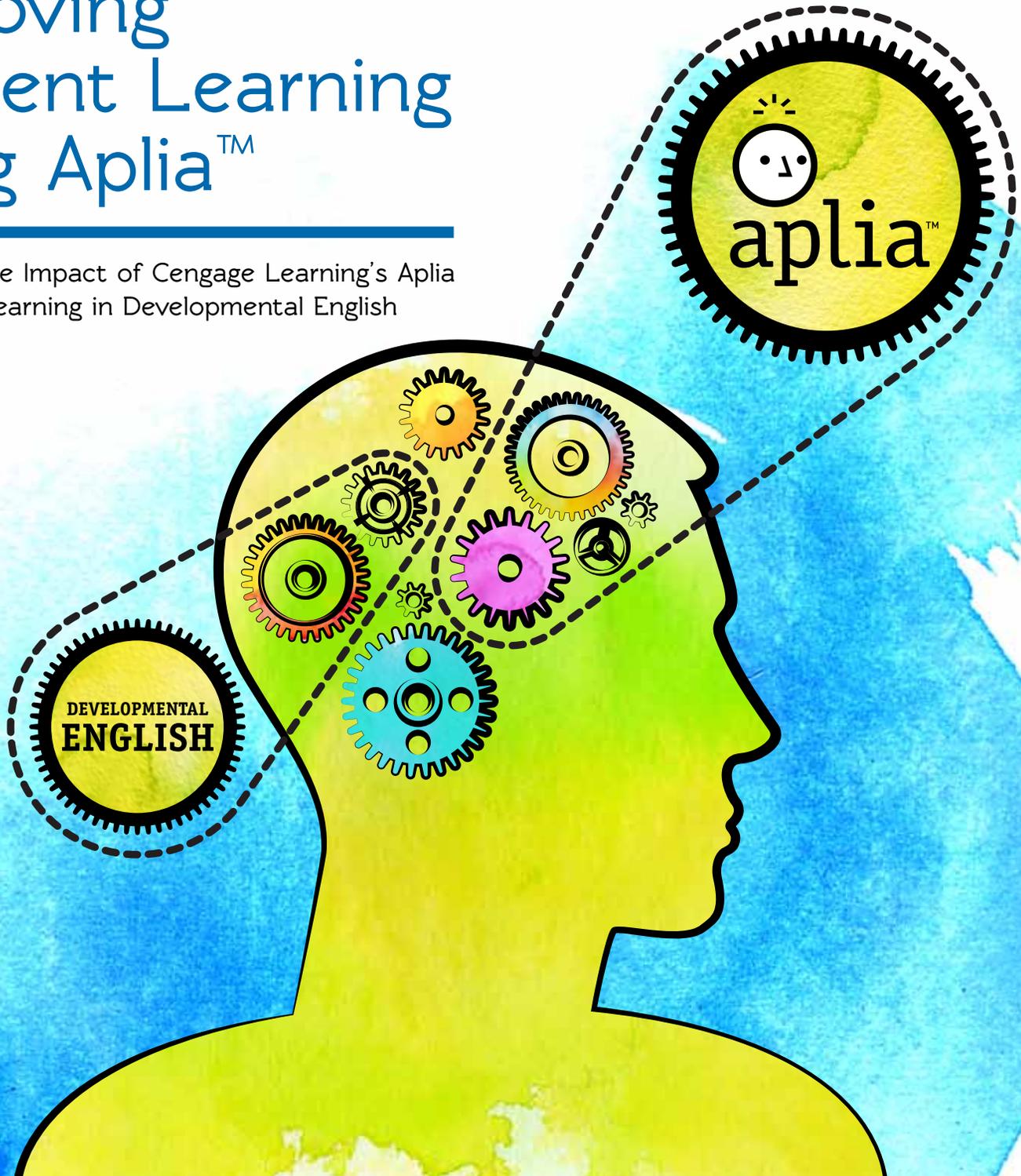




Improving Student Learning Using Aplia™

A Study of the Impact of Cengage Learning's Aplia on Student Learning in Developmental English



