



Jennifer Stueckle

Teaching Professor, West Virginia University

BIOLOGY

Tenet Biology Laboratory

Tell us about your project:

My project is custom lab manuals for our non-majors biology labs - BIOL 101L and 102L. Our non-majors curriculum is divided into two semesters. Thus, I wanted two one-semester lab manuals. And I wanted the activities to fit the concepts that are interesting to students or that students need a little additional support with.

I have found that the typical non-major biology lab manuals have the same standard of activities. And they are the same activities repeated from high school! These are college classes. We can do more than put an item in a brown paper bag and see if there is a grease stain which indicates that it has lipids. I want our students to explore more. They should be able to think and manipulate. Not all of our labs are exploratory, but we have been able to add multiple variables to a lab and divide them up among the students to test and then share data as a class.

How was the process of getting the project started?

It was set up more than 14 years ago. When I started, a colleague already had the manual with Macmillan. I just took over the lab manual that she had. I have replaced every lab that she had so she is no longer an author on the lab manuals.

In any case, I quickly gained access to the manual, was given an overview of the process and jumped in. I don't even remember a learning curve with the process. I don't think I started with an editable pdf. I think it was red ink and dog-eared pages. The current process is even easier and faster.

Did you uncover any challenges while working on your project?

I don't design the covers. Macmillan does that and they change with every edition. BIOL 101L is cell and molecular biology, ecology and evolution and BIOL 102L is plant and animal physiology. I like the pictures to match the course content. So a DNA strand only works for BIOL 101L. I always get the first draft, reiterate this distinction and then usually approve the second draft.

What aspects of the Macmillan Learning Curriculum Solutions program did you find the most beneficial when it came to making your product a reality?

I have always selected the photos and illustrations myself. I have also sent photos and have had Macmillan turn them into illustrations, with which they do an amazing job! Even the photos that I send are inserted to look professional.

What would you tell other people about what it was like to work with Macmillan Learning Curriculum Solutions?

The staff is friendly and very easy to work with. The process is so easy that I tell competitors that it would be more work to leave.

**What was your opinion on your project after completion?
How did it meet your expectations?**

Exceeded. Perfect product.

Every semester I have numerous reps from other companies approach me to switch. And my response is always, “Why would I switch?” The product is affordable to students. It is always delivered on time to my school. If the bookstore runs out of stock, manuals are quickly shipped. I have access to almost every illustration, photograph or graph that I could want and if they don’t have something, I can provide it and they can modify it. The revision process is seamless. And the other rep always responds, “Yeah. Why would you switch?”

**How was the process of timing the project?
Did you get everything completed on time?**

I ask for the editable pdf when the edition prints. As we work through the labs over the semester, I correct items that I see or insert the additions. Thus, the editing is continuous. When it comes time to submit the revisions, they are already done! The editable pdf is simple to strike items out, insert documents (like Excel sheets) or add in text. I upload the document to the author site and it’s done.

What results and feedback have you received from people using your custom project?

The students are always surprised when I tell them that I wrote the lab manual! They think it is a “real” lab manual and I respond that it is a real lab manual. The students really appreciate the cost. They have everything that they need in a lab manual that runs about \$35. That’s a deal for them.

What are some things you are proud of in regards to the creation and production of your project?

It looks so professional. And we can get exactly what we need like pockets on the back pages and perforated pages.

