

School Name Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN

Course Name Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing

Course Format Face-to-face, online

**Key Results** Ninety-eight percent of students taking Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing successfully completed their work in MyWritingLab, leading to improved writing skills—a critical element of their Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.

#### Submitted by

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#### Course materials

*The Successful Writer's Handbook*, McWhorter; MyWritingLab; *Nursing Informatics*, McGonigle; *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*; *Life Application Study Bible*, Zondervan

The Post-licensure (RNBSN) Division at Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) is designed for registered nurses who wish to go beyond RN licensure and earn a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. On-site students join together in cohort groups and take their nursing major core classes together in a blended delivery; students meet for some courses at education centers located in Indiana, Ohio, or Kentucky, and complete other courses online. Online students take 100 percent of their courses online. In addition to seven 8-week core courses, students select at least two online 4-week special topics courses. Courses are taken one at a time in sequence, allowing students to complete the program in about 19 months. The program is not semester-based; our courses start five times throughout the year. The RNBSN program is designed specifically for adult education and degree completion students who want guided independent study, practical professional application, and a collegial relationship with faculty and other students. Student enrollment in the post-licensure program for 2013 was 1,362. At the time of this study, 15 full-time faculty and approximately 120 adjunct faculty were employed in the Post-licensure Division.

#### About the Course

Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing is the first course students take upon entering the program. This course earns students five credit hours and is designed to enable the adult learner to identify academic goals and obtain the needed skills for successful transition to baccalaureate education. The course introduces students to key program concepts, required technology and computer skills, professional writing style and resources, library services, and the learning management system. Information management and inter-professional communication are emphasized as catalysts for quality and safety in health care settings.

We have many desired course outcomes for our nursing students, including three that are related to writing. Upon completion of the course, we expect our students to be able to:

- Comprehend the resources necessary for success in the program after obtaining or locating university resources, course material, scholarly information, and writing resources.
- Explain the importance of integrating information technology in the delivery of quality health care (through discussion posts and a formal paper).
- Critique the social, ethical, and legal issues involved in computerized health care delivery (through a formal paper in APA style).

*“MyWritingLab assignments were introduced in our Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing course to provide a needed refresher on writing skills and to help students succeed in the program.”*

*“Since adopting MyWritingLab, faculty have reported spending less time correcting grammar and punctuation errors and have had more time to concentrate on the important part of a written assignment—helping students develop their thinking and communication skills.”*

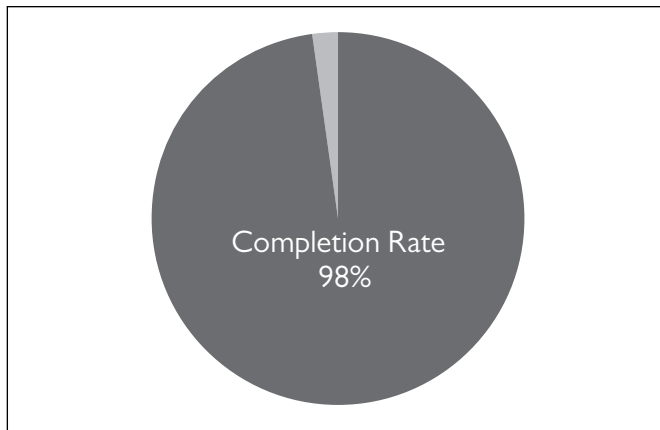


Figure 1. MyWritingLab Completion Rate Since August 2012 ( $n = 1,038$ )

### Challenges and Goals

Because students have been working in the field as nurses, and most have been out of school for a while, many have not taken English or writing classes in years. Writing is an essential skill for a professional nursing career; therefore, students complete several writing assignments in the program. Each of the core courses requires at least one formal (APA style) paper and many require written discussion posts.

To help students succeed in the program and to provide a needed refresher on writing skills, we decided to require students to complete MyWritingLab assignments in our Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing course.

We created a MyWritingLab survey to capture leading indicator information about how effective students find the MyWritingLab program in improving their writing skills (Figure 3). We also wanted evidence of how teaching strategies are evaluated in each course to ensure they are helpful to students—another benefit of the survey. IWU School of Nursing is accredited by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), and it is a requirement that we track how we monitor our students' accomplishment of our program and course objectives.