About Aplia

Aplia is an online learning solution that provides interactive chapter assignments correlating to specific textbooks. Aplia makes use of tutorials, news analysis, experiments, and other multimedia features to maintain learner interest. As students complete online assignments, they receive immediate grades and automatic feedback on each problem set. Assignments are automatically graded and entered into the instructor's Aplia gradebook, enabling instructors to focus on less labor-intensive and higher-impact areas of teaching. Aplia coursework is available for use with more than **200 textbooks** across **21 disciplines** including business communication, economics, finance, and statistics.

ABOUT THE STUDY¹

This comprehensive research study examined one of the most widely used digital tools in post-secondary education, Cengage Learning's Aplia. Aplia is an online learning solution dedicated to improving student learning in developmental English courses by increasing student effort and engagement.

MarketingWorks and SEG Measurement, two independent research firms, conducted a study of Aplia's effectiveness in developmental reading and writing classes in the fall of 2012. The primary goal of the study was to determine the extent to which Aplia users learned more than a control group of users who used the same textbook but without the benefit of Aplia. Further, the study investigated faculty and student perceptions of the product.

More than 750 students and 35 instructors at 30 two- and four-year institutions of higher education were involved in the semester-long study. Student learning using the Aplia application (treatment group) was compared to student learning in developmental reading and writing classes not using Aplia (control group), with both groups using the same print textbook. Pre- and post-tests of the reading and writing knowledge and skills taught in the course were administered as a basis for comparing the amount of learning among Aplia users and non-users. In addition, instructors and a sampling of students using Aplia provided feedback at the beginning and end of the study and bi-weekly throughout the semester.

STUDENT LEARNING INCREASES DRAMATICALLY USING APLIA

According to the research study, students in developmental reading and writing courses using Aplia learned significantly more than students using the same textbooks without Aplia. The differences in post-test scores achieved by students in the treatment and control groups are shown for reading in Figure 1 and for writing in Figure 2.

In reading, students at the 50th percentile who used Aplia grew 8 percentile points more than students who did not use Aplia. In writing, students at the 50th percentile who used Aplia grew 7 percentile points more than those who did not use Aplia.

¹ This research was selected through peer review for presentation at the 2013 annual SITE conference.

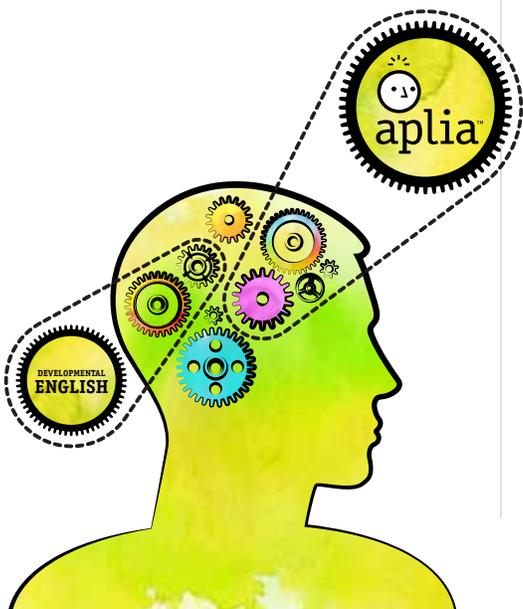


Figure 1

Reading Skills Improve with Aplia

Scaled Reading Post-Test Scores
(score range 200–800)

