

# SIMnet Digital Success Story

## Describe the challenges you faced in your course before selecting SIMnet:

“ Prior to adopting **SIMnet**, we were receiving several complaints from students about the method of delivery used with our computer courses. At that time, students would purchase a textbook and the instructor would basically take them through the book, page by page, at a relatively slow pace due to the diverse level of capabilities in the classroom. Students were not able to work ahead and were becoming increasingly frustrated with having to follow along at a pace that was far below their potential. Class attendance dropped off considerably, as did the average grades.

## What were the main reasons you selected SIMnet?

“ **SIMnet** was chosen for many reasons, the key one being that it allows students to work at their own pace so that they stay engaged and challenged. It also provides students who do need more time to review the lessons and attempt practice questions as often as needed, until they feel comfortable with the material.

## Compared to other technologies you've used, what do you like most about SIMnet?

“ **SIMnet** is the first specialized software I have used. Compared to our prior approach, what I like most is the fact that the number of assignments during the semester has increased dramatically due to the instant grading capability of the software. In the 45-hour (15 week) course I am currently teaching, students will complete approximately 20 assignments.

## Describe how you are currently using SIMnet in your course. What percentage of your course grades do you assign to SIMnet?

“ **SIMnet** has been used to implement a “flipped classroom” format. Lessons are assigned as homework and are completed outside of class. We use most of the 3-hour class time to work on projects, as well as to deliver the occasional brief lecture on more difficult topics. The exams are also written using **SIMnet**, and 100% of the course grade is assigned through the software.

**LIZ  
McLEAN**

## Instructor

**Liz McLean** is a full-time instructor at St. Lawrence College, Cornwall Campus, teaching in the areas of Business and Arts & Science. She is a passionate and effective instructor, facilitator and trainer. Liz McLean is a graduate of the MBA program at Dalhousie University, and holds a Bachelor of Computer Science Degree from the University of New Brunswick.

## Institution

For nearly 50 years, **St. Lawrence College** has been a vital part of the communities in Eastern Ontario, with campuses in Brockville, Cornwall and Kingston. St. Lawrence College provides a variety of post-secondary programs and services to support the success of students while contributing to local and international economies.

## Course

### Introduction to Computer Applications

- Course Type: Lab & In-Class
- Annual Course Enrollment: 400
- Text in Use: SIMnet 2016 Code – no hardcopy text
- Using SIMnet since: Fall 2011



## What was your experience implementing SIMnet in your course?

“**SIMnet** is a very user-friendly product. There is some initial work up front to set up the lessons using the content you would like to include, but the user interface makes everything very intuitive. Our part-time faculty have no problem getting up and running quickly with the software.

One of the main reasons implementation has been so smooth is due to the exceptional support we received from McGraw-Hill Education. At any point we had a question or difficulty, timely help was always there. I have never seen such a remarkable level of support provided by any other vendor during my teaching career.

## What changes are you seeing in student outcomes as a result of requiring SIMnet in your course?

“ Student comments about **SIMnet** are very positive; they appreciate the flexibility they have to determine how slowly or quickly they master the material, and they enjoy working on projects during class time as opposed to listening to a lecture.

With the immediate feedback students receive on their projects, they are very interested in seeing where they went wrong, correcting their errors and resubmitting to improve their grade. In the past, they often waited two weeks or more to see a grade on an assignment and by then there was no interest at all in seeing where they went wrong. Because of this change in the feedback timeline and additional attempts, average grades have been increasing.

## How has SIMnet changed the way you teach your course?

“**SIMnet** has changed everything about the way we teach our computer courses. We would never go back. Student complaints have virtually disappeared, our attendance has increased significantly and students are engaged at a level that we have not been able to achieve with our prior delivery approach. The dean at our campus is constantly boasting to others about how much we have improved the student experience with **SIMnet**.

## What are your students saying about SIMnet?

“ Students love SIMnet! They enjoy learning on their own outside of class and then being able to apply it in the lab. With the lessons having both an audio and hands-on component, they have indicated to me that they actually enjoy sitting down to complete them. Their favourite part of SIMnet, by far, is having the immediate feedback on their projects.

“ *The Dean at our campus is constantly boasting to others about how much we have improved the student experience with SIMnet.* ”

— Liz McLean