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MyLab® Accounting experience  
with Caroline Teh

Platform: **MyLab Accounting**

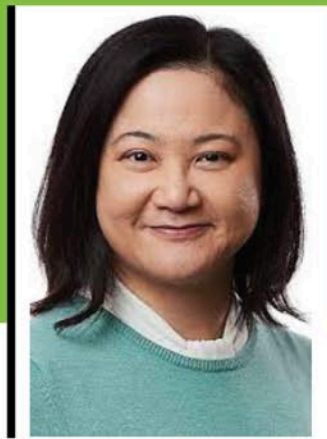
School: **Jönköping University, Sweden**

Book: **Frank Wood: Business Accounting**

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## The course

My course is a **first year, first semester course** and I have about **350 students**. All the students from all programmes take my course. These are students from marketing, international management, sustainable enterprise development and economics programmes. It's a standard common course that they all take before they go into their majors, and I run this course every year from October to Christmas. It's an eight-week course. At the end of the eight weeks, they sit for their exam.

The course is structured in a way where we have lectures and seminars and it is assessed by **one exam, which is 60%** of the final course grade and **40% of a group assignment**. Students get into a group of five or six and then for the group assignment we teachers select four or five listed companies on the Stockholm Stock Exchange. The idea is to teach students how to read annual reports. They use the information from all the lectures that they've gone through about ratios and apply this knowledge to calculate ratios about these companies. Every year we choose different companies so that they are not able to copy last year's students.

The students are supposed to recommend in their **written report** whether we should invest in these companies, or not, using a certain amount of money. They must make an assessment. They also have to present their findings in a group presentation in front of the class. This makes 40% of their final grade.

60% of their grade is based on their individual effort in their exam. It's a **four-hour exam** where we have **24 multiple choice questions** and some short answer questions. I use a digital exam so that the system can grade it for me. I don't have to do anything when it comes to multiple choice. Then, I have one question at the end at the end which carries the majority of the points in the exam. The final question covers preparing a profit and loss account and a balance sheet, writing out the journal entries and then prepare an income statement or prepare journal entries and write out a balance sheet. Some of these are combined.

It's a very **intense course** because they don't like numbers, they feel it's hard. So, I as a teacher, I have to find a way to encourage them and tell them if they just follow the system and the principle, they cannot go wrong. You have to teach them tricks to get over these kinds of things.

I thought, if we adopt MyLab Accounting and put in some questions which let them practise, **it eases their fear** a bit. And it does. **The students who actually bought the book with MyLab Accounting found it extremely useful.** That's the feedback that I've got.

In this digital age the young generation are really **on the go**. They can use it on the computer wherever they are, they don't have to be fixed in a permanent spot to use it. So, it's very useful to them, and the good students are the ones who regularly use MyLab Accounting to go over and over it again.

You need these digital tools to help to stay in education. The students who don't come to class regularly use this as their practise point, if they don't understand what's going on in class. When they do the questions, they get used to it and then they find a way, eventually.

In Accounting you need the time to practise, to understand and then you go with the principles into the questions. Students know that **practice is really important**, and this is why they ask for more. So obviously, we teachers don't have that much time to do everything. We run four seminars where we break the 350 students into 4-5 groups. We take the students through those questions that we feel are good for them to practise on. We go through that step-by-step with the students in the classroom during that two-hour period. We repeat that and we choose different topics for every exercise session.

Going forward, I would really love to create a more **flipped classroom** kind of experience for the students where we push them to **do more on a weekly basis**. I'd like to have weekly quizzes for them to keep them on track. I can picture myself using MyLab Accounting for that because it makes the teacher's life so much easier. **It puts the responsibility on the students to practise.** We provide the opportunity and it's up to them if they want to use it or not. If I make that mandatory in the classroom, I think they will take it much more seriously. We just need to put a bit more time into it to think about the structure.

**As a teacher, you need to invest time in planning and building the structure. Once you do it, you don't really have to do much more. Then, it's just a matter of switching and changing things around to cater for the students' needs.**



## About the use of MyLab Accounting

So far, I've used MyLab Accounting once and I found it very useful. What made it very different from other similar platforms is that the questions are already there, ready to get going. For me that was **time saving**.

***The reason I encouraged my students to use MyLab Accounting is because I always feel students don't have enough practise.*** Being first year students, they're very playful, naive, they want to enjoy themselves. Many of them are very afraid of numbers. Maybe they have had bad experiences in high school. So, they have this fear already coming into the course and that's how they think. I always have to mitigate this by saying, *"We have no formulas in this course. I'm not going to ask you algebra, trigonometry, and such things. It's just plus, minus, divide and multiply and we will give you a calculator to use in the exam hall. So, you don't have to be afraid. You just need to know these four functions."*

## Integration of MyLab Accounting into the course

Last year when I used it, it was not compulsory for them to buy it. I had our local Pearson contact coming to my class on my introduction day. She took 10-15 minutes at the end of my session to introduce MyLab Accounting to them. That got a lot of interest from the students because at the end of the lecture a lot of students came up to me, they wanted to buy it.

