Making it Click

Why Students Master Office 2007 Faster with Pearson's myitlab

BY MICHELLE D. SPECKLER • *Spring 2009*

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Introduction

The U.S. unemployment rate is at its highest level since 1997. The U.S. Labor Department reports that 240,000 jobs were cut in October 2008, the 10th month of job losses in a row. What does this mean for college and university instructors? Everything.

Students are looking for skills to help them keep from becoming the next Labor Department statistic. Judy McLeish, founder and editor of the Web site The Employee Factor, suggests the following: "Make your skills transferable into a variety of jobs and industries." McLeish offers job seekers a list of transferable skills such as time management, information gathering, problem solving, and an understanding of technology.[1]

In March 2008, Andrew Coey of The Spherion Career Blog[2] offered his two cents in the form of predictions. He warns of an environment of increased job insecurity. He posits that an overseas migration of graduates will open doors for an older, returning workforce. And he predicts that (1) workers over 45 years of age will soon constitute 40 percent of the workforce and (2) by 2012, workers over 55 will constitute 20 percent of the workforce.

Many institutions have already noted changes in student behavior. According to Inside Higher Ed,[3] a recent study reported that for fall 2007, nearly 4 million students had enrolled in at least one online course—an increase of approximately 13 percent over 2006 figures. A study called Staying the Course: Online Education in the United States, 2008[4] suggests that that growth might continue, "thanks to the flagging economy . . . which would align with previous experience in which a deteriorating job market leads to more enrollments."

The study's authors draw a connection between economic woes and higher online enrollments and explore the "inevitable byproduct: competition." "[T]his competition may be leading schools to increase their geographic reach and to concentrate on nondegree, nontraditional students," they say.

The most successful way to compete in an environment

Strong IT skills are essential for success in the 21st century—for working within an increasingly (electronically) collaborative world, using computers and their growing numbers of applications, navigating electronic media and information effectively, and continually adapting to changing technologies.

*—Students and Information Technology, 2008
Educause Center for Applied Research Study*

of market insecurity, shifting student demographics, and increased competition for funds is to offer students the most pedagogically proven, most time-saving, and most cost-effective resources available.

myitlab is one such resource. For students—traditional, returning, English as a second anguage, and continuing education—myitlab's proven Microsoft Office 2007 training can mean the difference between being a graduate and being an employee. On the following pages, you'll read how myitlab's numerous features can help students—and institutions—beat the competition.

- *Time savings.* Students don't waste time covering skills they've already acquired. They focus on what they yet need to master—and in an individually customized environment.

- *Real-world learning.* Students do more than memorize skills; through project-based assessments, they learn how to succeed in the workplace.

- *Robust, open-simulation software.* Students learn in a simulated learning environment that closely matches Microsoft Office 2007 applications; they prepare for exactly what employers want.

Taking Action

myitlab is online, performance-based assessment and outcomes-based training based on Prentice Hall's Microsoft Office 2007 textbook series. Course management tools, advanced reporting functions, a clean user interface, and a solid technical architecture are woven together to save you time on your most important tasks: preparation, teaching, and assessment.

What Makes myitlab Different

myitlab was the most successful Web-based technology product launch in Pearson history. Since fall 2007, there have been 8 million myitlab log-in sessions, 34,000 myitlab courses created, and 6 million grades posted to myitlab Gradebooks. Today, an average of 70,000 myitlab exams are delivered each week. Instructors across the country are discovering the tools, resources, and system approach they've always wanted in one package. "myitlab is the product I hoped for when I began using interactive training and assessment more than 10 years ago," says Candace Ryder of Colorado State University.

Only myitlab offers instructors and their students (1) a one-to-one content relationship between the textbook and the software, (2) an unparalleled simulation of Microsoft Office 2007, and (3) a system approach that means ease-of-use using any delivery method: traditional lecture, hybrid, or fully online.

Within the system, things only get better: thousands of test bank questions; two assessment scenarios and one training scenario for each skill; outcomes-based training; a wealth of reporting options; an in-service training program; and one of the most accessible and available technical support models in the industry.

myitlab Works for Instructors

myitlab's system focuses on student success and effective use of instructor time. Everything you need to prepare, teach, and assess your course quickly and easily is in there.

I'll never again teach my classes without myitlab. It's that good.

—Susan Fry
Boise State University

Assessment and training content that matches the textbook. myitlab's seamlessly integrated, system approach enables you to train your students on the same projects, activities, skills, and methods found in the GO!, Exploring, Skills for Success, and In Business series textbooks.

Powerful administration. Powerful program administration features allow you to create and manage course templates, course sections, and all of your users, including students. Using the administrator tools, you also can assign permissions to instructors and teaching assistants (adjuncts), allowing them only the level of access they need.

