



Kathryn Fryman

Freshman,
Maysville Community and
Technical College

Challenges

- College student with no computer skills or technical background is frightened by digital learning tools required for class assignments.
- Persuade students that digital solutions can help them perform better, learn more efficiently, and improve comprehension.

Solution

- SAM (Skills Assessment Management)

Results

- After initially considering dropping out, student falls in love with SAM and credits the platform with improving her academic performance.
- SAM credited with helping student learn to study more efficiently which frees her to meet demanding familial and work obligations outside the classroom.



Student Success Story

Premier Digital Learning Tool is Easy To Use, Even for Students Intimidated by Technology

You're not alone if Kathryn Fryman's life story, as difficult and tragic as it has been at times, sounds as if it were pulled from a Hollywood movie script. "I never graduated from high school," said Fryman, a freshman at Maysville Community and Technical College, a member institution of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). "I dropped out of school in the ninth grade, became a stay-at-home mom five years later, and raised eight children before deciding to attend college."

Along the way Fryman also somehow made time to care for loved ones who were receiving hospice care: her mother, stepfather, and a former husband. Yet, her positive attitude and desire to learn are not only inspiring to those who know her, they have helped her change the trajectory of her future. "I want to make a difference in people's lives," Fryman said. "It's why I wanted to come back to school so one day I can become a social worker at hospice."

Fryman earned a GED and enrolled in college, yet she had no familiarity with computers and was extremely intimidated when she learned she'd be required to complete all of her assignments online. "I walked into class barely knowing how to turn on a computer," Fryman said. "I went into panic mode because I didn't even know how to use one."

Fortunately for Fryman, her fear was quickly assuaged.

Student Credits SAM with Helping Her Learn to Study More Efficiently and Effectively

"I thought I was going to drop out the first week of class," Fryman admitted. "I didn't even know how to do a PowerPoint presentation at the time and then I was told I'd have to learn all of this other technology."

The technology to which Fryman is referring is Cengage Learning's SAM, an interactive online learning environment that helps students master Microsoft computer applications and concepts essential to academic and career success. The platform, which provides students a personalized learning environment that allows them to progress at their own pace, is especially valuable for less technically savvy students like Fryman.

"It was much easier than I thought," Fryman said. "I actually learned it quickly because SAM explained things very well and I didn't have any bad computer habits to break."

Besides helping her become a more efficient learner, Fryman credits SAM with helping her better manage the 16-17 hours per class she spends studying each week. She also cites the flexibility SAM offers her instructor to easily configure coursework, manage grading, and provide instant and personalized feedback with helping her simultaneously embrace the technology and subject matter.



“SAM makes it really easy and lets me go at my own pace. If I have a problem SAM walks me through it step by step and then makes sure I understand by having me attempt a similar problem on my own.”

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Increased SAM Usage Helps Fryman Perform Better Academically and Better Comprehend Concepts

In addition to allowing students multiple attempts at answering practice questions correctly, Fryman credits SAM with helping her target specific subject matter areas she needs to spend more time studying prior to exams. “Most of my grade is based on using SAM,” Fryman said. “SAM makes it really easy and lets me go at my own pace. If I have a problem SAM walks me through it step by step and then makes sure I understand by having me attempt a similar problem on my own.”

Once students have mastered Microsoft Office concepts, SAM prompts students to complete a live project in the application which is graded automatically so the student can receive instant feedback regarding their performance. “I am doing quite well,” Fryman said. “I can use all of the programs now and have aced this class.”

Besides improving the quality of her work, Fryman also credits SAM’s helpful study guides, interactive interface, and personalization with helping her better comprehend course material necessary to complete her Associate of Arts degree. “I sat in the front row and wanted to learn everything,” Fryman said. “It really paid off because I learned all of the programs in just sixteen weeks.”

Instant Feedback Builds Fryman’s Confidence and Yields Real-World Benefits Beyond the Classroom

The automatic grading feature that provides students like Fryman instant feedback frees instructors to provide the one-on-one attention some students require. Even more important at times is the exam playback feature, which allows instructors to see a student’s click path on assessment questions they answered incorrectly to identify exactly where students need assistance.

“SAM was extraordinarily great to me,” Fryman said. “It gave me confidence to move on to new concepts and is already helping me outside of class.”

Fryman works between twenty and thirty hours a week in the college’s financial aid office and feels that her mastery of Microsoft Office has made her a more effective and valuable employee. The lessons SAM teaches in the classroom, Fryman says, are skills that will pay dividends in the real world.

“I went from knowing nothing about computers to knowing the programs very thoroughly,” Fryman said. “You can’t make a mistake taking a course with SAM. You’ll learn to use the programs the correct way and more efficiently.”



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