PROPOSAL FOR SPECIAL SESSION: INCREASING RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS WITH MYITLAB

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ABSTRACT

Educational institutions of all types continually strive to improve the quality of education they provide and to measure the extent to which that objective is being accomplished. This special session provides information and results of an initiative at one education institution of higher learning to improve student retention and success through the use of MyITLab.

INTRODUCTION

The Computer Technologies Department at a regional community college was charged with improving student success and retention rates found within the introduction to computers course. This course was selected based upon previous performance levels and due to the impact among the entire student body. With a large number of students taking this course (approximately 1,500 per semester), it was determined that increasing success in this particular class would have the most positive impact for the institution.

Resultant data from this project implementation improved student success rates in this particular course by roughly 30% (achieving a C or better in the class). In addition, student retention in this course also improved by nearly 35%. Future considerations to improve the educational environment will also be presented based upon the evidence gathered during this process.

OUTLINE OF SPECIAL SESSION

Initial Class Concerns Surrounding Existing Course Content and Delivery

- Inconsistent Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes and Course Content
  o Low Success Rates
- Low Retention Rates
- Teacher-Centered Paradigm versus Student-Centered Paradigm
- Knowledge Transfer Model
  o Lifelong Learner Approach
- Deficiencies for Students Who Cannot Afford Office Software
- Integrity Concerns Regarding Student Submissions

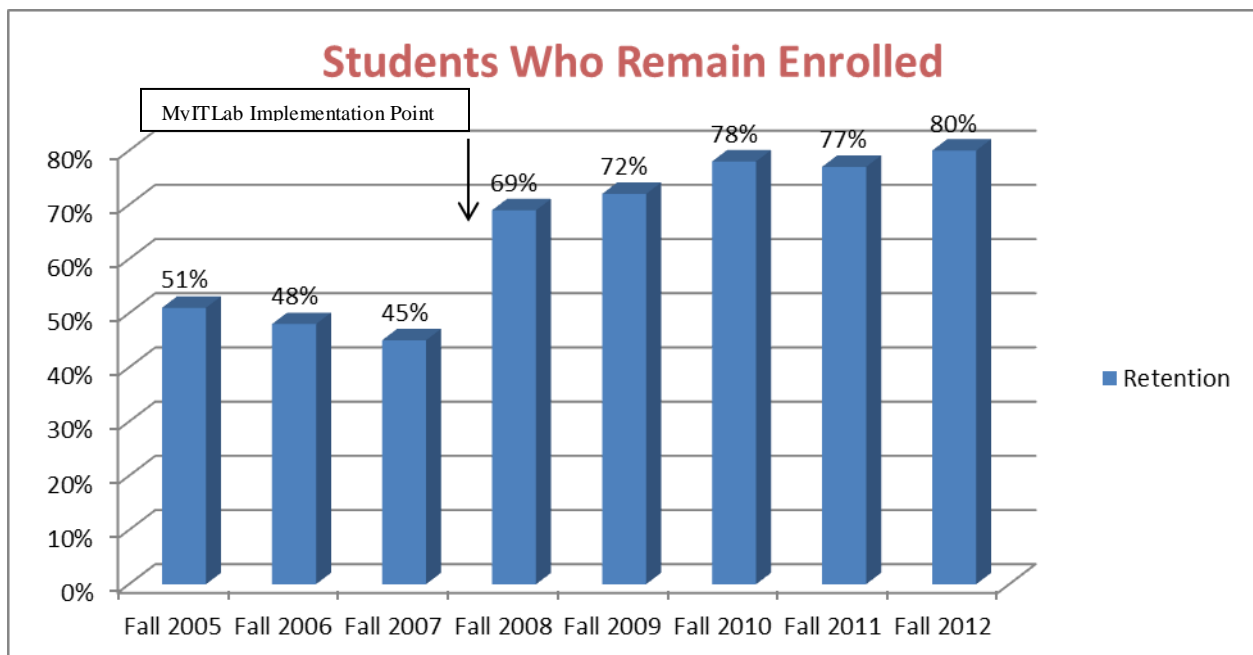**Issues That Must Be Addressed**

- Provide standardized content to insure outcomes are authentically assessed and scored with similarity
- Do not require students to purchase expensive software (think about those online students as well)

