Sheila Levi-Aland

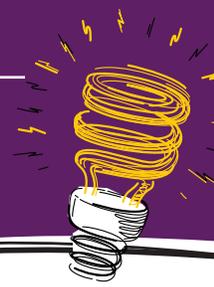Lord Fairfax Community College

Challenges

- Previous digital solution took too much time to set up and manage, and didn't integrate with the college's Blackboard learning management system.

- Today's media-savvy students aren't sufficiently engaged by a textbook alone. In addition, art history entails viewing many images of architecture, cultural artifacts, and pieces of art, and flat textbook images can't do them justice.

Solution

- MindTap® Art for Kleiner's *Gardner's Art through the Ages*

Results

- The instructor saved time with MindTap's fast and easy setup, seamless Blackboard integration, automatic grading, and vast pool of resources from which to select relevant course content.

- Google Earth™ assignments engage students by taking them on tours of virtual museums and enabling them to interact with, and zoom in on, 360-degree views of images.

- Students' test scores were more consistent, driven by practice tests that helped them prepare and by links to helpful resources such as a pronunciation guide, image flashcards, and modules on architectural basics.

MindTap® Proves to Be a Valuable "Work of Art" for Online Art History Courses

Professors of online courses have the benefit of being able to work for colleges that are hundreds of miles away, and hundreds of miles apart. Case in point: Sheila Levi-Aland, who teaches art history for Lord Fairfax Community College in Virginia and Valencia College in Florida. Since long before her introduction to digital products, Sheila has used one of the field's classic texts — *Gardner's Art through the Ages*. When decision makers at Lord Fairfax switched to MindTap®, Sheila was wary due to a negative experience with another company's web-based assignment and assessment platform. She needn't have been. "I was prepared for misery, and MindTap was like magic! I liked it so much I started to use it at both colleges," she says.

Several factors sparked Sheila's discontent with her previous digital solution. "It wasn't a seamless experience. It took students to a completely different webpage, didn't integrate with Blackboard® for grading, and provided inadequate resources. I provide a great amount of content, so having a large pool of resources to select from, as I do with MindTap, is important."

Time is always at a premium for college professors, so Sheila was pleased to find how simple it is to use MindTap. "The set up process is a lot easier than for the other product. I don't have to go to six different sites and synchronize it all the time. If something is auto graded, I don't have to do anything, and MindTap integrates very well with Blackboard." She continues, "Much of the prep work for a course is looking back to see what is broken and then recreating the wheel, and I did not have to do that. The rollover from semester to semester was fast and easy. For the first time, I had a totally seamless semester."

Engaging Zoomable Views of Images

Sheila organizes her course with content modules that include her lectures, videos, and links to other art resources. Her students also complete reading assignments and practice quizzes in MindTap, and participate in discussion posts about pieces of art, which enriches their perspective while giving them practice in articulating their thoughts. About 35% to 40% of the course grade is linked to MindTap.

MindTap pairs videos, Google Maps™ links, and 360-degree panoramas with the applicable image in the text. Students can access supplemental content that helps them master the material without ever leaving the image itself. They can review architectural basics modules, image flashcards, articles, and reference resources. There's also an Image Guide (a note-taking template with chapter images), a pronunciation guide, and a museum index.

"I love the Google Earth™ assignments, which are so valuable in an art class, and help students apply what they are learning beyond what I ask them to do," says Sheila. "MindTap assignments are tied to different works of art, and take students to a virtual museum where they can zoom in. The flashcards are so much more dynamic than an image on a flat text. Students are so inundated with media that having a textbook with flat images doesn't do anything for them. When you can turn something 360 degrees and zoom in, you often get a better view than you would in real life."

Higher-Level Thinking

Sheila is thrilled with the way MindTap engages her students and helps them meet course goals. Students learn to use original thinking in interacting with the course material and pieces of art, build critical thinking skills in course assignments, and engage in collaboration as part of the learning experience. "In an online environment, you can't see if students are getting a concept. But with MindTap I find that their questions are no longer basic. I love that they are asking higher-level questions — it demonstrates to me that they are comprehending the topics. Their discussions have much more depth."

"On the whole, students' reaction to MindTap has been really positive. They no longer say that they must have a textbook. If they don't understand something, they have many opportunities to find help in MindTap. Their test scores are more consistent, because they have practice quizzes to help them prepare."

From start to finish, the MindTap experience has exceeded Sheila's expectations. "I was not expecting it to be as incredibly easy as it was to set up, and I didn't expect the terrific level of support that I received from everyone at Cengage," she says. "In creating my courses I really think about the student experience and how courses can work better for them and for me. MindTap is the answer."

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

CENGAGE Learning®

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**