Realistic skill- and project-based assessment scenarios. Choose between two assessment scenarios—skill or project based—for Office 2007 quizzes, pre- and posttests, and finals. Use one scenario for a pretest or quiz and the other for a midterm or final.

The realistic, open simulation of Microsoft Office 2007 enables students to complete an activity the way the activity is taught in the textbook or by using other methods that the actual Office 2007 application accepts. Students can explore and navigate the Office 2007 applications without penalty unless they commit to an incorrect action.

Outcomes-based training. myitlab's outcomes-based training is self-paced and adaptable to each student's skill level. Students no longer have to retrain on skills they already know. They can apply and prove their skills, ask for a hint, or learn from multimedia Show Me demonstrations.

Customized study plans. myitlab offers instructors the opportunity to combine exams and training into complete, customized study plans. You select the path and how your students will proceed. For example, both premade and custom study plans enable you to assign a pretest that leads to training only on the activities a student missed. They are then presented with a posttest.

Robust scheduling options. You decide how many attempts to allow students before the question is deemed incorrect, as well as how many times a student can attempt a training or exam. You also can set the point value allotted to each question, so that some questions carry more weight toward the final grade.

Advanced reporting. myitlab's advanced reporting capabilities, including detailed student click-stream data, let you see exactly what actions your students completed click by click—for true, defensible grading. Activity reports are available for single or multiple students, assignments, and sections. Instructors can run frequency analysis reports, produce Study Plan reports, and create certificates of completion. All reports can be customized, exported, and saved for future access.

Full-functioning Gradebook. A full-functioning Gradebook enables you to manage all of your course grades in one place, import/export from popular learning management systems, manipulate and modify individual student grades, and calculate final grades.

In fall 2008, my section size increased from 30 to 70 students. I could never have done that without the grading support of myitlab.

—*Maurie Lockley*
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Built-in communication. myitlab offers complete e-mail and announcement functionality. You can communicate with just one student, or with a specific section, or with your entire course roster with just one click.

Instructor Support

Faculty Advocate Program
Built upon the proven effectiveness of peer-to-peer advising, myitlab's Faculty Advocate program offers access to a nationwide network of faculty advocates—college instructors experienced in teaching with myitlab—to advise and counsel faculty currently using myitlab, as well as those considering incorporating it into their courses. Faculty advocates provide phone coaching and support, staff online phone training, conduct campus training and demonstrations, and present myitlab at conferences and workshops.

Every time I speak to one of the faculty advocates I learn something new. That helps me to be a better instructor.

—*Ralph Argiento*
Guilford Technical Community College

"One of the best things about using myitlab," says Maureen Nowak Allen of Elon University, "is the awesome support I receive from the Pearson support team—particularly the Faculty Advocates, who helped me when I first started using the product. Obtaining whatever I needed to make my life easier was as simple as asking for it."

Training
Pearson provides a variety of training options to help you learn the many facets of myitlab and how to incorporate them into your course. "[Pearson's training staff] spent as much time as we needed," says Ralph Argiento of Guilford Technical Community College. "We felt like we were the only customers in the world. That's rare in

this industry. They had our money. They didn't have to stick around. But they did. They kept asking us, 'What else do you need? What else can we do for you?' And they are still constantly in touch with us."

WebEx sessions. WebEx sessions are weekly online tours conducted by myitlab faculty advocates. Participants view the trainers' computer screen and have the opportunity to interact with myitlab during the session. Each week, Pearson offers four levels of training sessions to accommodate the breadth of myitlab instructors—from those who have just adopted myitlab and need to learn the basics to those who are currently using myitlab and are seeking to go deeper.

> *Adult learners are often intimidated by the computers as well as the knowledge base of the younger students. myitlab provides them with the tools, learning resources, and encouragement they need to succeed.*
>
> *—Ralph Argiento*
> *Guilford Technical Community College*

Quick Tours. myitlab Quick Tours are self-paced, step-by-step demonstrations of key tasks, including scheduling exams, deleting submissions, and copying content from one course to another.

Printable documentation. myitlab's online archive of step-by-step instructions, downloadable guides, and hot tips is your always-available resource for questions about getting started and managing a myitlab course.

Responsive Customer Service

Faculty users of myitlab can be confident that they'll receive top-notch customer service for both their own technical questions and those of their students. Technical support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by e-mail, chat, and the online knowledge base of frequently asked questions. Support also is available via Pearson's toll-free technical support phone line at hours that even include Sunday evenings.

