

# Success Stories:

## Profiles of Pearson Technology Users

# MySpeechLab

**An interview with**  
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### Course Information

I typically teach eight sections of Speech 101 per semester (three credits). We use Beebe and Beebe's *Public Speaking Handbook*. The class size is about 17 students per section. This is a required course to graduate with an associate's degree from our school.

The main course objective is for students to become more professional, polished public speakers so that they may perform in work- or civic-related public speaking situations. In this course, students learn how to organize their thoughts in a logical manner and develop the self-confidence to believe in themselves as public speakers. Another important objective is for students to be able to identify what is credible research and how and where to access these sources.

I have used MySpeechLab for about two years. I am the lead instructor, and I chose to use MySpeechLab primarily because of the MediaShare application. I was looking for a safe place for students to upload their speeches that was user-friendly and did not have public access. YouTube was my only source prior to this and using this public site made me feel that I was leaving my students vulnerable. With MediaShare, I can critique each student's speech privately and then I can open up the video so the class can view it and can critique each speech publicly.

The second reason I chose the Beebe and Beebe text is because it has a focus on ethics, and our college prefers that each course includes a built-in ethics component.

### Assessment

*Online class:* MySpeechLab online activities/exercises, a discussion board based on MySpeechLab videos, and six speeches submitted via MediaShare account for 75% of the final grade.

*Hybrid class:* MySpeechLab accounts for 50% of the final grade.

*Traditional class:* MySpeechLab does not count toward the final grade.

### Implementation

I teach traditional, online, and hybrid sections of Speech 101, and the implementation of MySpeechLab varies to different degrees in each course format.

For our traditional classroom, I use MySpeechLab primarily as my instructor resource in the classroom. I show students sample speeches, diagrams, and PowerPoints.

In the hybrid and online classroom, MySpeechLab is required. With the hybrid class, most assignments are completed online because I only meet with students in person for a short amount of time. I have one hybrid class that is a 16-week course taught in eight weeks. It meets three hours a week, but students have to do three hours of work on their own time outside of class. I teach another 16-week hybrid class that meets six times during the semester so students can give their speeches to each other. For this hybrid class, the only thing I do not use on MySpeechLab is MediaShare. This hybrid class is better suited for people that do not own a video camera or do not feel comfortable gathering their own audiences.

For my hybrid and online courses, I assign exercises in MySpeechLab and have students view the MySpeechLab videos on their own time. I also assign discussion board questions related to MySpeechLab activities and students post their responses online.

I have taught Speech 101 long enough to be familiar with all the loopholes that students try to find. Many students who are highly apprehensive about public speaking gravitate towards taking the online course, because they think they will not have to give speeches in front of people. I want there to be the same level of apprehension for an online classroom as there is for a traditional classroom. One of the key requirements I build in is that students must give their speeches in front of an audience. I define an audience as five living, breathing adult human beings. Later in the semester, I require an audience of 10 people. I have had people put their dogs on the couch, their grandchildren, even stick people! I will not accept the speech

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unless the audience is in place. This is an important part of doing this course correctly online. It also has to be one continuous shot. Students must pan the audience before and after their speech. I also require that online students own a digital video camera—a webcam will not suffice. I want students to give their speech in a professional setting and I want them to have that “butterfly” feeling in their belly to the same degree as students giving their speech in a traditional class. The perceived convenience of an online course actually becomes a lot harder, so for some people, the hybrid course is a better choice.

#### **Benefits**

MySpeechLab helps students succeed because every resource they need is right there in one easy-to-access intuitive tool. Once they are in and know their way around, it is great for them! There is so much there that if they want to explore more, they could spend hours and hours. It is so easy for them to manipulate and find what they are looking for and I can clearly direct them where to go. For their benefit, MediaShare is great because it accepts many file types and it is very user-friendly. Even if a student is not tech-savvy, s/he can still take this class online.

I know my students are protected, because when they upload their speeches in MediaShare, their speeches are safe. As the instructor, MediaShare gives me a controlled environment, and I am the boss of it. If necessary, I have the ability to delete inappropriate comments. (This rarely happens.) Also, I do not have to go searching for examples of poorly-created speeches, great speeches, or diagrams. There is a wealth of information available on MySpeechLab. I never run short of material to use in the course. I could have a 32-week class if I wanted!

One of my favorite features of MySpeechLab is the speech examples. Every time I have an assignment, I show students what they *should* do and what they *should not* do. This helps them know what I am, and what I am not, looking for and why.

As mentioned before, I can use MySpeechLab to different degrees in all three course formats. Teaching eight sections of speech, it is easy to get confused about where I am and where I am going. MySpeechLab helps me stay organized and on-task. At the beginning of the semester, along with the syllabus, I post a “what we will be covering in class” document on MySpeechLab that helps me know exactly what I am going to use and students can see exactly what they will be learning.

#### **Conclusion**

As the lead instructor, I give required MySpeechLab training to all of our new adjuncts and dual-credit instructors (I have 22 in total). I train them one-on-one, get them logged in, and show all the resources available to them. I care a lot about what is going on in each classroom. I taught as an adjunct for 10 years, and I understand how frustrating it is to be left on your own to come up with exercises and resources. My adjuncts get really excited when they see all that MySpeechLab has to offer.

My best advice to new instructors would be to login to MySpeechLab and investigate every nook and cranny. It will take a while, but it is a lot of fun! The instructor resources within MySpeechLab are phenomenal. There are rubrics for all different types of speeches and goals. You can take that format and personalize it to your own liking, but generally what is there is excellent. I love MySpeechLab!