### Implementation

Implementation of MyWritingLab is pared down due to the nature of the program. During the second and third weeks of class, we assign a total of 13 topics in MyWritingLab that we think will be most valuable to our nursing students. These topics cover grammatical sentences, clarity and style, punctuation, spelling, and mechanics. Students work through each topic and have unlimited opportunities to master the topic posttests at 80 percent or higher. We then give completion credit for topic mastery. We expect students to spend six to seven hours each week on their MyWritingLab assignments.

A substantial amount of writing is required in the Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing course. Students complete a written workshop summary journal each week and contribute discussion posts about HIPPA privacy laws, ethical aspects of keeping patient information confidential, and other related topics. The culminating assessment is an Informatics paper in which students must describe the impact of clinical information systems and computer technology on the quality, safety, and efficiency of health care. Papers are scored on content (45 percent), critical analysis (25 percent), college-level writing (10 percent), and citing and referencing (20 percent).

### Benefits

One of the greatest benefits of MyWritingLab is that it can be incorporated within a course without interfering with other course assignments. Nursing faculty do not have time to teach English skills in addition to nursing. MyWritingLab work takes only two weeks to complete, and faculty can remain hands-off while students get the help they need.

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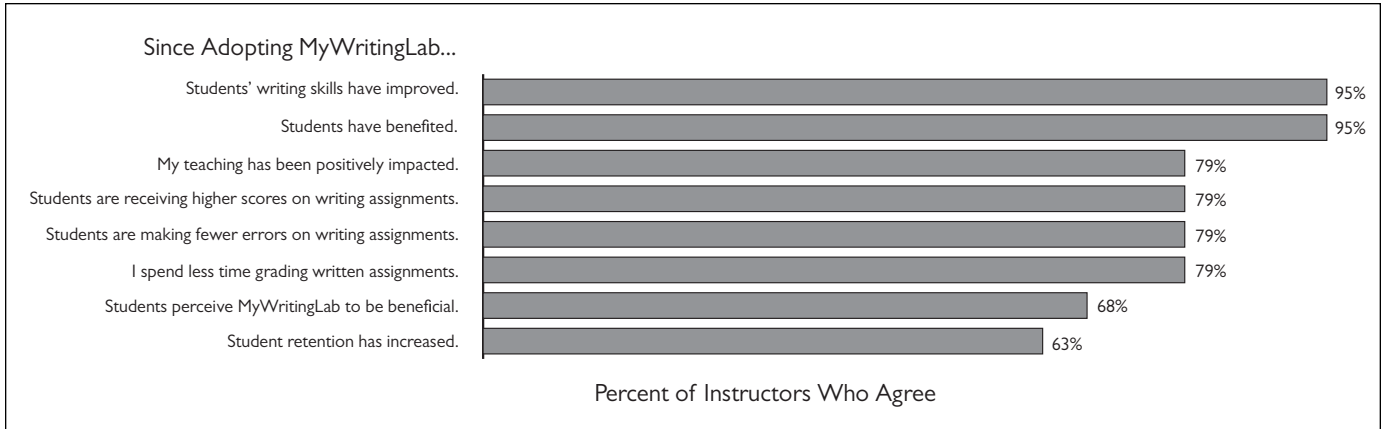


Figure 2. Faculty Survey (n = 19)