"Technical problems haven't been an issue," says Sally Baker, DeVry University. "When something comes up, Pearson technical support takes care of it. During our implementation, they were great. We had a variety of different configurations to contend with—in the lab, on our network, etc. Pearson's engineers called and talked our network people through the whole thing. They were very helpful, and it went smoothly. We were thrilled!"

myitlab Works for Students

Today's students are digital natives; most of them have grown up immersed in technology in some form. They not only embrace technology; they also expect it. myitlab provides the kinds of tools needed to engage, stimulate, and connect to 21st-century students both online and in the classroom.

Easy to Use

The end user is myitlab's first priority. Every aspect of the program—from development to design—is geared toward maximum convenience for the students who use it.

Usability. From pedagogical tools like prescriptive modules that create productive learning paths and increase self-esteem to technological features that enhance visual contrast and readability and make the application universally workable, myitlab knows what it takes to reach students.

Automatic adjustment of screen resolution. myitlab adjusts automatically to match the screen resolution settings on a user's computer.

Clean user interface. myitlab screens are clean and uncomplicated. Macro settings are color coded and

> *In the past, I wasn't reaching as many students as I do now. More students are sticking with the class and paying more attention while they're here.*
>
> *—Jennifer Kreie*
> *New Mexico State University*

myitlab has become the most important initiative for our incoming freshmen. Plus, it has significantly decreased our withdrawal/fail rate.

—Sally Baker
DeVry University

organized, and where possible, standard Windows or other well-known icons are used.

Real-time previews. While working in the simulation, students are free to use the entire spectrum of program features and options without penalty until they perform an action that changes their document. This promotes exploration of the program on students' own terms and results in greater understanding of and familiarity with the software.

Flexible and Robust

myitlab means teaching is no longer a one-size-fits-all proposition. Training is self-paced and adaptable to each student's level of knowledge.

Training supported by screen hints and multimedia demonstrations. While a student is taking a training, every question comprises a series of steps; each step has a hint related to it, and students are offered the opportunity to complete activities on their own. Repeated failed attempts prompt the system to offer hints, which students may also request.

Students may also request multimedia Show Me demonstrations of unfamiliar activities. Demonstrations walk students through the activity—and its corresponding hints—with audio explanation.

Real-world simulation. The myitlab simulation is a rich, robust replication of the Microsoft Office 2007 environment: it looks, feels, and acts like the actual program.

What Students Are Saying

The log-in process is easy enough for even the most novice computer user.

The myitlab screen is organized and easy to follow.

Everything is labeled so well—I don't have to guess which button would take me where I want to go.

The questions are very clear.

I especially like the multiple attempts and the clock countdown. The countdown gives myitlab somewhat of a gaming feel and challenged me to beat the clock.

That I can make my own schedule and learn about Excel at the same time—I just love it!

The Show Me button is very helpful. The option of trying it alone after the example makes all the difference.

I like the ease of moving within screens. I think the training window is excellent.

The ability to change font sizes makes the questions easier to read.

Doing the trainings more than once helps me with the learning process.

Being able to access my grades and receive feedback immediately makes the results more relevant and enables me to see what I need to work on.

After I took the training sessions, I could easily find my grade and my answers to the questions. The Gradebook is very easy to navigate.

It makes learning about Excel kind of fun.

I learn a lot from the training sessions, and I can get my work done wherever there is an Internet connection. I learn better with a mix of hands-on and teacher lectures. This is perfect for me.

The best part is, I can get my work done in one day and not worry about it the rest of the week.

The main reason I like myitlab is the flexibility to do assignments on my own time.

There is nothing I don't like about myitlab!

Case Studies

Bunker Hill Community College

Bunker Hill Community College (BHCC) is a multi-campus institution comprising two main campuses and five satellite campuses in and around the Greater Boston metropolitan area. Founded in 1973, BHCC enrolls more than 8,900 students in day, evening, weekend, Web-based, and distance-learning courses and programs. Through more than 65 associate degree and certificate programs, the college prepares students for both immediate employment and transfer to four-year universities. With students from 90 countries and students of color constituting more than half of the student's population, BHCC is one of the most diverse colleges in New England. The average student age is 28 years, and the majority of students work while attending college.

As early adopters of technology-based learning systems, Mike Puopolo, professor and chairperson of BHCC's Computer Information Technology (CIT) department, and his colleagues were familiar with the benefits of delivering learning via online and multimedia venues. But by spring 2006, they were looking for a learning management system that was more complete than the one they were currently using. They sought one that could take them beyond the testing of technical capabilities and into more comprehensive soft-skills delivery.

In March 2006, a team of Pearson representatives demonstrated myitlab for Puopolo and his department. "It looked good," says Puopolo. "We appreciated its combination of soft skills—working in teams, listening for meaning and understanding, and creative problem solving—and hard content. To top it off, Pearson customized the entire course series just for us."

