

Educator study compares retention rates in a class test of MyLab Intro to Business at Glendale Community College

Key Findings

- The retention rate for students in the pilot section using MyLab was 16 percentage points higher than the retention rate for students in the section not using MyLab.
- Students completing all MyLab homework assignments had average MyLab quiz scores six percentage points higher than students who skipped at least one MyLab assignment.
- 87.5% of respondents on an end-of-semester survey agreed that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab.

Study Specifics

School name: Glendale Community College, Glendale, AZ

Course name: Introduction to Business

Course format: Online

Course materials: MyLab Intro to Business and *Business Essentials* by Ebert and Griffin

Timeframe: Spring 2018

Educator: Janet Brooks, Residential Faculty and Business & Information Technology e-courses coordinator

Results reported by: Candace Cooney, Pearson Results Manager

Setting

- Locale: large, suburban, two-year, public community college located approximately 20 minutes north west of downtown Phoenix
- Enrollment: more than 20,000 students
- Full-time retention rate: 66%
- Three-year graduation rate: 17%
- Ethnicity: 40% Caucasian; 37% Hispanic; 6% African American; 5% Asian; 2% American Indian/Alaskan; 10% Other

About the Course

Introduction to Business is a one-semester, three-credit, entry-level course enrolling nearly 1,000 students per year, and is required of all business students. The course offers an overview of current local, national, and international business, as well as broad coverage of economics, marketing, management, and finance.

Challenges and Goals

Success in an online course often depends on how actively students are engaged with the instructor, classmates, course content, and technology used. Having used MyLab™ assignments in some of her other classes to engage students and positively impact learning and achievement, Brooks noted an increase in course retention rates. Hoping to experience a similar improvement in success rates, she engaged in a class test of MyLab for her Introduction to Business class in Spring 2018. She was tasked with teaching two online sections of 24 students each. One section continued to use the textbook she had used previously without technology while the other section used MyLab Intro to Business and the accompanying text.

Implementation

Students use MyLab for understanding content, homework assignments, and assessment. On a voluntary, end-of-semester student survey of Brooks's students (42% response rate), 63% of respondents said they spent 1–2 hours working in MyLab each week, and an additional 24% spent more than two hours in the program weekly. Brooks views the MyLab assignments as formative — an opportunity for students to experiment and learn. MyLab assignments consist mainly of simulations, video cases, and quizzes.

MyLab assignments

Mini Sims: Simulations ask students to apply course concepts to realistic business challenges they are likely to experience in their future careers, covering topics like leadership, accounting, and supply and demand. Students make a series of decisions, and the Mini Sim then branches, creating various scenario paths based on answers given. This personal learning experience provides an opportunity for Brooks's students to build and develop their critical thinking skills. Simulations are meant to be a learning experience, so students have three attempts at completion. On the end-of-semester survey, students indicated the following:

- 75% of respondents agreed that the Mini Sims allowed them to practice business decision-making skills and to understand the impact of the decisions they were making.

Video case studies: These visual cases help students check their understanding of the chapter material and reinforce basic concepts. Each 10-minute video case is followed by five multiple-choice questions, providing an opportunity for students to apply what they are reading about to the real world. Video exercises help Brooks's students to bridge the content gap for those who might not be reading the text carefully. Because they are brief, students have just one attempt at completion. On the end-of-semester survey, students indicated the following:

- 100% of respondents agreed that the video case assignments helped them to see the chapter contents in action.

MyLab quizzes: Six online quizzes are administered throughout the semester and usually cover 2–3 chapters. They are comprised of ten multiple-choice questions per chapter chosen from the test bank, and students have two minutes per question and one attempt for completion.

Writing assignments: Writing assignments play a key role in helping students develop the analytical and critical-thinking skills they need for success, but the addition of MyLab simulations and video cases allowed Brooks to engage her Introduction to Business students in a different way. However, to maintain writing as a course component, Brooks offers optional, low-stakes writing assignments through [Writing Space](#) in MyLab. Assignments are easily created and auto-graded. In response to the student survey, all students but one completed at least one writing assignment to earn additional MyLab points.

Other course assessments

The marketing plan assignment allows students to apply their knowledge of the marketing mix to a business of their choosing. Students research and share information in the following four categories: SWOT analysis, product line and product mix, target market and marketing trends, and distribution and promotion strategy.

Discussion posts allow students to share with and learn from their peers. Original student posts are due on Thursday and responses to other student posts are due by 11:59 p.m. Sunday.

Assessments

- 28% MyLab simulations (8)
- 24% MyLab quizzes (6)
- 21% MyLab video cases (23)
- 12% Marketing plan
- 11% Discussion posts (4)
- 3% Other assignments
- 1% MyLab writing assignments (2)

Results and Data

Brooks conducted a class test by having one section of her course use MyLab and the corresponding Pearson text book, while the other section used her previously adopted print textbook only from another publisher. In Spring 2018, data indicate retention in the section using MyLab was 16 percentage points higher than in the section using the print textbook (figure 1).