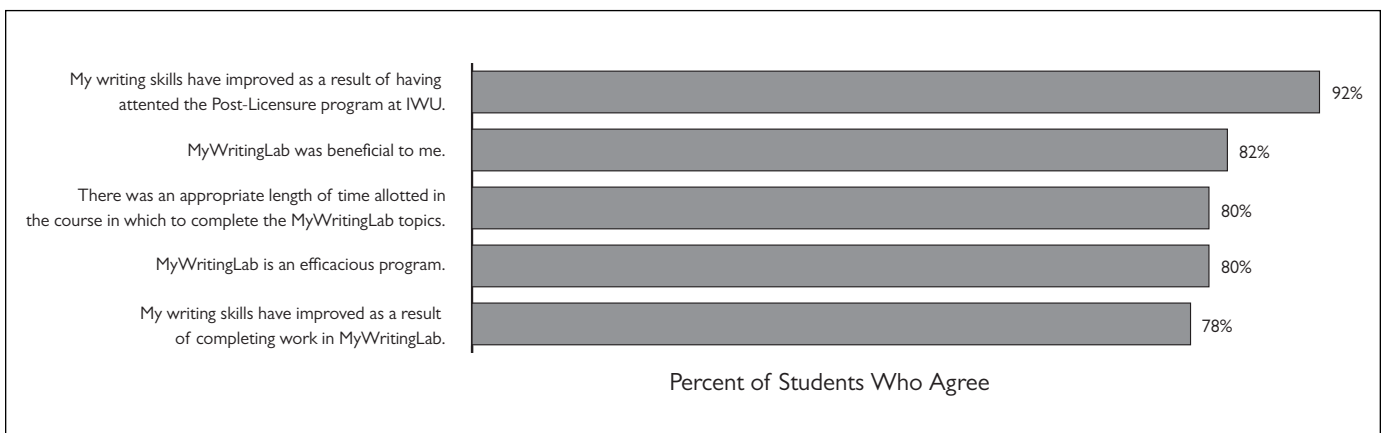


Figure 3. Student Survey (n = 105)

**Assessments**

- 28 percent Workshop summary journals (7)
- 20 percent Informatics final paper
- 14 percent Article review
- 13 percent MyWritingLab topic post-tests (13)
- 10 percent APA quiz
- 5 percent Goal setting assignment
- 5 percent Plagiarism quiz
- 3.5 percent Quizzes (Learning Studio; Student Handbook; Microsoft Word; Off-Campus Library Services)
- 1.5 percent In-class discussions

**Results and Data**

Since August 2012, 1,013 out of 1,038 students, or 98 percent of students, have successfully completed their MyWritingLab work (mastered 13 topics at 80 percent or higher) in Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing (Figure 1).

It's important to highlight that since adopting MyWritingLab, faculty have reported spending less time correcting grammar and punctuation errors and have had more time to concentrate on the important part of a written assignment—helping students develop their thinking and communication skills. Figure 2 features additional faculty feedback.

## The Student Experience

In March 2014, we surveyed all students who had taken Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing with MyWritingLab since August 2012. Fifty-six percent of the students who responded to the survey completed the course between two to six months prior to taking the survey, 18 percent completed it 8–12 months prior, and 26 percent of students completed the course 14–20 months prior.

In the survey we asked students if they thought MyWritingLab was an efficacious program: Did they agree that the tutorials had a positive impact on their learning, helped reduce the number of errors they made, increased retention, and raised their scores on written assignments (Figure 3)?

Student responses included:

- “I loved MyWritingLab—so many great refreshers on there! It also helped me realize different writing techniques that I had developed over the years, and I am conscious of not making those mistakes when I write papers now. Thanks!”
- “The MyWritingLab assignments were stressful, but they were valuable tools for helping me succeed in all of my courses.”
- “As an adult who had been out of the school setting for some time, the course was helpful to refresh on English grammar that is critical when writing professional papers.”

*“I heard from students that they enjoyed MyWritingLab and learned from it. Some said it was a good review for them. I’ve seen a big improvement in the average student’s writing skills since IWU adopted MyWritingLab.”*

—Instructor

Some students, who generally needed to refresh their skills, suggested that they be given more time to complete the MyWritingLab assignments or that MyWritingLab should be offered as a separate course. Other students, who generally had stronger writing skills, did not feel the program was that beneficial to them. We estimate that about 30 percent of students entering the program do not need a refresher course in writing.

All things considered, the survey results indicate that overall, we are providing a beneficial tool for our students that will serve them well in their academic and professional careers.

## Conclusion

We are very pleased with MyWritingLab and the positive response we have received from both students and instructors. Our survey findings encourage us to continue using the program, even though we have had a few bumps in the road with the Learning Studio interface and the grading process. We believe MyWritingLab is adding value to our nursing students’ education and will continue to use it in our Introduction to Baccalaureate Nursing course for the foreseeable future.

For more information about our post-licensure program, please visit: <http://www.indwes.edu/Adult-Graduate/BS-Nursing/>.