- If using a 3rd party simulation environment, it must "really" simulate a true environment (e.g. "get lost" approach)
- Provide an environment where students can develop critical thinking skills and "learn how to be an active learner"
- Students must learn the application intended, not the 3rd party software component
- Provide an environment that checks the validity of student submissions against classmates' work
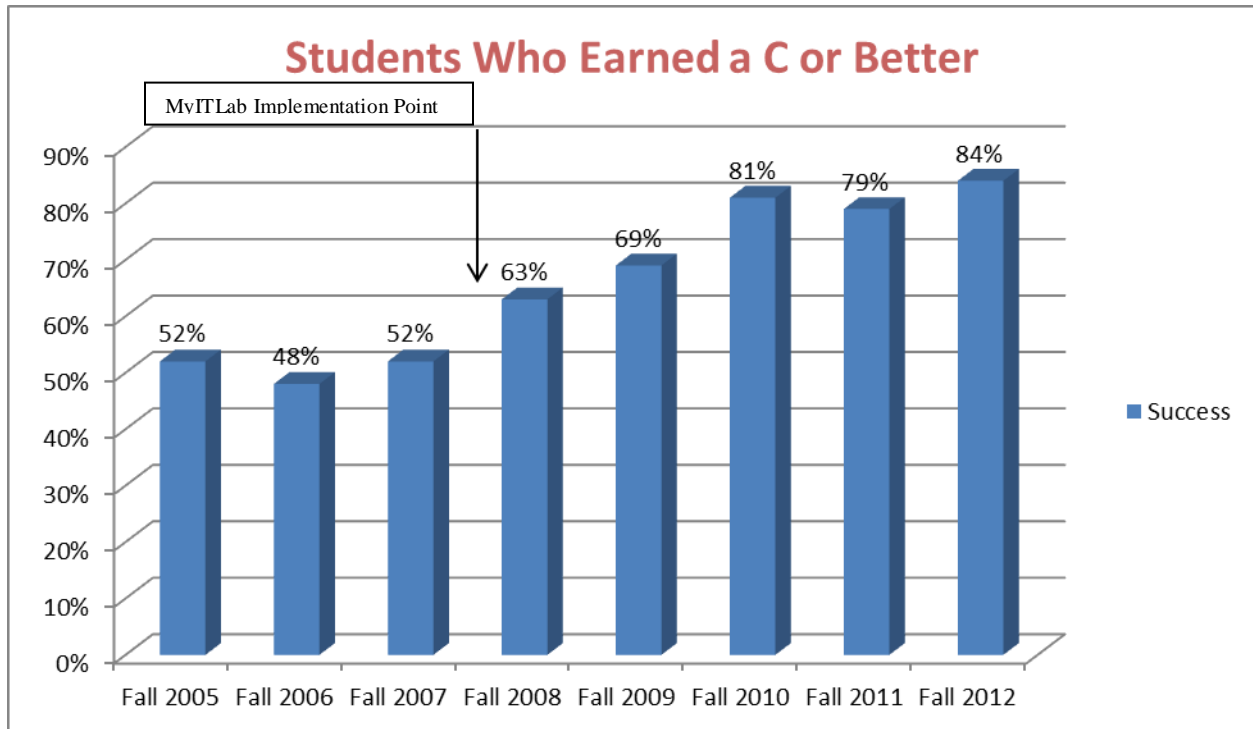
Results and Findings

- Consistency in data and assignments
  - Same assignment expectations
    - Apples to apples comparative data
- Faculty experience is more "hit the ground running"
  - Recommend an initial training session requirement for all faculty
- Assignments with objective analytical rubrics
  - Students and faculty are both aware of expectations and consequences of missing those expectations
- Students learn how to be active versus passive learners
  - Develop critical thinking skills
- Lifelong learners with problem solving skills
  - Instructors are no longer the sole purveyor of knowledge
- Cost of purchasing expensive software is unnecessary
- The integrity of student submissions are now higher

FIGURE 1: STUDENTS RETENTION 2005-2012

Students Who Remain Enrolled

MyITLab Implementation Point

51% 48% 45% 69% 72% 78% 77% 80%

Fall 2005 Fall 2006 Fall 2007 Fall 2008 Fall 2009 Fall 2010 Fall 2011 Fall 2012

Retention

FIGURE 2: STUDENT SUCCESS RATE 2005-2012

Students Who Earned a C or Better

MyITLab Implementation Point

Fall 2005	Fall 2006	Fall 2007	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
52%	48%	52%	63%	69%	81%	79%	84%

Success

Future Considerations

- Two distinct teaching models
- Online course will rely solely upon MyITLab
    - Less expensive to students
    - Integrity of individual work
    - 24/7 Help
- Traditional and hybrid courses will use less MyITLab
    - Use MyITLab as a training tool only
    - Give more flexibility to instructors for creativity and scheduling
    - Continue to improve the learner-centered approach