

# MyLab Business Law educator study

A look at Dynamic Study Modules and  
exam scores at Rutgers University



## Key findings:

- In Business Law I, Spring 2017, MyLab™ was required and midterm exam scores were nine percentage points higher than midterm scores in Fall 2017 when MyLab was optional.
- In Business Law II, Spring 2017, MyLab was required and midterm exam scores were five percentage points higher than midterm scores in Fall 2017 when MyLab was optional.
- On an end-of-semester student survey, 97% of respondents agreed that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab.

## Setting

**Locale:** large, urban, four-year, public research institution, with a main campus in northern New Jersey

**Enrollment:** more than 69,000 students overall, approximately 49,000 in New Brunswick

**Four-year graduation rate:** 59%

**Ethnicity:** 41.5% White, 26% Asian, 13% Latino, 7.5% African American, 14% Other



**School name:** Rutgers University,  
New Brunswick, NJ



**Course name:** Business Law I and II



**Course format:** Face to face



**Course materials:** MyLab Business Law  
with *Business Law* by Cheeseman



**Timeframe:** Spring 2017–Fall 2017



**Educator:** Charles J. Soos, JD, Associate Professor



**Results reported by:** Candace Cooney,  
Pearson Customer Outcomes Analytics Manager

## About the course

After maintaining his own law practice, Charles Soos joined the Business School at Rutgers and has been teaching there for 25 years. Business Law I is a one-semester, three-credit course offered to more than 300 students each semester and required of business majors, followed by Business Law II. The course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the fundamentals of the American Legal System including the Court System, the Constitution, the Legislature and litigation process, and it offers analysis of the principles of common law contracts.

## Challenges and Goals

Soos had been using a Pearson text and digital course companion for years, when MyLab Business Law was introduced in Summer 2016. **Looking for a greater variety and quantity of options for self-study and application, as well as online content that was tightly integrated with the text, Soos adopted MyLab for his summer classes.** Knowing that many of his students were using MyLab in other classes and had experience with the product gave Soos confidence that it would be a seamless addition to his current class structure.

## Implementation

Instructors face other external considerations before adopting educational technology, including price. Soos believed that the eText option in MyLab offered a cost-effective solution for those students interested in cutting down on the expense of course materials. Addressing the need for his students to pay for the MyLab, Soos said, "I have never received negative feedback from students in the past when asked to purchase a digital program, and did not expect to when I adopted MyLab either, as it offers more."

In fact, on an end-of-semester survey of his students, **70% of respondents agreed that the resources in MyLab made the program a good value for this course.**

However, Soos wanted to offer his students options when purchasing their course materials. Students shared the following on the survey:

- 55% purchased the all-digital solution (MyLab and eText only)
- 17% purchased the MyLab code and a new, print textbook
- 14% purchased the MyLab code and a used, print textbook
- 14% purchased the MyLab code and a print, loose-leaf version of the textbook

Generally, students are satisfied when purchasing course materials that have relevance and impact, a statement supported by the student survey where **97% of respondents agreed that use of MyLab positively impacted their exam scores.**

Soos' implementation of MyLab has varied each semester since being added to the course, but has always counted as an extra credit assignment. From Summer 2016 to Spring 2017, MyLab was required, becoming optional in Fall 2017. Soos evaluated several options of extra credit scoring with MyLab, always resulting in students having the ability to earn five points toward their final course grade. To earn the five extra credit points, students must complete every MyLab assignment and earn a 90% minimum score on all graded assignments and quizzes, except video assignments which require a minimum score of 80%. Otherwise, they do not receive any points. Although optional in Fall 2017, 41% of respondents on the end-of-semester survey indicated that they spent 2–3 hours working in MyLab each week, while an additional 38% spent more than three hours working in MyLab.

## MyLab assignments

Students complete the chapter warm-up exercises to encourage reading the textbook thoughtfully and to

gauge their understanding of essential chapter concepts. As a result, students come to class familiar with basic content, allowing Soos to focus on interesting cases that apply the material, drawing heavily on his personal law experience. On the student survey, 86% of respondents agreed that the warm-up exercises encouraged them to read the textbook.

Video case studies help students apply chapter concepts to real-world business law challenges, reinforcing the concepts. Each video case is followed by five multiple-choice questions, and students have one attempt for completion. On the student survey, 72% of students agreed that the video cases provided a practical application of the chapter material and highlighted important chapter concepts.

Dynamic Study Modules (DSM) are questions that continuously assess student performance and activity, using data and analytics to provide personalized feedback in real time, to reinforce concepts targeting a student's strengths and weaknesses. The student survey revealed:

86% of students agreed that the test-review-retest pattern of the Dynamic Study Modules helped them to learn and remember chapter content.

“The learn function that explains why/why not answers were correct or not helped me learn where I struggled most or where I needed to study more.”

—Student, Rutgers University

“Dynamic Study Modules help me to differentiate concepts that are similar in meaning and relearn these concepts when tested again.”

—Student, Rutgers University

Chapter quizzes in MyLab are comprised of 10–15 multiple-choice questions and learning aids are turned off. Quizzes help bridge the gap between the DSM assignment, which students can complete continuously, and the midterm exam. Quiz and midterm exam questions are similar in format and difficulty.

The midterm exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions, students have just one attempt and must complete the exam in 80 minutes. To further encourage MyLab usage, 20% of the midterm exam (10 questions) are pulled from MyLab assignments. The final exam is distinctive, taking an application-oriented approach. Students are presented with a multi-paragraph scenario that Soos has written and must apply the given facts to 7–10 questions that follow. Students have 90 minutes for completion. The midterm exam and final exam are different in purpose, scope, and format.



#### Assessments

- 50% Midterm exam
- 50% Final exam
- 5% MyLab assignments (extra credit only)

## Results and Data

MyLab was required in Spring 2017 but changed to optional for Fall 2017. Data indicate that average midterm exam scores fell in both Business Law I and II after MyLab became optional. As stated earlier, to encourage student use of MyLab in Fall 2017, Soos chose 20% of the exam questions directly from MyLab assignments.

- Average midterm scores dropped nine percentage points after making MyLab optional from 80% to 71% in Business Law I.
- Average midterm scores dropped five percentage points after making MyLab optional from 83% to 78% in Business Law II.

## The Student Experience

Responses from the Fall 2017 end-of-semester survey of Soos' students indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of MyLab Business Law.

- 97% of respondents agreed that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab.
- 90% of respondents agreed that they would recommend MyLab to other students taking this course.
- 79% of respondents agreed that the use of MyLab positively impacted their exam scores.

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

"Study modules [in MyLab] helped me go back and refer to the textbook which was helpful."

"The different types of modules [in MyLab] help reinforce the material. The modules are very thorough and cover most of the material in the book. Going over modules was very helpful when preparing for exams."

"The DSM modules and warm-ups helped [me] study and perform better on the quiz modules and class exams."

"MyLab helped me reinforce the material I had read in the chapter and study for the exams."

## Conclusion

With MyLab, Soos was able to offer his students multiple options for self-study: chapter warm-up exercises to encourage reading the text, Dynamic Study Modules for adaptive learning and repetitive practice with core chapter concepts, video case for real-world application, and chapter quizzes that mimic the midterm exam in format and difficulty. Students who used MyLab consistently and successfully agreed that the homework and quizzes helped them more clearly understand the course material and positively impacted their exam scores. "MyLab helped me understand the definitions," and "MyLab aided my studying for exams," were typical comments offered by students on the end-of-semester survey, validating Soos' rationale for offering the program as part of his course.