I would love to make it compulsory if I could make it structured into the course. For example, the exam will be worth 50% instead of 60%, and I would use the 10% for weekly exercises on MyLab Accounting. That's something that we need to adjust in our core syllabus to implement it in a formal way.

I would love to even cut my exam from 4 hours to 3 hours just because it's going to be a smaller exam and then have the students do something else on a weekly basis. **Keeping them on track along the way instead of studying at the end, which never works in accounting.**

## About the book

### (Frank Wood: Business Accounting)

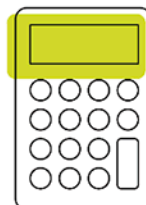
Pedagogically, this is the best book for me because if you had no knowledge of accounting whatsoever, this is the book that you would want to adopt and use to learn the details from the start. **From the beginning** – this is what the book offers that other books do not, and it doesn't do it in a way that bombards you with a lot of information. ***It takes you slowly, bit-by-bit.***

Chapters are short, to the point and you don't get lost in information. This is why I love the book very much. I loved this book from the first time I used it years ago.

When I first used it, students just loved the book. Back then we didn't have things like MyLab Accounting. We didn't have teaching resources, nothing of that sort but I still found the book so useful. Of course, it was more effort on my part as a teacher. I had to draw on the board, and so on, but it worked well. We didn't have digital exams, either. Every exam was all on paper and pencil and students answered on paper.

At that time, I taught different programmes and different levels. I could see the difference between students with a business background and those who did not have such a background. For those students from Engineering and IT, with a bit more technical minds, it was a breeze. **They just needed to follow the book in a systematic way, and they did really well.** For me, that is the strength of the book. It's well written and structured.

We as teachers only have limited time in the classroom. This is where the book comes in. ***With short, straight-to-the point chapters, students will be more motivated to read the book.*** This is why I recommend the book.





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## Communicating the use of MyLab Accounting with students

We use **Canvas** as our learning management platform, so every announcement is there on a weekly basis. Sometimes I feel I may be using it a bit too much because they get bombarded with too many emails, and I don't want to do that. We've done evaluation feedback before where they mentioned they had received too many announcements. **So, I try to gather all my announcements together and just make one announcement with different points.** Then students don't feel overwhelmed.



## Variety of exercises

I think the variety is good and I feel that it is enough. When I look through the questions, I feel there is enough material that I can use, and I can select to create an assignment or a quiz or exercise session for them. And we also have the *"Help me solve this"* and *"View an example"* tools to help students. If they click on them, they can get additional aid.

**It's fantastic because they don't have to go through their book to look at what page the material which help them answer is, they just click a button, and the help is there.** It also prevents excuses from them to say too hard or it's too much effort to put in. This platform offers these links to different parts of the material which you don't have in a print book.

I also need to mention the **algorithmic questions**. Every time a student starts an exercise, they will have the same problem with different numbers. So, it **helps them practise more**, as well as **prevents them copying the results from each other**.

The good students are always looking for better challenge. This is where the algorithm comes handy. It is very useful that it can adjust to the student's level of performance. **As a teacher, I love the fact that I can have the freedom to create different types of quizzes and assignments.**

## Change in students' behaviour and engagement

The generation that came during the pandemic have been really affected in the way they learned and how they took their education for granted. People don't want to read so much nowadays. I told them in this book the chapters are so short, they can read it in half an hour or less. This is why I selected the book because it's **easy to read** and it's **to the point**. These are my incentives for them to come to class.

## Comments from students about MyLab Accounting

**They love the fact that they can do many exercises when they feel like it.** Last year when I implemented it, it wasn't compulsory, only offered for practise. Those who used it are usually the better students. They are the ones who have higher ambition, so they practised, and they found it useful. They've come back to give feedback to say the number of questions and the availability of practise is good.

The hard-working ones will always ask for more to do and this gives them an opportunity to do different types of questions, as well.

## Advice to lecturers starting or considering to use MyLab Accounting

I would say **use it**. I mean that as a teacher in education, there's no way you can run a course without digitalisation. You have to be on board, you have to get on the boat. If you don't, you're going to be left behind.

**If you would like to know more about MyLab Accounting, visit our MyLab® website at <https://www.pearson.com/en-gb/higher-education/products-services/mylab.html>**

