

MyLab Management educator study examines MyLab homework and test scores at Farmingdale State College

<p>School Name Farmingdale State College, Farmingdale, NY</p> <p>Course name International Business</p> <p>Course format Flipped, face-to-face</p> <p>Course materials MyLab Management with <i>International Business: Strategy, Management, and the New Realities</i> by Cavusgil, Knight and Riesenberger</p>	<p>Timeframe Fall 2016</p> <p>Submitted by Betty Feng, Assistant Professor</p> <p>Results reported by Candace Cooney, Pearson Customer Outcomes Analytics Manager</p>
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Key Findings

- Data indicate a strong, positive correlation between MyLab Management homework scores and test scores.
- Students earning MyLab Management homework scores greater than the median score earned substantially higher test scores and final course grades.
- Most student respondents on an end-of-semester survey agree that the simulation exercises in MyLab Management helped them practice decision making and apply the chapter content to a real-world business challenge.

Setting

- Locale: mid-size, suburban, public, four-year university located about one hour from New York City
- Enrollment: approximately 9,000
- Student-faculty ratio: 19:1
- Full-time: 75 percent
- Four-year graduation rate: 30 percent
- Receive need-based aid: 51 percent
- Gender: 60 percent male
- Average age: 18
- Diversity: 37 percent minority

About the Course

Betty Feng has been teaching for approximately six years and has been full-time at Farmingdale for three years, where she has been teaching the International Business course for five years.

International Business is a one-semester, three-credit course which enrolls about 200 students per semester. The course is required of all students in the School of Business. This course examines the worldwide integration of economic, political and socio-cultural aspects of business in order to explore and understand the impact of globalization on countries, organizations and individuals. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Develop thought processes and analytical skills essential to a global mindset;
- Practice critical thinking by keeping current with global events and discussing their implications;
- Identify complexities introduced by globalization in shaping the business environment and assess trends, challenges and opportunities created by the globalization of business practices;
- Examine trade and investment theories and patterns, and critically evaluate the role of governments and their impact on the international business environment.

Challenges and Goals

Feng acknowledges that her students simply were not reading the textbook before attending lecture and this limited her ability to flip the class to engage in more experiential and group activities. To encourage her students to read the textbook and come to class with some understanding of the chapter content, she was looking for a course supplement that would compel the students to engage with the reading prior to class attendance, allowing her to spend less time lecturing. With a course emphasis on critical thinking and analysis, Feng also wanted to incorporate case studies, projects and presentations to help her students think analytically and apply the course material to business theories and practices. In Fall 2015, she selected MyLab™ Management as a digital course companion because it would help her address both goals: students would complete a graded assignment before lecture based on the assigned reading, while additional simulation and video exercises would encourage critical analysis for completion.

Implementation

MyLab Management is required; the program is used primarily by students working at home on a personal computer. Students use MyLab Management for understanding content, homework assignments, and testing. As the course instructor, Feng's role is to assign content, homework, and assessments in MyLab Management and provide support to students using the program at home. Her goals for assigning work in MyLab Management are to introduce new concepts, provide homework and practice opportunities, and to help students assess their own understanding of the course material and track their progress.

Feng anticipates that students will spend at least one hour per week working in MyLab Management. Her students confirmed this on a voluntary, end-of-semester Fall 2016 survey (56 percent response rate)—63 percent of students said they spent 1–2 hours per week working in MyLab Management, with an additional 22 percent of students reporting that they spent more than two hours each week working in the program.

Feng's classes meet twice a week for one hour and 15 minutes. Use of MyLab Management allows her to adjust this lecture time so that the first meeting each week is spent discussing concepts which her students are already familiar with after completing pre-class assignments, while the second meeting is devoted to the semester-long group project on Exporting and other experiential work. Students complete the following assignments for each chapter in MyLab Management, generally covering one chapter per week:

- [Warm-Ups](#): these exercises keep Feng's students accountable for reading the chapter material and coming to lecture more prepared to participate; each assignment is approximately 10 multiple-choice questions and students have two attempts at completion.
- [Watch It video exercises](#): these exercises help Feng's students see the concepts they are reading about in action; the video is followed by a set of objective based questions that students have two attempts for completion.
- [Try It simulation exercises](#): these branching, decision-making simulations put Feng's students in the role of a manager where they are asked to make a series of decisions based on realistic business challenges related to the chapter content. Her students receive a report at the end of each simulation that sum up the impact of their decisions.