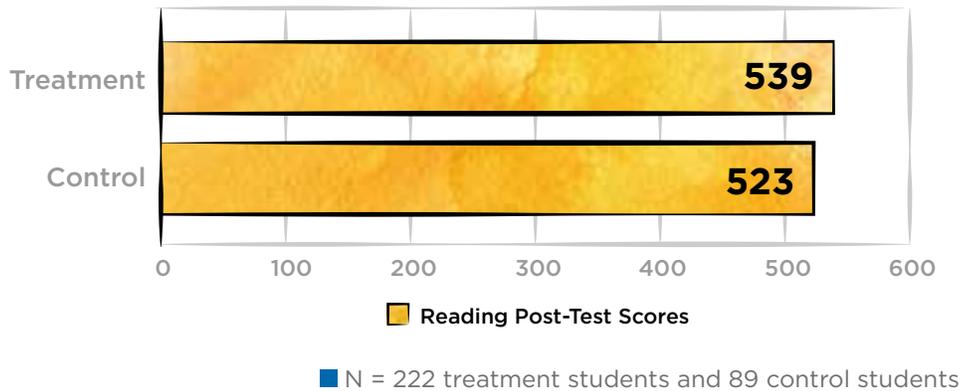
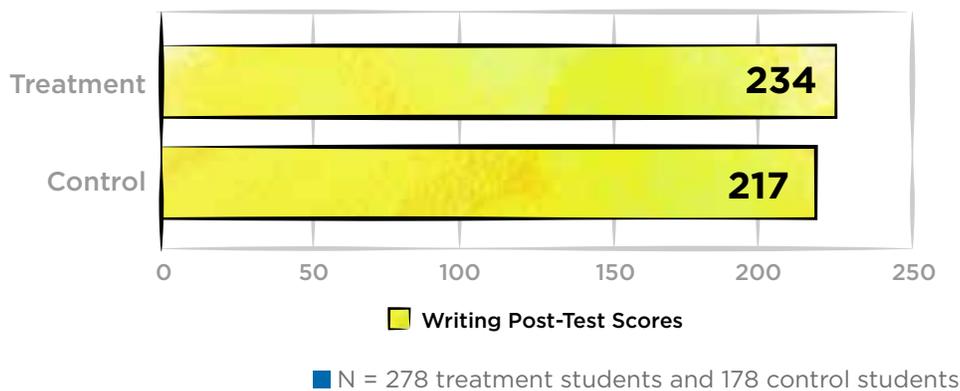


Figure 2

Writing Skills Improve with Aplia

Scaled Writing Post-Test Scores
(score range 100–700)



All instructors felt that Aplia contributed to the improvement of student learning outcomes, with 55% saying outcomes were greatly improved, 40% saying outcomes were somewhat improved, and 5% saying outcomes were slightly improved. In addition, 70% of the students said they had learned more than they would have otherwise because of their use of Aplia.

“This semester I had a greater percentage of students that passed the course. Given that all other course materials remained unchanged, I contribute the increase in my completion rate to my structured use of Aplia.”

Donna Richardson-Hall
Mercer County Community College

“Overall, Aplia is an excellent tool for reinforcing lessons and skills taught in class. It keeps the students focused and active in and out of class.”

Helen Ceraldi
North Lake College

“Bravo to Aplia for engaging students and keeping them on target! I’ve already introduced and endorsed Aplia at my college. The greatest strength is that students are more engaged because of its relevancy and use of video. It addresses all learning styles.”

Victoria Efird
South Piedmont Community College

“I love Aplia!! I have searched high and low to find a tool to use with my students outside of class to help engage them in the material, and I’ve finally found it!”

Kristi Barker
South Plains College

“Students loved doing exercises at their own pace and convenience and definitely seemed more prepared for exams.”

Anna Maheshwari
Schoolcraft College

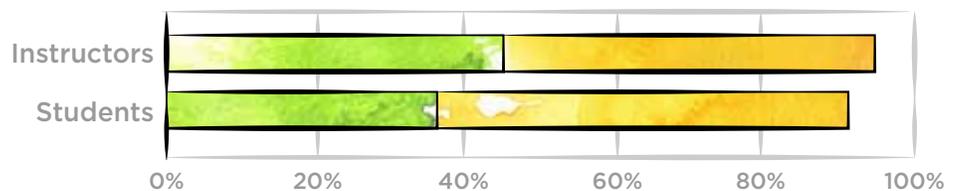
APLIA ENHANCES STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

All instructors in the study reported that students’ engagement with the reading and writing coursework was positively impacted by their use of Aplia, with 60% saying engagement was greatly impacted and 30% saying it was somewhat impacted.

