



Eileen O'Brien, Ph.D.

Senior Lecturer
University of Maryland, Baltimore

Challenges

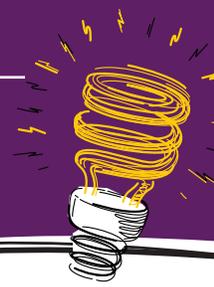
- Instructor was frustrated that other publishers' online solutions and gradebooks didn't integrate well with her institution's learning management system.
- Finding new ways to engage students in course materials, motivate them to prepare for class, track their progress, and improve performance outcomes are ongoing concerns.

Solutions

- MindTap for Pastorino/Doyle-Portillo's *What Is Psychology*, 3rd Edition

Results

- MindTap integrates easily with learning management systems such as Blackboard, including rolling over of grades.
- MindTap engages students in an interactive learning experience that integrates multimedia activities, readings, and auto-graded assessments.
- Students' mean performance improved in the MindTap introductory psychology course, increasing to the mid 70s from a previous mean of 60.



Success Story

Instructor Applauds Seamless Integration of MindTap® and Blackboard®

Eileen O'Brien teaches psychology at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, where she has used online course resources for ten years. She was dissatisfied with the first two solutions she used because they didn't work as they were supposed to — particularly in terms of integrating with the institution's Blackboard® learning management system. Today, Eileen relies on MindTap® from Cengage Learning and is a contented user. "MindTap works really well with Blackboard, and I have more flexibility with it than with the two competing products I used previously," she says. "I think MindTap offers an efficient way to deliver complex material. It allows students to master content at their own rate, and gives instructors a vast array of options to choose from."

Eileen faced "consistent problems with links to Blackboard and the rolling over of grades" in working with the other publishers. When she discovered Cengage Learning's Aplia™ a few years ago, she liked its interactivity. She also liked the assistance she received from the Cengage Learning support team, which helped her build an online psychology lab in Aplia. "It did exactly what I wanted it to do," she says. "It was seamless to Blackboard, geared to adaptive learning, and included many learning activities." This positive experience sparked Eileen's interest in trying other Cengage Learning solutions, so when MindTap became available for the introductory text she was using, she adopted it and hasn't looked back.

Assignability and Analytics Facilitate Teaching

Eileen teaches about 1,000 students every year in five sections of introductory psychology; 35% of the course is tied to MindTap. Students work through engagement activities (labs) featuring videos with questions. "The readings are integrated into the labs, and are segmented," Eileen explains. "I can break the chapter down into sections. There's also coverage of core concepts that helps students review the material." Eileen embeds quizzes and exams into Blackboard, and ensures that students are prepared for class by putting a timed release on a pre-lecture quiz, on which students must score at least 90%.

Tracking students' engagement and performance is important to Eileen, and MindTap offers her the tools she wants and needs. "I like the grade center and how it automatically comes into Blackboard. That is a huge plus for us," she says. "MindTap allows you to look at analytics, too. The engagement tracker gives me a good sense of students' engagement level. I also like that I can go in and look at the progress link. I can drill down into each assignment and see



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who is completing work and who is not, and how each student is doing. I can extend due dates individually, or shoot off an email and tell a student that I am questioning the effort he or she is putting in.”

Students Applaud MindTap

Eileen isn’t alone in her regard for MindTap: she says her students love it, too, and passed along comments from their course evaluations. “I love the online labs because they were interesting,” wrote one student. Another said, “Online labs are engaging and help to show how dynamic the material is.” Still others wrote, “Online activities and interactivity really bring psychology to life,” “Use of videos to aid instruction is great to show a new concept,” and “It [MindTap] gives lots of opportunities to learn the materials in an interactive way.”

With such enthusiasm, it’s no surprise that student outcomes have improved since Eileen began using MindTap. “Students are doing better,” she says. “I used to have a mean of 60 on unit exams, and now it’s in the mid-70s.”

Neither is it surprising to hear that MindTap has met Eileen’s expectations on all fronts. “I really like working with MindTap. I expected it to be seamless in Blackboard and it has been. It has really worked well, especially with the automatic integration of the grades. And, I’ve received fantastic support. Cengage knows what we need and is willing to take the time to understand what we are looking for. I think there’s a lot more we can do.”



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