Feng believes these MyLab exercises give her students background information, allowing her to reduce lecturing and dedicate more class time to higher-order ideas, expand on complex concepts, and help students reinforce what they've learned through collaborative and real-world activities. Feng also acknowledges that students find the Try It's to be challenging at first, as students are required to apply the concepts they are learning about. She works through the first Try It simulation assignment with her students to give them a solid foundation on which to build. In fact, 73 percent of student respondents on the end-of-semester survey agreed that they became more comfortable working through the simulations as the semester progressed and they became more familiar with the process.

On the survey, students also reported on the effectiveness of the various MyLab Management assignments:

- 75 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed that the Try It simulations in MyLab Management helped them practice decision making and apply the chapter content to real-world world business challenges.
- 78 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed that the detailed report at the end of the Try It simulations allowed them to see the consequences of the decisions they made.
- 90 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed that the video Watch It exercises helped them to visualize the chapter contents in action.

Additionally, 41 percent of students reported using the Study Plan on their own for studying and review, 15 percent of students benefited from the [Dynamic Study Modules](#), and 59 percent of students utilized the eText.

Feng administers four tests online in MyLab Management, each comprised of approximately 15 questions from the Pearson test bank, covering two or three chapters. They are multiple-choice, but are application oriented and require students to use their critical analysis skills. Students have 75 minutes for completion and the test must be completed once it has been opened. Students may drop their lowest test score, but there are no make-ups or late submissions.

The Export Project is a major course assessment, worth 40 percent of a student's final grade. Students work in small teams of four to five and create a company that seeks to export to a foreign country. Each team is tasked with identifying a product or service produced in the US to successfully sell to another country and the project culminates in a four-part presentation covering country background, the cultural environment, the institutional (political, legal and economic) environment and the proposed export opportunity.

As a further application of the course material, different students are assigned weekly to post a news link to a current article relating to international business topics to the class Blackboard discussion board. In class, students give a one-minute overview about the news and explain its relevance to topics covered in the course. Additionally, attendance is expected and absences may affect the final grade.

Assessments

- 40% Export team project
- 30% MyLab Management tests (3 out of 4)
- 20% MyLab Management homework assignments
- 5% International news articles
- 5% Attendance

Results and Data

Figures 1 and 2 are correlation graphs; correlations do not imply causation but instead measure the strength of a relationship between two variables, where r is the correlation coefficient. The closer the positive r value is to 1.0, the stronger the correlation. The corresponding p -value measures the statistical significance/strength of this evidence (the correlation), where a p -value $<.05$ shows the existence of a positive correlation between these two variables.

- A strong positive correlation exists between average MyLab Management homework scores and average MyLab Management test scores where $r=.57$ and $p<.05$.
- A strong positive correlation exists between average MyLab Management Try It Simulation scores and final course grades where $r=.62$ and $p<.05$.

For students, the formative MyLab Management homework is intended to help them identify where they are in terms of successfully completing the summative tests; it appears that performance on these assignments could be a leading indicator of course success (additional research is needed to develop and test this concept further). Feng asserts that students are more prepared for lecture after completing the MyLab Management assignments, and has found that the simulation Try It assignments help them sharpen their critical analysis skills.

