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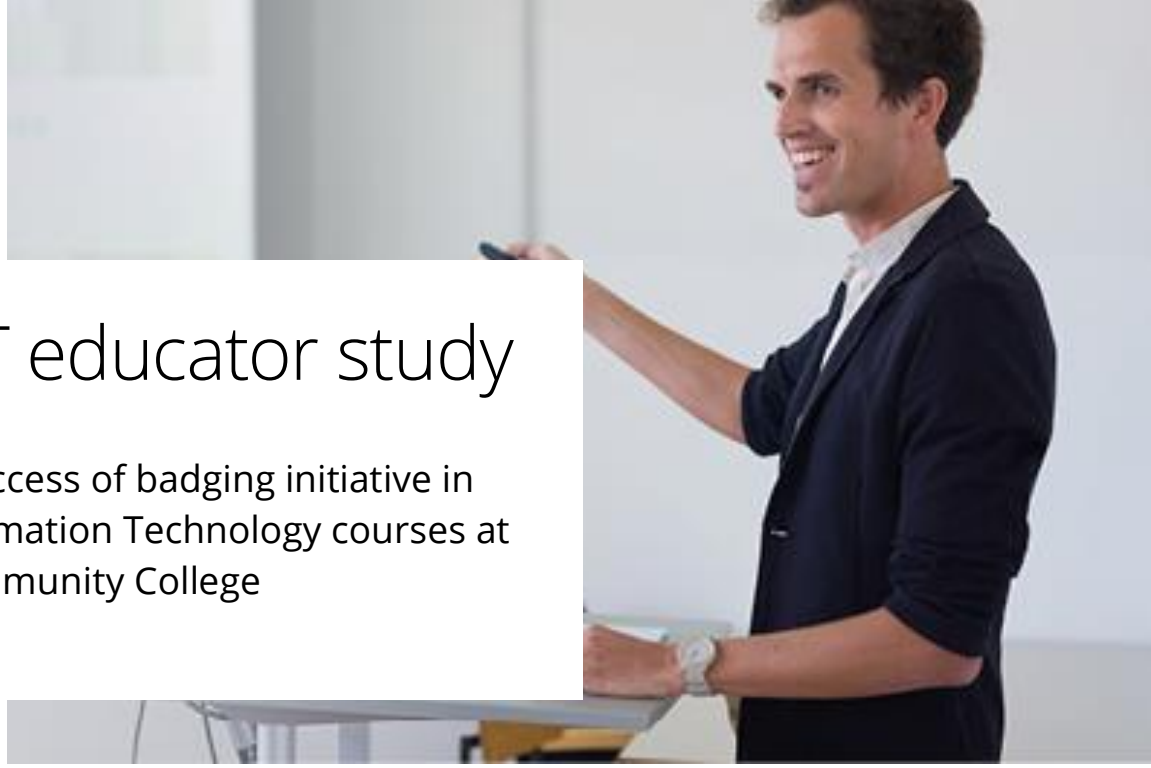

MyLab IT educator study

A look at the success of badging initiative in Computer Information Technology courses at Bunker Hill Community College

Key findings:

- Across four CIT courses in Spring 2018, 63% of students achieved introductory MyLab IT Microsoft Office badges.
- 93% of the students who reported receiving a badge on an end-of-semester survey also reported claiming the badge with Credly.
- 88% of student survey respondents agreed that MyLab IT badges add value, and 85% agreed that MyLab IT badges give an advantage when applying to jobs.

Setting

Locale: the largest community college in Massachusetts
Enrolment: more than 13,000 students
Student body: Approximately 61% are people of color, more than 50% are women, and nearly 1,000 international students attend from over 100 countries.

School name: Bunker Hill Community College, Boston, MA

Course names: CIT-128 Database Design with MS Access,
CIT-234 Decision Support Using Excel,
CIT-250 Collaboration, Communication & Integration

Course format: Hybrid and online

Course materials: MyLab IT

Timeframe: Spring 2018

Educator: Mike Puopolo

Results reported by: Sara Kasper, Pearson Results Manager

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About the course

Beginning in 2007, all of the Computer Information Technology (CIT) courses at BHCC began using MyLab IT with a common interface. Everything, including folder nomenclature and exam prompts, is set up the same so that students can move easily from one course to the next.

Challenges and Goals

Puopolo was aware of badging a few years ago, but wanted to wait until it was perfected within the MyLab IT system. About a year ago, he felt the implementation was seamless and it was time to roll it out to students. He says, "We always try and gear our curriculum to certification. Badging is the next best thing to certification, and it doesn't cost our students anything." In Fall 2017, badging was made a requirement for the following courses:

CIT-128 Database Design with MS Access (hybrid — meets in person for 75 minutes once a week) This is a comprehensive course in the use and application of computers in database applications based on the most current version of Microsoft Access.

CIT-234 Decision Support Using Excel (hybrid and online) This comprehensive course covers the use and application of Decision Support using spreadsheet software based on the most current version of Microsoft Excel.