Overall, 95% of the instructors felt that students were either very engaged or somewhat engaged with the coursework while using Aplia, with more than 90% of the students agreeing that they found the coursework to be either very engaging or somewhat engaging (Figure 3). Furthermore, almost one-half of the students said that they were more engaged because of their use of Aplia.

Figure 3

Coursework Is Engaging When Using Aplia



	Students	Instructors
Course with Aplia was somewhat engaging	36%	45%
Course with Aplia was very engaging	55%	50%

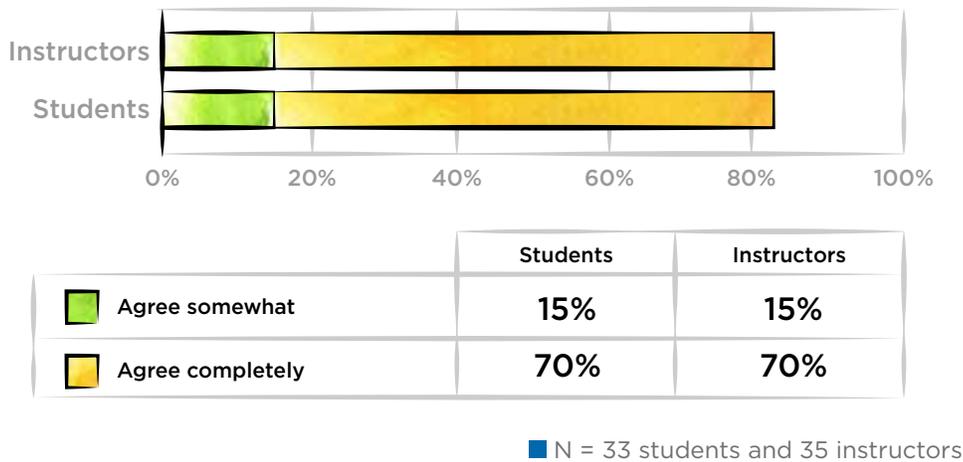
■ N = 33 students and 35 instructors

STUDENTS AND INSTRUCTORS RECOMMEND APLIA TO OTHERS

Both instructors and students indicated that they would recommend Aplia. As seen in Figure 4, 85% of students indicated that they would recommend Aplia to their friends, and 85% of the instructors indicated that they would recommend Aplia to their colleagues.

Figure 4

Instructors and Students Would Recommend Aplia

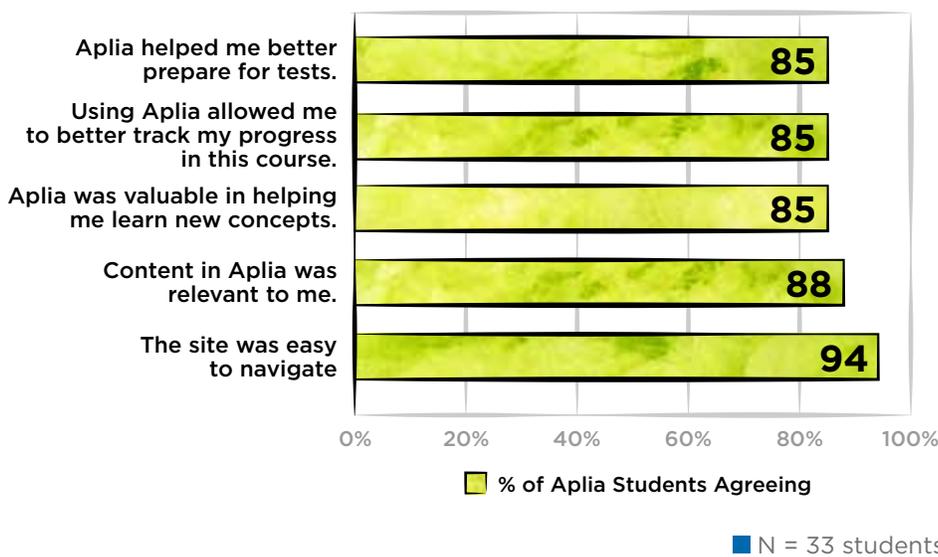


APLIA TRANSFORMS HOMEWORK

Student ratings of specific aspects of Aplia reflected their positive attitudes and the degree to which the application was seen to help them learn, track their progress, and prepare for tests (Figure 5).