Puopolo and faculty in the CIT department selected exactly the custom content and materials they wanted and then worked with Pearson to create a common scheme for the entire course series—Intro through 100- and 200-level courses in all of the applications. "All of BHCC's myitlab courses share a common portal, navi-

gation theme, and user interface," says Puopolo. "Students log in once and never have to go anywhere else. All of the resources they could ever need—podcasts, sound bites, demo documents—are available through myitlab in one centralized location. We even integrated YouTube into it so we can point to real-world examples of successful—and not-so-successful—PowerPoint presentations, etc. It's incredibly convenient, plus when students proceed to the subsequent course or are presented with a fully online course, it is all familiar to them. They know the navigation scheme and nomenclature and are that much more comfortable from the outset."

The myitlab application provides Puopolo and the other instructors with the full learning system they'd been seeking. "We love the Gradebook, the discussion features, the textbook-based training, the pre- and posttests—all of it; myitlab has enabled us to streamline our teaching and present more material in a more coherent fashion," he says. With more than 40 sections being taught—40 percent of them by adjuncts—the quality assurance aspect of one standardized course comprising this kind of high-quality and complete content is invaluable."

Puopolo's favorite feature is myitlab's unique combination of skills-based and real-world, project-based training and assessment. "The kind of training that myitlab gives presents the same set of tasks that an employee would have to perform on the job," he says. "If students can do the tasks, they do them and move on. If they can't, they can click Show Me. Students needn't waste time on what they already know how to do. They can focus on exactly what they need. This really helps in a class full of individuals at varying degrees of experience. It also means that I don't have to remember every single macro and sequel skill in the advanced levels. I can use the Show Me feature, too!"

Puopolo's students appreciate myitlab's Save for Later option. "On a practice exam or while training, students can stop at any point, save their results, and not risk having to redo their work later," Puopolo says. "They

manage their time as it suits their schedules. Our students are largely working adults, and that kind of flexibility is important. It makes the course more accessible."

BHCC also has a lot of students for whom English is a second language. "These students are very motivated," says Puopolo. "They utilize many of the training options and enjoy being able to take the practice exams as many times as they like. It enables them to zero in on the tasks they have problems with and practice those skills until they've mastered them."

Would Puopolo recommend myitlab to other instructors? "No question," he says. "We're definitely delighted with the product—and with Pearson's customer support. We received all the professional development we needed to quickly get up to speed on the program. We did WebXs; faculty advocates came here to train us; and technical support was very responsive to issues that arose during the application's implementation. Working with Pearson has been a very positive experience."

Future plans include adding content and integrating an online meeting feature. "We're looking forward to enhancing the program, particularly with online meetings," says Puopolo. "We'll probably integrate it into the introductory courses in a very simple way, but in the more advanced courses, we envision students using it to facilitate group work. Employers assume that employees know these kinds of things. And BHCC graduates will."

DeVry University

Founded as DeForest Training School in 1931, DeVry University and DeVry Institute of Technology now comprise 23 major campuses, 3 subsidiary institutions, and numerous service centers throughout the United States and Canada. Campuses offer programs from the associate to the master's level in professional studies and business administration. As of 2001, 5 of the top 10 producers of information technology degree graduates in the United States were DeVry campuses.

Many of DeVry's students already possess certain computer skills. They can navigate the Internet, use Windows XP, send e-mail, and make their way around Microsoft Word. Armed with a base of knowledge from the get-go, such students quickly get bored with traditional programs—and that means high withdrawal/fail/grade D (W/F/D) rates. "Across the DeVry system, our W/F/D average was about 36 percent," says Sally Baker, senior professor at DeVry's Kansas City, Missouri, campus. "One of the primary reasons we looked first to TAIT and then to myitlab was to reduce that number."

DeVry–Kansas City uses myitlab as an assessment and test-out tool in a self-paced, eight-week course. "We quickly learned that while most students know Microsoft Word, very few know Microsoft Excel," says Baker. "And that's where they get hung up. Instead of penalizing them for it, myitlab provides us with an efficient way to keep those students in class, stimulated, working, and learning. It's been a huge success in Kansas City and on every other campus on which we tested it. We're going systemwide this fall."

Comp 100 is a required entry-level course for every incoming DeVry student. "It ensures that all of our students are on the same, level playing field," says Baker. "In their follow-up classes, they'll need all of it."

Baker uses myitlab to teach Comp 100. She particularly appreciates the program's direct alignment with the textbook. "My students are using their books more now than they ever did before myitlab," she says. "Once we showed them the direct correlation, it clicked for them. They enjoy that they can go to the book to try to solve their problems before asking for help. It's the opposite of what I had expected, but it works. Most students figure out their questions on their own via either the textbook or the Show Me feature. They gain self-confidence and mastery of the skills, and I gain more time for those students who really need me."

