

Mary Jo Slater, M.S., MIOS

Microsoft Office Master Instructor, Microsoft Subject Matter Expert,
IC3 Authorized Instructor

Associate Professor — Community College of Beaver County

MindTap™ Helps Students Spell S-u-c-c-e-s-s in Medical Terminology Course

Mary Jo Slater is Associate Professor of Office Technology at Community College of Beaver County (CCBC) in Monaca, Pennsylvania, where she has taught a variety of courses for 12 years. The college offers associate degrees, certificates, transfer programs, and skill training that leads to career readiness and workforce development. CCBC is committed to the use of state-of-the-art technology, so it makes sense that its instructors would embrace innovative technology resources such as MindTap™. Built on Cengage Learning content, MindTap replaces a traditional textbook for Mary Jo's online medical terminology class, guiding students with readings, multimedia activities, and assessments that are integrated into a consistent Learning Path — with all resources instantly accessible.

COURSES AND PARTICIPANTS

The online medical terminology class, which has used MindTap for three years, is the prerequisite for other courses that lead to an associate degree or certificate as a medical administrative assistant. Mary Jo's online classes include both traditional and non-traditional students.

THE CHALLENGES

Before MindTap, Mary Jo's online course wasn't as "seamless" as it is today. Students had to listen to CDs to learn pronunciations, but there was no way to assess whether they had completed the task. "We noticed that some students were confused in subsequent seated classes because they hadn't listened to the CDs. They could recognize a term on a page but had no idea how it sounded. That was a problem, because audio proficiency with medical terminology is foundational for other courses as well as the workplace," she says.

The course is challenging because there are myriad terms to learn. Many have unfamiliar prefixes and roots, and are difficult to pronounce, spell, and remember. "Learning medical terminology is like learning a new language, and it can be daunting," says Mary Jo. "Any tool that engages students and promotes learning is a big benefit."

Grading assignments was time consuming before MindTap. Students did their exercises and submitted them online. Mary Jo opened up the links, corrected the assignments, and sent them back. The lag time often hindered students from moving ahead as quickly as they could have otherwise.

THE RESULTS

Now, everything students need in the course is integrated into MindTap and available at their fingertips. Students can hear the pronunciation of a term just by clicking on it. As students work through their Learning Path for each chapter, they review learning objectives, watch videos, read core material, and complete activities that assess their learning. MindTap for Medical Terminology asks students to participate in 'spelling bee' activities, in which they listen to a word and then type it.



CHALLENGES

- **Teaching complex medical terminology** requires both aural and visual learning tools.
- **Unmotivated students who don't like to read** are at risk of performing poorly in a foundational course.
- **Inability to provide timely feedback** on assignments can hamper online learning and cause students to lose interest.

SOLUTIONS

- MindTap for Medical Terminology

RESULTS

- **Audio pronunciation** feature allows students to click on a term and hear the pronunciation. Students review and retain terms with flashcard app.
- **ReadSpeaker text-to-speech app** allows students to listen to their reading assignments on desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices.
- **Students get instant feedback and scores** on graded activities, engaging them in their learning and allowing them to set their own pace. Automatic grading saves instructors time. *View Progress App* archives grades and makes them easily available to students and instructors.

“Some of my students say that MindTap is the only resource that really helped them learn. In my mind, that spells success.”

Mary Jo Slater
Associate Professor,
Community College
of Beaver County

To learn more about this and other digital solutions provided by Cengage Learning, visit:
www.cengage.com/DiscoverDigital

Students can click through the flashcard app to review key terms and concepts. “Repetition is vital to learning and retaining terminology, and the flashcards make it easier and a bit more fun for students to get the practice that they need,” says Mary Jo.

If students retain more information by hearing instead of reading, they can select a portion of the assignment and listen to it using the ReadSpeaker text-to-speech app. “When I told students they could listen to their reading assignments, they were excited. They can listen or read on their desktops, laptops, tablets, and even smart phones. Having that flexibility helps to motivate them to do their work.”

Students proceed through the course at their own pace. Says Mary Jo, “The immediate feedback that students receive is a big advantage, because they don’t have to wait for me to grade an activity or quiz. When they’re done reading or listening to the chapter, they can move directly to the activities and the spelling bee. There are critical thinking questions, too.”

Mary Jo appreciates that MindTap grades assignments automatically. In addition to saving time, she can review student assignments and write notes to those who may benefit from additional guidance. MindTap has a View Progress App that archives grades and makes them easily available to students and instructors, keeping everyone apprised of personal and current class standings.

MindTap has even helped CCBC support students with special requests. “One student wanted to start the course late, realizing that it was a prerequisite for a course the following term. MindTap allowed her to work at her own pace, go back and review material in previous chapters, and accelerate her learning process. Without MindTap, we wouldn’t have been able to accommodate her.”

With technology resources, customer service is as important as product features. “I have used Cengage Learning Digital Course Support and it has been excellent in terms of the feedback and timely response,” she says. “I’ve also used the in-service training and online webinars to review content — they help me be a better faculty member.”

Students’ feedback on MindTap is positive. “They like the interaction, the immediate feedback, and being able to see their grades right away. The embedded videos are terrific for visually oriented students, and provide an engaging break from reading while imparting important information. And they love the pronunciations,” says Mary Jo.

Mary Jo sees improvement in the preparedness of her students, particularly when comparing students who took the MindTap online course with those who took the online course without MindTap. “Some of my students say that MindTap is the only resource that really helped them learn. In my mind, that spells success.”

Community College of Beaver County
Monaca, Pennsylvania



Source Code: 14L-AA0072



Cengage Learning is a leading provider of innovative teaching, learning, and research solutions for academic, professional, and library markets worldwide. The company’s products and services are designed to foster academic excellence and professional development, increase engagement, improve learning outcomes, and deliver authoritative information to people whenever and wherever they need it. Through the company’s unique position within both the library and academic markets, Cengage Learning is providing integrated learning solutions that bridge from the library to the classroom. www.cengage.com

Copyright ©2013 Cengage Learning. All Rights Reserved.