

San Diego Mesa College San Diego, California

INSTRUCTORS Professor Laurie Lorence and Professor Marilynn Schenk

COURSES English 42: College Reading and Study Skills I
English 56: College Reading and Study Skills II

LEVEL 7th-9th grade and 10th-12th grade

TEXT Guide to College Reading, 8/e, with MyReadingLab *by Kathleen T. McWhorter*
Active Reading Skills, 2/e, with MyReadingLab *by Kathleen T. McWhorter*
The Longman Textbook Reader, 2/e, *by Cheryl Novins*

TERM COVERED Spring 2009

CONTRIBUTION OF MYREADINGLAB TO FINAL GRADE 20%

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Lexile scores

COURSE STRUCTURE Both Hybrid (part lecture, part lab)

Reading courses serve a large, diverse student population with majority ESL students

SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE, with 25,000 students, is one of the largest and most successful transfer institutions in the region and possesses a diverse student population. Fully 50-80% of students enrolling in the English department's reading courses are ESL/Generation 1.5 students.

Professors Laurie Lorence and Marilynn Schenk teach several sections each of the two developmental reading courses at SDMC and adopted MyReadingLab two years ago. The courses are taught in two 1.5 hour sessions per week in hybrid format where one class per week is a traditional lecture format and the other is either instruction in the computer lab or, for the higher-level students, independent work online. In the lower-level class, the instructors move around the computer lab as students work in MyReadingLab, offering motivation and one-on-one instruction. MyReadingLab contributes 20% to students' final grade. Students must achieve success with 10 MyReadingLab reading levels/modules at 70% or better to pass either course.

MEETING STUDENTS' NEEDS WITH MYREADINGLAB

Professors Lorence and Schenk find that MyReadingLab offers tremendous learning advantages to their ESL/Generation 1.5 students in particular. These students may require extra time to grasp concepts or decode contextual clues. MyReadingLab allows them to work at their own pace and offers immediate, on-demand assistance with unfamiliar vocabulary words and even with American history and culture.

Professor Lorence offers an important insight into the advantages of an integrated learning environment like MyReadingLab. "Students' auditory processing skills at this level are often poor. It's clear to me as a teacher that students often don't grasp concepts in a purely lecture environment, even when I repeat the information. But the multi-sensory inputs of MyReadingLab enable students multiple, reinforcing pathways to access concepts. This is particularly acute for my ESL students. With MyReadingLab, students can access vocabulary resources with a few clicks; in a

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—PROFESSOR SCHENK

A note on Lexile scores: The Lexile framework is a scientific approach to reading measurement that matches readers to text. Both reader ability and text difficulty are quantified on the same Lexile scale. The Lexile scale is both an assessment tool for measuring increasing reading comprehension and a motivational index to encourage students’ progress.

lecture format, upon hearing an unfamiliar vocabulary word, students simply look puzzled and lose the thread.”

Professor Lorence encourages students to use MyReadingLab exercises as a warm-up activity prior to her lectures. In class, she stresses main ideas and delves into concepts best explored by a live instructor; students then follow up with MyReadingLab to practice what they’ve learned and cement their understanding.

RESULTS: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MYREADINGLAB

In spring 2009, in one section of English 56 for which scores were recorded, Professor Schenk’s 26 students improved their Lexile scores an average of 131 points.

Both professors report that students are proud of the reading improvement achieved with MyReadingLab. They enjoy MyReadingLab. With MyReadingLab, students master material that was previously inaccessible to them—and this in turn motivates them to continue improving.

Interestingly, a student intern working for Professor Lorence worked through all of MyReadingLab’s exercises to trial the exercises for students and assess their level of difficulty. The intern, who was preparing to take the GRE, reported that her own vocabulary and comprehension improved dramatically as a result of working with MyReadingLab and that she felt far better prepared to score well on the GRE.

“We’re always looking for an increase in reading level but I think that we should be looking for other indicators,” says Professor Lorence. “When we teach reading, we don’t really improve reading level. Rather, by giving students strategies and the opportunity to practice, we equip them to read better and the improvement shows up when students succeed in their other classes and in their subsequent, higher-level work.”

Says Professor Schenk, “Especially with California’s budget problems, MyReadingLab meets critical student needs. Even with a large class size and only two class meetings per week, our students are continuing to succeed because we have MyReadingLab 24/7.”

THE FUTURE: EXPANDED IMPLEMENTATION OF MYREADINGLAB

Impressed by the strong results achieved with MyReadingLab, other instructors in the department have indicated that they plan to adopt MyReadingLab. Professor Schenk hopes to network with faculty using MyReadingLab at neighboring campuses to share best practices. Professor Lorence asserts, “This is definitely the right direction, and I’m pleased to be involved at the beginning of this resource implementation. Students are comfortable with the technology and therefore more open and accepting of instruction. The immersive environment engages them in ways that a traditional lecture approach simply does not. I believe that online resources like MyReadingLab will become the core of our teaching. Quite frankly, MyReadingLab is the teaching tool of the future.”

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For a product tour or to find out more, please visit www.myreadinglab.com