Baker says myitlab has made a positive difference in student success. "My classroom is quiet now. Before, it was chatter all the time; now they're focused and intent on working. Of a class of 20 students using myitlab, 17 pass with a B or higher," she says. "The three who don't pass usually don't pass because they never showed up. If students show up and try, they succeed in my class and they do better in their next class."

myitlab has also changed the way Baker teaches. "I don't lecture anymore," she says. "I help my students one by one. When they have a problem, I'm there. It has enabled me to get to know my students on a more individual basis, which is fun.

"I recommend myitlab to every colleague I have," says Baker. "The pedagogy and robust technology like the

kinds driving myitlab enable my teaching to go beyond what could ever happen in a traditional classroom. With the help of myitlab, I'm teaching students more in less time, preparing them more deeply and comprehensively than I ever thought possible, and—perhaps most important—teaching them how to learn, bolstering their initiative to learn, and motivating them to be self-directed. I really like this program."

Guilford Technical Community College

Guilford Technical Community College (GTCC) provides lifelong learning opportunities for workforce productivity, community service, and personal growth. It serves all segments of Guilford County's diverse population, delivering educational programs and services through partnerships with business, with community groups, and with other educational institutions. GTCC offers more than 70 degree and certification programs that prepare students for the career of their choice. For those interested in eventual transfer, GTCC enables students to save money while receiving the first-rate education they'll need to move to a four-year institution.

Spring 2008 found Instructor Ralph Argiento and the rest of GTCC's Computer Information Systems (CIS) and Networking department pretty frustrated. Seemed like every semester, the CIS introductory class was trying a new online courseware system. And every time, the system just didn't measure up.

Argiento had heard good things about myitlab from another department, which was using rudimentary aspects of the program with Go! series textbooks. He decided to check it out. It was an immediate hit. "It's so good," says Argiento. "For the first time we were able to find in one place all the course resources we need and were able to create the kind of activities and training we wanted in order to reinforce what and how we teach."

Fall 2008 was Argiento's first full term using myitlab. "Both the students and the instructors love it," he says. "It enables us to teach everything our students need to know to succeed. The tools in the program lead to additional training; and students can practice what they've learned and be assessed on it all in one place, at any time. These kinds of tools free instructors to focus on teaching instead of grading papers. It makes our lives much easier."

The other department was using only pieces of myitlab—some trainings, some videos. Argiento uses all of it. "The students love every one of the multimedia features," he says. "Instead of my lecturing all the time, they get voice, pictures, and interactivity. For the first time, students are stimulated and engaged by the content. And because the textbook and the program are coordinated, the points I go over in my lecture are constantly being reinforced. Even the assessments are coordinated: I no longer need to worry about trying to make everything fit. It all flows together, and in the end, I can see exactly what each student has learned."

Argiento's Introduction to Computers course is a four-hour-per-week, in-seat, hybrid or online course. Class periods comprise lecture and hands-on demonstrations. Via myitlab, Argiento assigns an additional three to four hours of homework, individual assessments, and optional training per week. "myitlab's immediate feedback keeps students on track when they aren't in front of me or another instructor," says Argiento. "And the Show Me button has removed the frustration of not immediately understanding a concept. Students can repeat a task over and over until they've mastered it—without any shame about not getting it right the first time. I believe that taking away the opportunity for embarrassment and comparison with other students has directly affected our retention numbers. Usually by this time, half of our students have dropped or withdrawn. This semester, the instructors in my department are still looking at full classrooms."

Instructors are often directed to "teach to the middle of the class." GTCC's population, like the populations of most community colleges, is so varied that there is no middle. "With myitlab, it doesn't matter," says Argiento. "All students take pretests and are provided with exactly what they need. Those who need one receive a personalized study plan. Those who already have the skills don't waste their time in the class. If they can prove mastery, they can move on."

Many of GTCC's students are looking to reenter the workforce but don't have much computer experience. With myitlab, such students can make the best use of their time by learning at once all they need to learn. myitlab makes it easier for them: it's clear, offers them a variety of optional training methods, and prompts them to continue trying.

For those students for whom English is not the first language, myitlab offers a leg up. "myitlab enables non-native English speakers to perform the trainings over and over and over," says Argiento. "Similarly, they can pause the videos and take their time."

Many GTCC students don't have up-to-date, fast computers at home. Maybe their computers can't run the full Office 2007 application, and even if they could, most students can't afford to purchase the application. With myitlab, students need neither a fast computer nor the actual application. They can access the program on campus, at the library, or anywhere with Web access. This is a huge benefit compared with other programs we've used."