Correlation between MyLab homework and test grades

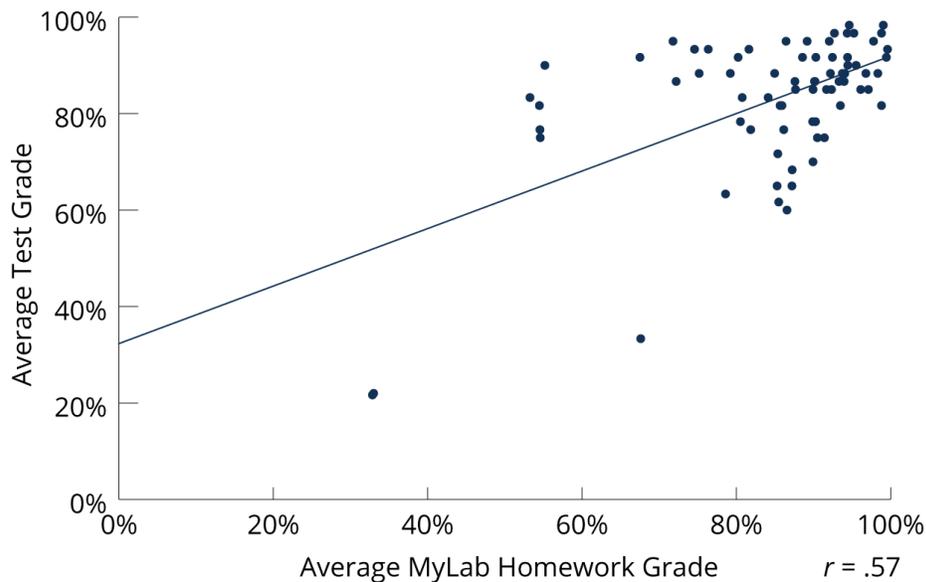


Figure 1. Correlation between Average MyLab Homework Grade and Average Test Grade, Fall 2016 ($n=73$)

Correlation between simulation scores and final course grades

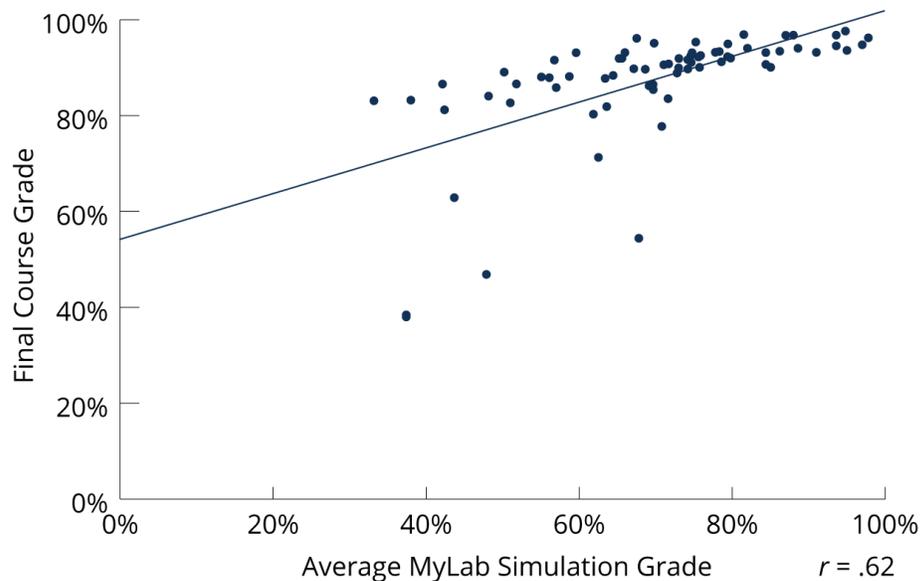


Figure 2. Correlation between Average Try It Simulation Grade and Final Course Grade, Fall 2016, ($n=73$)

Students were divided into two groups based on the average score on the Try It simulation exercises. Students who scored higher than the average Try It score earned higher average test scores and final course grades than students who scored lower than average on the Try It simulations (figure 3).

