



Montclair State University (MSU) was established in 1908 as the State Normal School at Montclair. Today it is New Jersey's second-largest and fastest-growing university, boasting six schools and colleges and more than 250 majors, minors, and concentrations—including the only U.S. doctorate in pedagogy. Plans for continued expansion include increasing student enrollment to 18,000 by 2008 and making full use of the recently opened University Hall—consisting of more than 60 state-of-the-art classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, and study lounges, as well as the region's most sophisticated conference center.

MyPsychLab offers students the opportunity to take learning—and their grade—into their own hands.

Irwin Badin, professor of psychology at MSU, was using a competing online courseware product when a Prentice Hall book representative presented him with MyPsychLab (MPL). After comparing the two products, he chose MPL. “I like to give my students as many different kinds of opportunities to earn points as I can. MPL provided me with more opportunities for them to study and therefore more opportunities to earn bonus points and more opportunities to learn. I'm happy with the change.

MyPsychLab takes away the guesswork as to whether or not a student is prepared for a test.

“My learning curve wasn't bad. The learning curve of my students was negligible,” says Badin, who offers his class the option of using MPL to earn extra points. “In an end-of-class survey, the students expressed quite strongly that they

found MPL helpful. Eighty percent used the product; 55 percent replied that they found the Web site helpful.”

Badin is committed to more than his students' grades. His passion lies in igniting their curiosity and guiding them toward taking responsibility for their own learning. MPL helps him do just that. “It is up to the student to choose to learn,” he says. “They will take the opportunity—or not—if motivated. As professors, we try to promote our students' inclination to engage in a personal exploration of the course material. MPL provides a significant enhancement to that endeavor. It offers them links and enables them to discover other material that I simply don't have the time to show them. In this way, MPL is like a personal tutor.

“For those who are grade conscious,” Badin says, “MPL provides a practice venue, a concrete way to know that they are prepared. This is particularly beneficial for students who are hovering in the middle and need a little extra help, for those with different learning styles, and for those who are learning disabled.

Students nowadays are much more inclined to go to the computer to find their answers than they are to ask their professor.

“The students' favorite feature is probably the practice test,” says Badin. “By studying the material and taking the posttests, students both earn bonus points and increase their retention of the material. The immediate feedback they receive keeps the content relevant to them. They become hooked on the feeling of doing well—and thus do better overall. In this way, MPL is more than a tool to achieve a higher grade. It helps students solidify the very foundation of how they learn.”