For Argiento, one of the most beneficial features is the Gradebook. "I really appreciate myitlab's Gradebook," he says. "Automated assessments mean that I can focus on making the class and the lessons the best they can be—instead of spending my time grading papers. Being able to monitor who takes what amount of time on what features has also helped me. It helps me quickly and easily identify who needs help. And if I notice that the majority of students are doing extra training on a particular topic, it alerts me to spend more time on that topic in lecture. In this way, myitlab helps me improve my teaching by helping me connect with students in a more targeted manner."

Simple-to-use coordinator courses also make myitlab a popular choice among GTCC's adjuncts. "Adjuncts don't have time to keep learning new programs," says Argiento. "myitlab coordinator courses enable me to create the entire course for them ahead of time. Our adjuncts don't have to worry about learning the material, the book, how the simulator works, or the ins and outs of a new grading system. It keeps their teaching and our assessments consistently on track—and them much happier. Because coordinator courses are inherently standardized, we don't have to follow up with them or look over their shoulders. We know exactly what they're teaching.

"By presenting knowledge via real-world, hands-on experiences, myitlab facilitates a higher level of teaching and learning than we've ever before been able to offer," says Argiento. "My students are gaining more than just skills. They're gaining confidence in themselves and

their ability to learn on their own. At a basic level, myitlab is teaching students how to learn: how to find resources, how to problem solve. In this way, it sets up a track record for continued learning and success beyond the classroom. And that's what makes teaching such an exciting thing to do."

Would Argiento recommend myitlab to other instructors? "I can't imagine why anyone wouldn't use it," he says. "Our department loves myitlab. We wouldn't change a thing. In fact, we look forward to spending the coming years going deeper into the program and into all that it offers."

New Mexico State University

New Mexico State University (NMSU) was founded in 1888 as an agricultural college and preparatory school. Today, NMSU is a NASA National Space Grant College, a Hispanic-serving institution, and the only Honors College in New Mexico. Dedicated to teaching, research, and service at the undergraduate and graduate levels, a statewide system provides learning opportunities for a diverse population of students and community members at five campuses, a satellite learning center in Albuquerque, extension offices in each of New Mexico's 33 counties, and 13 research and science centers, as well as through distance education.

In fall 2007 Associate Professor Jennifer Kreie and her colleagues in the Accounting and Information Systems department at NMSU's main campus selected Pearson's myitlab for the school's freshman Introduction to Computers course. Kreie is delighted with the choice. "myitlab provides a remarkably different experience that enables me to cover more than I ever could with

I'm impressed. A lot of publishers are trying to do something like this. This is the best I've seen.

—*Jennifer Kreie*
New Mexico State University

just a book," she says. "My students learn so much more now. I've been able to cover in my first-year course certain skills that in the past I never even touched on. I anticipate that our junior-level classes will be able to accomplish more because of it as well."

myitlab's one-to-one textbook-to-program correlation offers benefits to both Kreie and her students. "The book is great," she says. "It does an excellent job of explaining why certain scenarios work the way they do. The hands-on simulations reinforce those concepts and enable students to practice until they've mastered the skill. And that makes for better-prepared students during actual class time. My myitlab students keep up with in-class demonstrations. That's never happened before."

myitlab's real-world simulation makes practice convenient—and fun. "The online availability enables students to work according to their own schedule," Kreie says. "The immediate feedback keeps them engaged, helps them get through the trainings faster, and gives them a feeling of control. When they can see step-by-step how to do a skill, they are more likely to try it themselves. It motivates students to spend time in the program."

The practice that Kreie's students get on myitlab enables them to succeed. "My myitlab students are earning higher grades than students I've taught in any other manner," she says.

For some of Kreie's students, English is a second language, and myitlab's online, self-paced format eradicates student shame around asking questions and unconsciously comparing themselves with others. "The online hints help my English-as-a-second-language students both see and hear how a skill is accomplished," she says. "They can slow down the speed of the hints, and they can repeat them. It enables those students who are embarrassed to ask questions to get the help they need. It increases their self-confidence by giving them the experience of learning, learning on their own, and learning things they didn't know they could. For some students, it's been a real eye-opener."

As an instructor, Kreie says myitlab helps her serve more students and feel better about the results. "myitlab eases my grading load," she says. "I can move to larger sections and still offer students individualized training. I also have a lot more confidence that students are doing the work themselves and not copying from friends."

Kreie and her department also like the quality and assessment control that myitlab offers. "At the end of the semester, myitlab makes it easy to track what skills were successfully taught and what the next-course-level teachers will need to review," she says. "That will ensure we successfully meet standard, collegewide assessments and ensure that all our students receive the same level of quality teaching."