Retention rate in section not using MyLab and section using MyLab

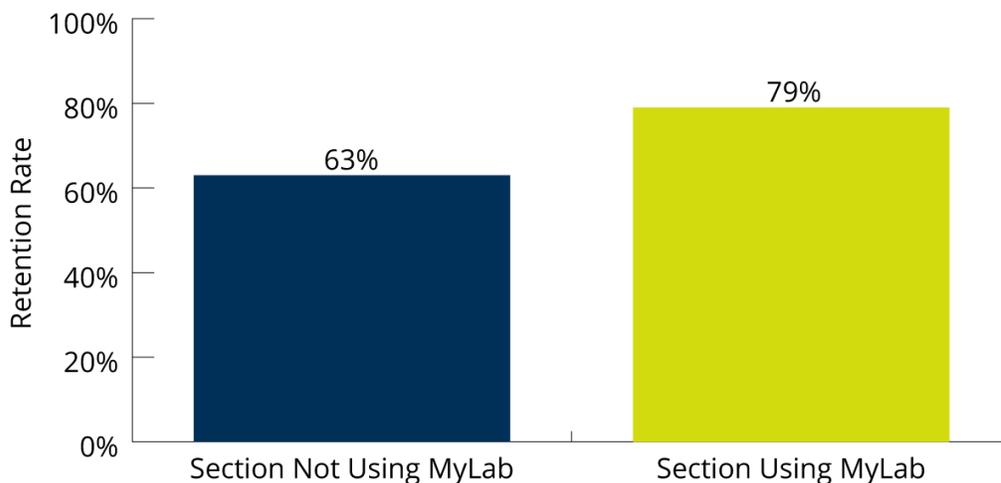


Figure 1. Retention Rate, Spring 2018; Section Not Using MyLab ($n=24$); Section Using MyLab ($n=24$)

Students in the section using MyLab were divided into two groups based on their completion of MyLab homework assignments. Students who completed all assignments (29 total assignments) earned higher average MyLab quiz scores than students who skipped at least one assignment (figure 2).

- Students who completed all assignments had average exam scores six percentage points higher than students who skipped at least one assignment.

For students, the formative MyLab homework assignments are intended to help them identify where they are in terms of successfully completing the summative course quizzes. Data suggest that if students are not successfully completing MyLab assignments, they may not be aware of potential gaps in their content knowledge until they complete their quizzes.

MyLab assignment completion and average quiz scores

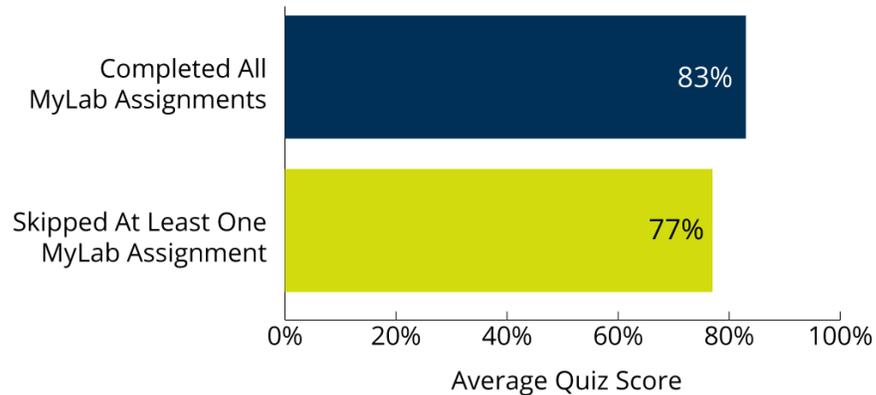


Figure 2. Average MyLab Quiz Scores Based on MyLab Assignment Completion, Spring 2018 (n=24)

The Student Experience

Responses from the Spring 2018 end-of-semester survey of Brooks's students indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of MyLab Intro to Business.

- 87.5% of respondents agreed that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab.
- 87.5% of respondents agreed that MyLab homework assignments positively impacted their quiz scores.
- 87.5% of respondents would recommend MyLab to another student.

Student responses to the question "What were the benefits of MyLab?" include:

- *"The simulations were the most useful to me as they helped me get into the mindset of "owning" a business and deciding what would be the best course of action to take."*
- *"[The benefit of MyLab] was being interactive, especially for an online course. I believe the content made sense and was broken up in ways that allowed it to keep my attention and be impactful."*
- *"MyLab worked pretty well and I liked how it would correspond with Canvas instead of having to go back and forth between Canvas and the MyLab assignment."*

Conclusion

Brooks engaged in a MyLab class test hoping to see improved retention in her online sections, similar to what she has experienced when adding MyLab resources to other courses. The pilot appears successful — the retention rate in the section using MyLab was substantially higher than in the section using only a traditional print text, and her students overwhelmingly agreed that the MyLab resources were an important part of their understanding of the course content. Brooks has chosen to use MyLab in all her sections of Introduction to Business moving forward.