



Eutimio Gonzalez

Calculus Student — Wharton County Junior College

WebAssign® Promotes Grade-A Work in Calculus

College sophomore Eutimio Gonzalez will transfer to Texas Tech next year to complete his biology degree. He likes science and math, which explains his degree choice and his decision to take chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and calculus in a single semester. WebAssign® was required in his calculus hybrid course, and proved to be beneficial. “I got an ‘A,’ and I think a lot of that had to do with WebAssign,” he says.

STUDENTS WORK AT THEIR OWN PACE, ON THEIR OWN TIME

As is the case with many students who have jobs, as Eutimio does, finding time to do homework — and do it well — is a challenge. “I was raised to believe that education is very important,” he explains. “It is fun for me, but I study a lot and don’t have time for a social life. I stress out about getting my homework done and getting good grades.”

Available 24/7, WebAssign is ideal for students needing flexibility. It’s also easy to access and use, a boon for someone like Eutimio, who by his own admission isn’t tech savvy. “With WebAssign you can study and do homework on your own time and at your own pace. It’s very helpful,” he says. “When I sat down with WebAssign, I didn’t have to rush through my work or worry about whether I would know how to do it the right way.”

WebAssign also relieved some of Eutimio’s performance anxiety by helping him become a better student. “It helped me not to stress out as much because after doing all the problems and knowing that I did them right, I wasn’t worried about the test. The fact that I understood how to do the problems and could figure them out myself gave me confidence.”

WEBASSIGN STEPS IN WHEN CLASSTIME RUNS OUT

Eutimio and his classmates took their laptops to class, where the instructor would present new material, have students work on an in-class assignment in WebAssign, and then assign WebAssign practice problems, readings, and homework for later. “I expected the teacher to provide all the instruction on new material, but as it turned out she often ran out of time in class so we had to learn topics on our own,” he explains. “I was able to understand by going into WebAssign, watching the videos, and working through the *Master It* problems.”

WebAssign’s variety of resources, which appeal to diverse learning styles and allow students to get help outside of class and around the clock, make the solution ideal for any course with an online component. And while Eutimio may not have recognized it at the time, turning to WebAssign to learn new material or to review concepts that he didn’t quite “get” in class also helped him become an independent learner—a skill that will serve him well throughout his life.

CHALLENGE

- Many students are stressed by the demands of school, work, and the desire to get good grades.
- Lectures often don’t allow enough time for instructors to cover topics students must understand to successfully complete their homework.
- Calculus students, even motivated ones, need extra practice and guidance outside of class to gain proficiency in the complex material presented in the course.

SOLUTION

- Stewart, James, *Calculus*, 7th Edition
- WebAssign®

RESULTS

- Easy to access and use — and always available — WebAssign allows students with diverse learning needs to work at their own pace, on their own time.
- WebAssign takes over for instructors after class and office hours, providing section-level video lectures as well as problem-specific guidance through direct links to eBook pages, *Master It* mini-tutorials, and *Watch It* video solutions that guide students to greater understanding.
- Student credits WebAssign with being instrumental in helping him get an “A.” Abundant practice opportunities, including algorithmic problems and solutions, allow students to practice as much as they want. Immediate feedback encourages continued practice that reinforces skills.
- Answer Evaluator recognizes and accepts equivalent mathematical responses in the same way an instructor grades, analyzing responses for correctness and intent so students aren’t penalized for mathematically equivalent responses.

“My favorite thing about WebAssign was [that it] would accept an answer that wasn’t completely correct, if you used the right steps. [WebAssign] understands that you are doing the right steps but you aren’t there yet. It helps you finish the steps and get the right answer.”

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VARIED LEARNING RESOURCES ENCOURAGE PRACTICE AND CRITICAL THINKING

WebAssign for calculus offers section level video segments as well as *Watch It* video solutions for specific problems, which use different values from the assigned problems. *Master It* multi-step examples serve as mini-tutorials that guide students through the solution to a similar problem and provide feedback along the way. Students can link directly to pages in the included eBook, too. They can practice another version of a problem to gain confidence before they submit their final answer. And with WebAssign’s immediate feedback and automatic grading, students know right away whether they’re on track or whether they need more practice.

“My favorite thing about WebAssign was how there wasn’t just one answer that you had to plug in. WebAssign would accept an answer that wasn’t completely correct if you used the right steps. It understands that you are doing the right steps but you aren’t there yet. It helps you finish the steps and get the right answer.” WebAssign’s sophisticated Answer Evaluator recognizes and accepts equivalent mathematical responses in the same way an instructor grades. Student responses are analyzed for correctness and intent so students aren’t penalized for mathematically equivalent responses.

When asked if WebAssign helped him build critical thinking skills, Eutimio answers “Yes, I would say so. A lot of the times there would be an option to watch the videos for the basic problems. I didn’t have this option for advanced problems. I had to completely understand the easy problems first, and then figure out the harder ones myself. I liked that WebAssign didn’t give me the answer for all of them.”

WebAssign also helped Eutimio prepare for tests, and consequently, do well in the course. “My teacher picked questions that were similar to those in WebAssign, so I knew that if I could work through every question in WebAssign and understand it, then I would for sure get an ‘A’ in the class.”

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