Would Kreie recommend myitlab to a colleague? "Yes," says Kreie. "In fact, I was very vocal about passing myitlab on to the management information systems instructors. As a result of the success in our introductory classes, they're adopting it, too."

Kreie is eager to spread the word about myitlab. "The program is excellent," she says. "It will serve students for the rest of their time in college and give them an advantage no matter what their chosen field. It's hard to imagine any line of work today in which one doesn't make use of these software skills."

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Chartered in 1891, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) is a public university serving more than 17,000 students from all 50 states and more than 70 countries. Affirming the liberal arts as the foundation for lifelong learning, the university provides learning environments on campus and through distance education in which students can acquire knowledge, develop intellectual skills, and become more thoughtful and responsible members of a global society. The fall 2007 freshman class was the school's largest ever, at 2,445. Minority enrollment is approximately 26 percent.

Maurie Lockley, lecturer of information systems and operations management at UNCG, was an early adopter of myitlab's predecessor, TAIT; a TAIT faculty advocate; and a participant in the focus groups and research surveys that drove the development of myitlab. She's now a faculty advocate for myitlab. As she puts it, "I see faculty advocate fingerprints all over this product!"

Lockley teaches Introduction to Business Computing, an introductory course required for all business majors. "myitlab helps me reduce the amount of instructor-graded homework without reducing the level of student achievement," she says. "Before myitlab, I could assign only two or three exercises per chapter because the

*myitlab helps students see the direct corre-
lation between the amount of time they
spend practicing and their final grade.
To get this concept as a first semester
freshman is huge.*

—Maurie Lockley
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

exercises needed to be hand scored. Any more than
that was too time-consuming. Now I can increase the
number of quizzes and trainings I assign and ensure
that students get the practice they need. For each chap-
ter, students are required to take three or four simula-
tion quizzes and a 15- to 20-question multiple-choice
quiz on concept material; for each unit, they complete
an application-based, hands-on project. It is such a
burden lifted!"

myitlab has benefits for more-advanced classes as well.
"I teach the sophomore-level advanced Access and
Excel course, too," Lockley says. "Before implementing
myitlab, I had a DFW [drop/fail/withdrawal] rate of
about 50 percent. Now, not only is the DFW rate less
than 20 percent, but also the mean scores are in the mid
80s. I attribute the change to the fact that the students
used myitlab in their previous course, and their founda-
tion skills are stronger. Instructors who use myitlab can
cover more ground. It enables both the instructor and
the students to go much faster."

Lockley has noticed another positive change since using
myitlab: her students read and use their books more
than before. "The students clearly see the books as a
value add in their world," she says. "I am seeing dirty
books for the first time in my career: stuff is written
in the margins, they have soda stains on them, etc."

What Lockley appreciates the most about myitlab is
how it enables her to keep connected to her students.
"My favorite feature is Identify Inactive Students," she
says. "In 30 seconds I can become aware of what's
happening with my entire class. Sometimes I reach out
to inactive students, and they respond with, 'It's OK,
I worked ahead and finished it all.' Other times, they

really are in trouble. And that 30-second time invest-
ment is all it takes to let them know I care and to keep
them on track before they get too far behind to recover."

For nontraditional students—those who are returning to
school, are already working, or are otherwise balancing
schoolwork and personal obligations—myitlab offers the
means to study whenever and wherever they want. "My
students' favorite feature is probably Save for Later,"
says Lockley. "They can work on assignments around
their own schedule. This is particularly helpful for my
distance and adult learners."

Students come to UNCG from around the world; at
least 15 percent of each of Lockley's classes consists of
nonnative English speakers. "The multimedia aspect
is a huge help," she says. "The international students
frequently bring headphones to class so they can utilize
the sound capabilities. And when I go into the usage
logs, I see that they also use the optional, audio-narrated
PowerPoint demonstrations. Again, the narrated Power-
Point demonstrations take me 30 seconds to make avail-
able—but it's 30 seconds that can tremendously impact
students' lives and their odds of a job in the future."

myitlab makes a difference in people's lives. "More and
more, students say to me, 'I just came back from a job
interview. They tested me on something that looked just
like myitlab. If I hadn't worked in myitlab, there's no
way I could have passed the test,'" says Lockley.

From a technology standpoint, myitlab covers all bases.
"I have laptops in my section running all types of oper-
ating systems: Vista, Windows, XP," she says. "It has
the potential to become a bit of a circus for an instructor
to keep up with it all. But myitlab is flexible enough
to handle it—every system, in on-campus and distance
courses, undergraduate and graduate levels. It works
with everything and for everyone out there."