Figure 5

Aplia Transforms Homework



“Aplia is a great addition to the classroom. It saves the instructor a lot of time that would otherwise be spent creating worksheets and grading. Aplia helps us manage our time and gives us time for our families.”

Rochelle Dahmer
Jones County Junior College

“To use the old cliché, practice makes perfect. Students were able to have reinforcement concerning concepts discussed in class, and they completed exercises beyond the ones offered in the textbook.”

Melody Hargraves
St. John’s River College

“The fact that Aplia is self-paced, includes media, and can be done more than once to improve a score allows us to serve students with varying needs.”

Mimi Leonard
Wytheville Community College

“For grammar work, Aplia is a great tool for an instructor who has a wide variety of skill levels in his/her classroom. With students having multiple attempts allowed on assignments and with ample practice opportunities, Aplia gives everyone a chance to work and revisit their work as needed.”

Hoyy Susi
Community College of Rhode Island

“Aplia is extremely useful for me. It reduces my workload, allows me to identify with minimal effort trouble spots for individuals and/or the class as a whole, and allows me to reteach right away, which is a great advantage.”

Patti Miinch
St. Louis Community College

APLIA MEETS THE NEEDS OF ALL TYPES OF STUDENTS

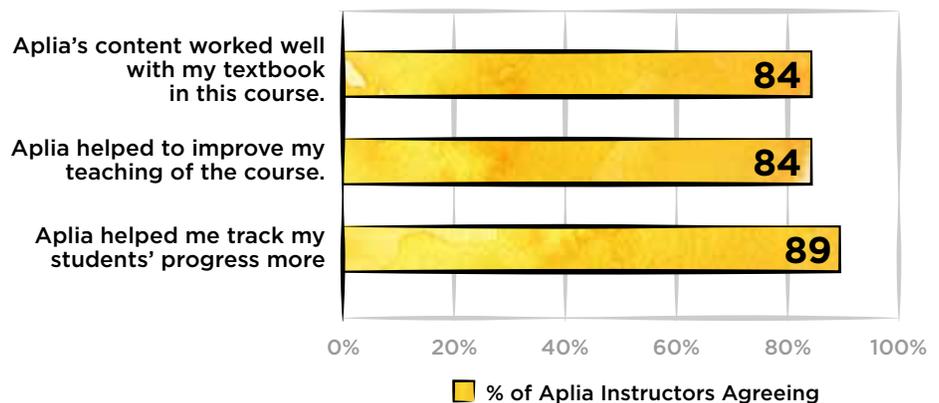
Aplia is equally effective for men and women and for students of different ethnicities, according to the research study. In addition, instructors stated the needs of students with a wide range of capabilities were met very well through the use of Aplia (average instructor rating of 3.3 on a scale of 1 to 4).

APLIA HELPS INSTRUCTORS TEACH BETTER

Aplia helped reading and writing instructors track their students’ progress more easily and improved their teaching of the courses. In addition, Aplia’s content worked well with instructors’ textbooks.