CIT-250 Collaboration, Communication & Integration (online) This is a course in modern office technology which introduces students to all major areas of personal and organizational collaboration, communication, and integration of MS Office applications. Using Word as the "core" application, students gain practical experience in moving and linking data among all applications: Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Implementation

About badging: Digital badging is a Microsoft Office credential in Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint which verifies both basic and advanced competencies through the Credly system. Once earned, a badge can be placed into a LinkedIn ePortfolio, posted on social media (Facebook, Twitter), and/or included in a resume. Instead of just claiming familiarity with Microsoft Office applications, MyLab IT badges provide verified evidence that learners have demonstrated specific skills and competencies using Microsoft Office tools in a real project.

> "We always try and gear our curriculum to certification. Badging is the next best thing to certification, and it doesn't cost our students anything."
>
> —Professor Mike Puopolo, Bunker Hill Community College

Capstone Grader Projects in MyLab IT require the skills presented in an entire textbook volume — typically three or four chapters of materials — to complete. These projects are typically assigned as end-of-unit activities or cumulative assessments. Students may earn a badge by completing a comprehensive Capstone Grader Project up to three times with a minimum score of 90%. Depending on the course, students may receive one or more introductory badges and/or an advanced badge.

While not an official MS Office certification, Puopolo appreciates that badges may be earned by BHCC students at no additional cost, although earning a badge does give students the opportunity to purchase an MOS or IC3 certification voucher at a 30% discount.

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Badging best practices

- MyLab IT courses at Bunker Hill Community College contain a dedicated badging folder with videos, tips on success, etc..
- Students are reminded of badging benefits throughout the duration of the course.
- Students taking introductory CIT courses are required to set-up their ePortfolio on LinkedIn, and advanced CIT courses stress the importance of creating an ePortfolio if students have not already done so.
- Puopolo makes sure students watch several YouTube videos, including one which explains how to claim and share an earned badge on LinkedIn. Students have the option to auto-accept and auto-share badges received moving forward.
- The Credly system has the ability to connect students with current job openings related to the achieved skills represented by the badge.

Student Learning Outcomes

All BHCC Office courses make extensive use of the MyLab IT Office applications simulations, training, and Grader technology. Practice exams have unlimited attempts, while the Grader assignments have three attempts with a cut score of 90% for full credit, similar to the Capstone Graders by which badges are achieved.

Instructor (for credit) exams have only one attempt. There are no objective (true/false or multiple choice) questions. Puopolo feels that the robust use of MyLab IT simulations in CIT courses has students drilling down into the applications and has led to improved Student Learning Outcomes.

Results and Data

Across four CIT courses in Spring 2018, 63% of students (36 out of 57) achieved introductory MyLab IT Microsoft Office badges. Puopolo notes that performance in the CIS-234 online section was less successful than the hybrid section due to the nature of a course without face-to-face time to connect with students.

On a voluntary, end-of-semester survey (49% response rate), 67% of students (28 of 42 respondents) reported earning one or more MyLab IT badge from successfully completing a Capstone Grader Project. 93% of the students who reported receiving a badge also reported claiming the badge with Credly.

The Student Experience

> "Badges show that we have practiced and learned valuable skills. It supports our education and experience."—Student, Bunker Hill Community College

On Badging: 88% of student respondents agreed that MyLab IT badges add value, and 85% agreed that MyLab IT badges give an advantage when applying to jobs. Open-ended student comments included the following:

- "The badges are proof that the student has, at the very least, hands-on experience with MS office applications."
- "These badges make you more confident from a moral and professional point of view."
- "I really think it does because Excel data skills are required in the workplace. [Badges] add an extra value."
- "The badge is a way for employers to actually verify that a potential employee is actually somewhat fluent with Excel."

Of course, there are differing opinions amongst students, and the following two quotes summarize the

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challenges of reporting a badge and connecting the benefits of a badge to potential employers.

- "I think that employers are still looking for formal coursework. I recently had an interview and the recruiter was excited about the certificate I'm completing rather than badges."
- "I have spoken with many people about the badges, and no one knew about it."

On MyLab IT

Responses from the end-of-semester survey in Spring 2018 indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of MyLab IT.

- 100% of student respondents would recommend MyLab IT to other students.
- 98% of student respondents agreed their ability to successfully use Microsoft Office increased as a result of using MyLab IT.
- 76% of student respondents felt very confident in their ability to use Microsoft Office programs at the end of the course.

Student comments when asked, "What do you see as the benefits of MyLab IT?" include:

"It makes me understand Excel easier. I used to struggle but not anymore. In my workplace, I'm the one doing more Excel work because I know more about it. Thanks to MyLab IT."

"I think MyLab IT covers everything about Microsoft Office. Doing projects, following instructions, then [doing it] without instructions forces us to learn all the skills needed."

"It is very convenient to learn at your own pace and use the tutorial videos and other resources to help succeed in the course."

Conclusion

Moving forward, Puopolo plans on incorporating the badging initiative in all introductory and advanced Office Applications courses in Fall 2018. Puopolo is proud of their drive to make badging a part of CIT courses at Bunker Hill and concludes, "The bottom line is that it has worked out extremely well."

Learn more about MyLab IT

Learn more about how MyLab IT could benefit your course by visiting: https://mlm.pearson.com/northamerica/myitlab/educators/features/index.html

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