Lockley says that that kind of flexibility is one of the
many reasons for myitlab's popularity. "The last gen-
eration of online courseware was so narrowly focused
that the program dictated course delivery," she says.
"myitlab is so broad and rich that all who employ it can
teach in their own way. In my work as a faculty advocate
to help other schools set up their programs, I see that
everybody uses myitlab differently; everybody does it in
a way that works best for their population; and myitlab
helps all of them achieve success."

Conclusion

Since fall 2007, myitlab has helped hundreds of thousands of students achieve their educational goals via an easy-to-use one-to-one textbook correlation, guided solutions, real-world simulations, and project-based tests. Through its emphases on self-motivation and positive reinforcement, myitlab does more than teach students Microsoft Office 2007: it empowers students—all students. And in today's environment of shifting demographics and student goals, that's no small feat.

According to Open Doors, an annual survey conducted by the Institute of International Education (IIE), more foreign students came to the United States during the 2007/08 academic year than ever before. The data shows that during that year, foreign enrollment in nondegree programs alone increased by 16.7 percent. Peggy Blumenthal, IIE executive vice president, predicts continued growth. "[T]he number of new international students is up by about 10 percent for the second year in a row," she says. "If this trend continues, we're going to probably be at a record high next year."[5]

Pearson is committed to meeting the challenges of the new, skills-based educational environment—an environment that includes older learners, international students, larger class sizes, more distance-learning courses, and an economic imperative that means a student's time is more precious than ever. That commitment is already bearing fruit, because instructors around the nation are applauding the immediate and real-world benefits of myitlab's self-paced, multimedia learning model.

- "Initially, my adult learners are intimidated by the software," says Maurie Lockley of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. "But they quickly realize they can do it. Then they become role models for the younger students."

- "My international students facilitate many of the training options and enjoy being able to take the practice exams as many times as they like," says Mike Puopolo of Bunker Hill Community College. "It enables them to home in on the tasks they have problems with and practice those skills until they've mastered them."

- "myitlab has enabled us to streamline our teaching and present more material in a more coherent fashion," says Puopolo. "With more than 40 sections being taught and about 40 percent of those by adjuncts, the quality assurance aspect of one standardized course comprising this kind of high-quality and complete content is invaluable."

- "I don't lecture anymore," says Sally Baker of DeVry University. "I help my students one by one. When they have a problem, I'm there. It has enabled me to get to know my students on a more individual basis, which is fun."

- "My students have jobs and families and other responsibilities," says Ralph Argiento, Guilford Technical Community College. "myitlab offers them the same quality education they'd get in a classroom anywhere they have connectivity and whenever they have the time."

- "myitlab enables me to cover more than I ever could with just a book," says Jennifer Kreie of New Mexico State University. "My students learn so much more. I've been able to cover skills that in the past I never even touched on."

As of the writing of this report, hundreds of community, four-year, and nontraditional educational institutions nationwide are using myitlab. Not surprisingly, the figure rises exponentially at each count. After all, for most instructors, decisions boil down to the matter of whether a product can help provide the highest-quality learning possible for students or whether it can't. myitlab unequivocally can—and it does.

For more information, visit myitlab online at www.myitlab.com.

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Read why myitlab was the most successful Web-based technology product launch in Pearson history.

8 million myitlab log-in sessions • 34,000 myitlab courses created • 6 million grades posted
to myitlab Gradebooks • An average of 70,000 myitlab exams delivered per week

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There is no better way to see how students perform on the application assessments than with myitlab.
—Joyce Thompson, Lehigh Carbon Community College

After using other publishers' products, I find myitlab to be the most reliable, functional, dependable, and useful for my students.
—Diana Baran, Henry Ford Community College

The students love the instant feedback and I love having everything for the class organized into weekly folders so they know exactly
what they need to do each week. The ability to customize the Gradebook with calculated columns is a huge plus for me as well.
—Jennifer Yuen, The Illinois Institute of Art, Schaumburg

With all of the options available with myitlab and the GO! textbooks, my students can customize the Office 2007 training
to fit their needs, previous experience, and learning style. They appreciate the choices they can make about their
learning experience and are pleased with the end results.
—Susan Holland, Southeast Community College

I have used myitlab in my seated, online, and hybrid courses, and student retention has increased as a result.
My students really enjoy using myitlab.
—Mark Marino, Erie Community College

myitlab works so well, I am more relaxed and have more time to address individual student needs. Many students have sent
me unsolicited messages of thanks for the encouragement and support I am now able to give them.
—Donna Madsen, Kirkwood Community College

The myitlab simulation is one of the best I've ever experienced. When showing the product to our graduate assistants,
they didn't realize that the desktop part of the screen was simulated.
—Sven Aelterman, Troy University