Figure 6

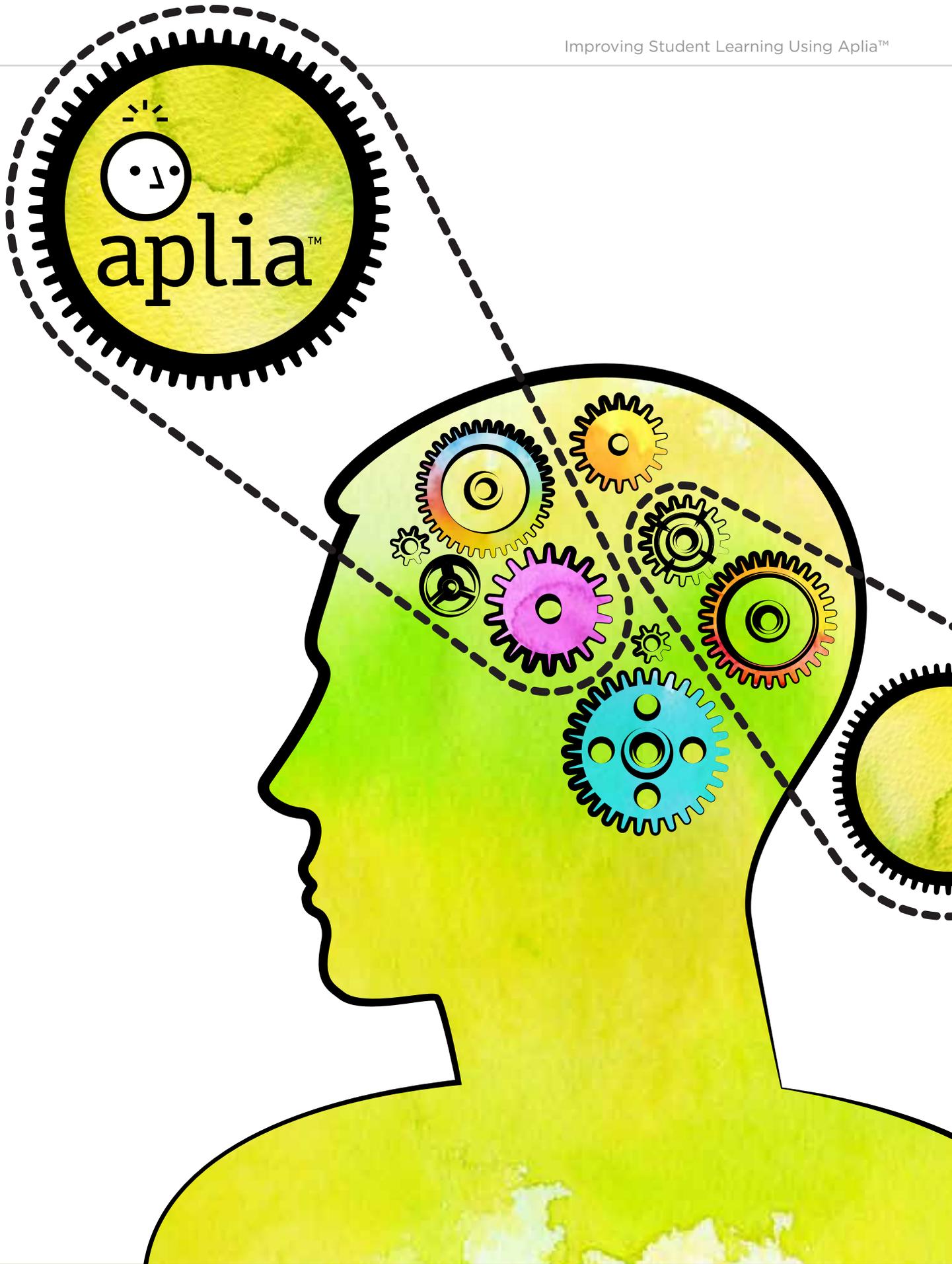
Aplia Helps Instructors



■ N = 35 instructors

IN CONCLUSION

In a national, semester-long study, Aplia was found to be an effective tool for improving student knowledge and skills, with students in developmental reading and writing classes using Aplia learning significantly more than students using the same textbooks without Aplia. Furthermore, both students and instructors using Aplia reported a high level of satisfaction, with more than 90% of each group reporting that the course with Aplia was engaging for students. Finally, 85% of instructors and students reported that they would recommend Aplia to their colleagues or fellow students.



CENGAGE LEARNING

AN OVERVIEW

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.