- Average Try It simulation score: 70 percent
- Students earning higher average Try It scores had average test scores 11 percentage points higher than students who earned scores lower than the average and final course grades 11 percentage points higher than students who earned lower than average scores.
- 53 percent of students earned a Try It simulation score higher than average ($n=39$)

Relationship between simulation score and test and final course grades

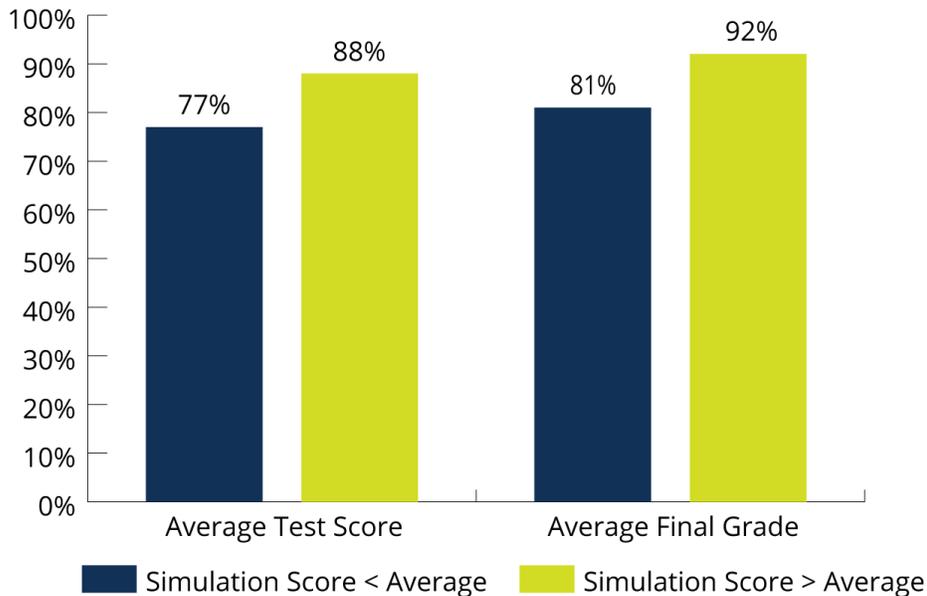


Figure 3. Relationship between MyLab Management Simulation Grade and Average Test and Final Course Grade Fall 2016 ($n=73$)

The Student Experience

Responses from the Fall 2016 end-of-semester, voluntary survey of Feng's students indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of MyLab Management.

- 98 percent of students strongly agree or agree that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab Management.
- 97 percent of students strongly agree or agree that the use of MyLab Management positively impacted their quiz and exam scores.
- 87 percent of students strongly agree or agree that they would recommend MyLab Management to another student.

Student survey responses to the question, "What did you like most about MyLab Management?" include:

- *"I loved how MyLab Management gave an explanation of why the answers I chose were right on the multiple choice homework activities."*

- *"I liked how the assignments for each chapter forced you to read the chapter and answer questions based on the reading. It made me read the material in depth and I feel like it allowed me to learn more."*
- *"I liked the simulations because it's as if you are interacting with people, and they respond based on how you respond. It made me think of real life problems based on the chapter and what we learned in class."*
- *"I like that I could retake the homework questions. It enabled me to review and focus on what I got wrong."*
- *"What I liked most about MyLab Management is that it helped me understand the course material better."*

Conclusion

Intrigued by the variety of formative assessment options in MyLab Management, Feng hoped that having students complete the chapter Warm Ups before class would encourage them to read the textbook prior to lecture, coming in with some understanding of the chapter content. Feng noticed an improvement in student preparation and an increase in class participation after incorporating MyLab homework assignments.

Additionally, she noted that the Try It Simulations and Video exercises were improving student critical analysis skills, which was supported by the response to the student survey: 75 percent of students strongly agreed or agreed that the Try It simulation exercises in MyLab Management helped them practice decision making and apply the chapter content to real-world world business challenges. Students offered their opinion about the difficulty of the simulations, though, encouraging MyLab to "make the simulations easier because I felt like they were trying to confuse me sometimes," as one student stated. Other students echoed this sentiment, and Pearson has modified the simulation features and functionality for 2017.

Now that Feng's students are coming to lecture having read the textbook and are honing their critical thinking skills through MyLab Management exercises, she has time to incorporate case studies, group work and other experiential activities during class, focusing more on real-world applications that are relevant and significant to her students.