing instruction available to students at various levels and in diverse programs.

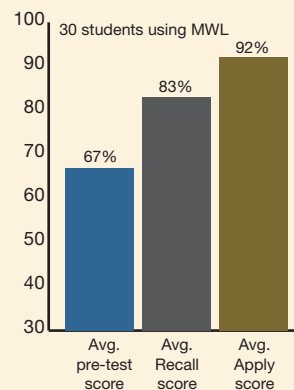
### Taking MyWritingLab campus-wide

Intensive Writing Lab 277 (freshmen/sophomores)/477 (juniors/seniors) is designed to help students with critical thinking, writing, grammar, and rhetoric necessary for analytical reading and persuasive, logical, and effective writing in any lower- or upper-division course. Students may elect to sign up or a faculty member may recommend students for the course. MyWritingLab constitutes 100% of students’ final grade.

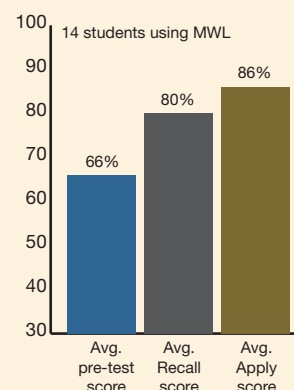
Students work entirely online at their own pace on a personalized lesson plan with access to one-on-one tutoring on request. To achieve course credit, students must complete 17 hours of lab and must master (80% or higher) at least 15 topics in the MyWritingLab program. Mastery is measured either through the diagnostic or through completion of individual topics. Students also have the option to use Pearson’s MySearchLab to learn research skills and documentation formats and access SMARTHINKING.

Particularly for students in Intensive Writing Lab who are seeking to apply stronger writing skills to their work in a variety of disciplines, Professors Brummett and Hughes praised the new SMARTHINKING feature of MyWritingLab as “just a stupendous addition to the product.” SMARTHINKING allows students to submit up to six papers (up to 15 pages long) on any subject and have personalized feedback from a person with a Master’s or PhD in that subject area.

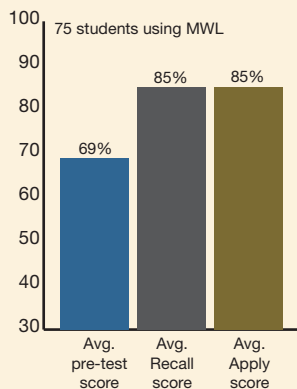
**Winter 2008 / 277**



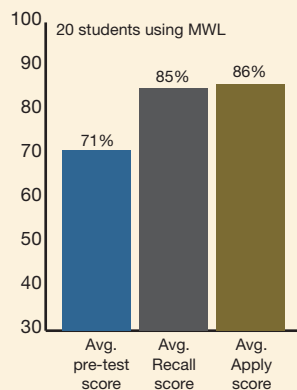
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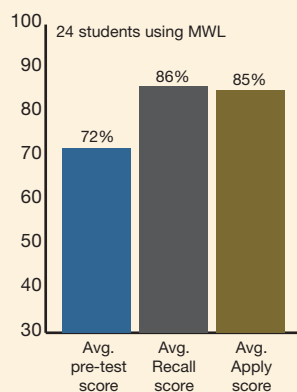
### Spring 2008 / 277



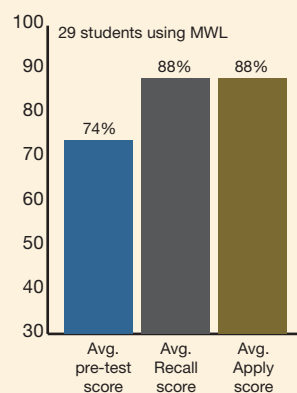
### Spring 2008 / 477



### Fall 2008 / 277



### Fall 2008 / 477



“Students were absolutely floored to receive expert feedback on their papers, usually within 24 hours, from professionals who provided knowledgeable advice both on the writing and on the content,” continued Brummett and Hughes, “and we were so impressed by the quality and range of the responses. SMARTHINKING is a gem of a resource.”

### RESULTS

Students take four diagnostic tests on grammar, mechanics, sentence structure, spelling, and word choice. In order to complete mastery of a topic, students watch a mini-lecture on the topic and complete two areas: Recall (multiple choice questions) and Apply (where students apply what they’ve just learned to a paragraph).

Each quarter, between 50 and 100 students opt to take Humanities/Behavioral Sciences 277/477 with MyWritingLab. For winter 2008, students in Intensive Writing Lab scored 67% and 66% respectively on the diagnostic exam. Working entirely online and at their own pace, students’ Recall scores were 83% and 80% respectively and their Apply scores were 92% and 86% respectively. These 20-25% mastery gains are repeated each quarter over the last five quarters among students from many

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different campus departments/programs, including Social Work, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Sociology, and Athletics. Professors Brummett and Hughes keep advisors in those departments/programs apprised of their students’ progress with periodic email reports during the course term.

### Expanding MWL campus-wide—ambitious next steps

Professors Brummett and Hughes believe that MyWritingLab is scalable university-wide because of its flexible nature and the potential to improve student performance in virtually any course by adding a writing component. Brummett and Hughes have met with several department heads to propose adding a MyWritingLab component and a university-wide committee has begun demonstrating MyWritingLab to groups of faculty at a time.

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