MindTap®

Pass Rates Rise with MindTap in Tech Course at Community College of Baltimore County

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About MindTap

MindTap is an online, personalized learning experience built on Cengage Learning's content that combines student learning tools—readings, multimedia, activities, and assessments—into a Learning Path that guides students through their course. Instructors can personalize the experience by customizing Cengage Learning content and learning tools, including adding their own content via apps that integrate into the MindTap framework with Learning Management Systems.

Renuka Kumar teaches Computer Science and Information Technology at the Community College of Baltimore Country in Baltimore, Maryland. She and her colleagues recently redesigned the course to bring it up to date, adding new material on collaboration, mobile devices, and emerging technologies. The course learning resource that the department was using at the time didn't cover all the necessary new topics, so a search ensued for a better option. A review of five available products led to the selection of Cengage Learning's *Emerge with Computers v. 5.0*, which was accompanied by the MindTap® online learning platform.

"I think MindTap is a great fit for our content and the course," says Professor Kumar. "It has been a great experience. The experience with the students has been positive as well—we have had a 5% increase in the success rate since we switched to MindTap."

In evaluating possible new solutions, department decision-makers had several criteria. First, they wanted a product that would be easy to use by students and instructors. "We have 40 adjuncts teaching this course, and we needed to come up with something simple for them. It was also important to have enough tools for them to use in the classroom," says Professor Kumar. The ability to integrate with the college's Blackboard learning management system (LMS), something that wasn't possible with the existing product, was also on the wish list.

Smooth Set Up, Easy Access with LMS Integration

MindTap answered the call on all counts, and the experience turned out to be everything Professor Kumar expected—and more. "The transition was very smooth, even the switching of the software. Students weren't confused," she recalls. The process to set up the integration took about two months, including course design, selecting topics, and creating the links. "We really spent most of the time figuring out what we wanted in the course," she says. "Our sales rep helped create the links. It was very simple from our side."

She continues, "One of the best features is the single sign-on through Blackboard. The entire course is in Blackboard with links to MindTap. Students no longer have to go to two different places. One location. One sign-on. Grades are pulled right into the gradebook in Blackboard."
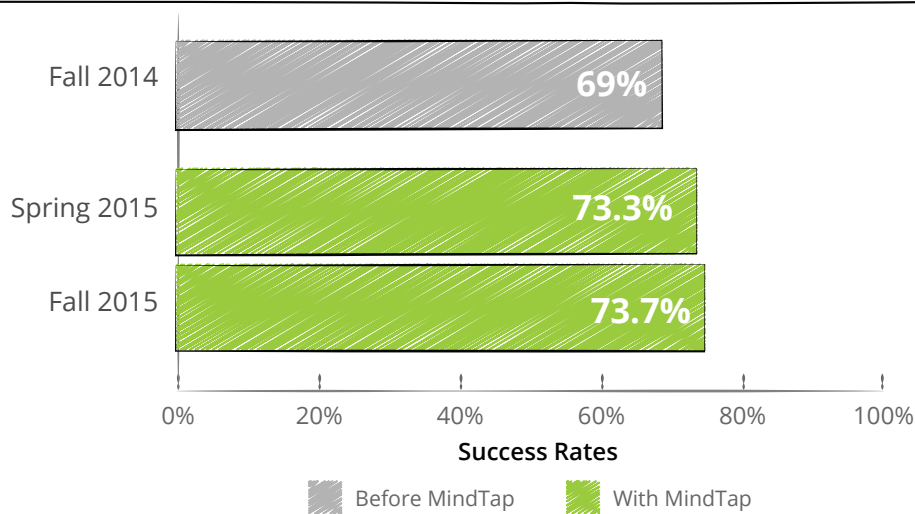
Professor Kumar recounts other MindTap advantages for instructors. "The one big benefit of using Emerge with MindTap was that we could pick and choose our topics and tailor them exactly to our course objectives. We set up the modules around

our course objectives," she explains. "MindTap also came with supplements, such as discussion guides, RSS feeds, videos, games, and the like that we could use for in-class activities. We created links to all of these tools in MindTap within Blackboard, so it was easy to use. The adjuncts appreciated that we gave them so much material to work with, and that it was all in one place. We received questions from very few faculty, and they were about how to best use the product, not the design or technology issues."

Higher Course Pass Rates

A significant part of the course grade is tied to MindTap, including all readings and all SAM assignments. (SAM, or Skills Assessment Manager, is an online training tool for Microsoft® Office). Since the move to MindTap, students have performed better in the course. In Fall 2014, before MindTap, the success rate (defined by the percentage of students earning grades of A, B, C, or D) was 69%. When students used MindTap in Fall and Spring 2015, success rates were 73.7% and 73.3%, respectively (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Success Rates rise with the implementation of MindTap.

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Professor Kumar says she would recommend MindTap to colleagues. "If you know how to use MindTap, it is a simple process to integrate it into an LMS. The benefits are tremendous for your students because you can provide them with a single sign-on, single gradebook, and seamless integration between MindTap and Blackboard."

"Among all the products that are available in the market—we looked at five—the biggest advantage to using Emerge with MindTap is that you can customize the content and the course to your wants and needs. I really like the idea that I can insert my own content, such as videos, put it in MindTap, and link it to Blackboard. It is a huge help for instructors and students to have everything in one place. I really like the product."

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