

# MyLab Marketing educator study explores student performance at Western Michigan University

## Key Findings

- Data indicate that above average MyLab scores were indicative of higher average quiz and exam scores.
- 79% of students scoring above average on MyLab assignments earned an A or B for their final course grade, while just 19% of students scoring below average earned an A or B for their final grade.
- 90% of respondents on an end-of-semester survey agreed that completing the Dynamic Study Modules before class helped better prepare them for lecture/class sessions.

## Study Specifics

**School name:** Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI

**Course name:** Principles of Marketing

**Course format:** Face to face

**Course materials:** MyLab Marketing for *Marketing: An Introduction* by Armstrong and Kotler

**Timeframe:** Spring 2018

**Educator:** JoAnn Atkin, Associate Professor

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

## Setting

- Locale: large, urban, public, four-year research university in southwest Michigan
- Enrollment: more than 23,000 students
- Freshman retention rate: 79%
- Six-year graduation rate: 57%
- Minority students: 22%

## About the Course

JoAnn Atkin has been teaching at Western Michigan University for approximately 15 years. Principles of Marketing is a three-credit, entry-level course enrolling approximately 1,000 students per year. The course is required of business students but is also taken as an elective. Principles of Marketing is an introduction to the role of marketing in the US and global economy, with an emphasis on how organizations create customer value through marketing strategy planning.

## Challenges and Goals

Faced with large lectures and many students not reading the textbook, Atkin was interested in online homework as a way to engage students with the course content. With lecture sections of 250 students, hand grading homework was not really an option, and additionally, objective grading was appealing to her. Furthermore, Atkin surmised that application-oriented assignments requiring students to practice critical thinking skills might also encourage them to read the textbook more. In Fall 2017, Atkin adopted MyLab™ Marketing and added the Mini Simulations to her course, giving her students an opportunity to apply course concepts and develop their decision-making skills.

Conscious of the fact that course materials can be expensive, Atkin gives her students options when purchasing MyLab and the textbook. Generally, students are satisfied when purchasing course materials that have both relevance and impact, a statement supported by the student survey where 89% of respondents agreed that the resources in MyLab made the program a good value for this course.

## Implementation

Students use MyLab for understanding content and homework assignments. Atkin estimates that students spend about 1–2 hours per week on MyLab assignments, more if they use the eText for reading, which many do. On the student survey (60% total response rate), 60% of respondents said they spent 30–89 minutes in MyLab, 27% spent 90–119 minutes in the program, and 7% spent more than 120 minutes using the program. Atkin views the MyLab assignments as formative — an opportunity for students to experiment and learn. They are completed weekly and consist of Dynamic Study Modules (DSM), video questions, and marketing simulations. DSM assignments are due pre-lecture, while video exercises and simulations are due post-lecture.

**Dynamic Study Modules** are questions that continuously assess student performance and activity, using data and analytics to provide personalized feedback in real time, reinforcing concepts that target the student's strengths and weaknesses. DSM are due prior to lecture, and Atkin suggests that each module can be completed in under 30 minutes. On the end-of-semester survey, one student summarized the purpose of this pre-class assignment: *"I really benefited from the DSM assignment, mostly doing it right before class so I could understand what was being discussed in class that day."* Additional student survey results and quotes related to DSM include the following:

- 90% of respondents agreed completing the DSM before class helped better prepare them for lecture/class sessions.
- 95% of respondents agreed that the test-review-retest pattern of the DSM helped them learn and remember chapter content.
- 67% of respondents indicated that the DSM were the single most helpful MyLab exercise for understanding the course concepts.
- *"I liked the way the DSM explained why the wrong answer was wrong and then showed what the correct answer was. Making the questions you get wrong reappear helped in remembering that concept."*
- *"I thought the DSM was a good feature because it helped me cover chapter terms in repetition format which helped me with memory."*

**Mini Simulations** ask students to apply course concepts to realistic business challenges they are likely to experience in their future careers, covering topics like marketing mix, marketing research, creating customer value, and strategic marketing. 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 Atkin's students to build and develop their critical thinking skills. The simulations were the most important motivation for adopting MyLab, as their completion required that her students read the textbook for conceptual understanding first. On the end-of-semester survey, students indicated the following:

- 85% of respondents agreed that the Mini Simulations in MyLab provided a real-world application of the chapter material that allowed them to apply course concepts to realistic business challenges.
- 84% of respondents agreed that the Mini Simulations allowed them to practice business decision-making skills and to understand the impact of the decisions they were making.

Overall, students found the Mini Simulations challenging, yet valuable. Student survey comments include:

- *"I really enjoyed doing these and pretending like I was in a real-world situation. I got to make decisions and learn from the "wrong" decisions that I made for a specific topic."*
- *"The Mini Simulations were sometimes difficult, but I liked how they prepared us for real-world situations."*
- *"I really liked these assignments because they made me want to think through them and do well. More like an effective game than doing an assignment. Definitely a neat structure."*
- *"They were the most difficult but the most effective in my opinion."*

**Video exercises** help students check their understanding of the chapter material and reinforce basic concepts. Each 10-minute video exercise is followed by five multiple-choice questions, providing an opportunity for students to apply what they are reading about to the real world. On the student survey, 83% of students agreed that the video exercises provided a practical application of the chapter material and highlighted important chapter concepts.

Online chapter quizzes, given weekly, are comprised of 15 questions per chapter and students have 15 minutes and one attempt for completion. Out of a total of 16 quizzes, the two lowest scores are dropped before recording the final quiz score in the grade book. Quizzes are intended to be practice for exams.

The midterm is approximately 80 multiple-choice and true-false questions with one short response question, and students have 75 minutes for completion. The final exam is comprised of 100 multiple-choice questions and students have two hours for completion. Questions are application-based, rather than simple recall or recognition items.

Additionally, students create a personal marketing plan intended to support their future job search.

## Assessments

- |       |                             |       |                        |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| • 21% | Online chapter quizzes      | • 10% | Marketing plan         |
| • 21% | Final exam                  | • 10% | In-class assignments   |
| • 16% | MyLab Dynamic Study Modules | • 8%  | MyLab Mini Simulations |
| • 10% | Midterm exam                | • 4%  | MyLab video exercises  |

## Results and Data

Students were placed into two groups based on the average MyLab score of 81%. This score includes DSM, Mini Simulations, and video exercises from MyLab, contributing to 28% of the final course grade. Data show that students scoring above average on MyLab assignments earned significantly higher quiz, exam, and final course scores than students who scored below average (figure 1).

- Average quiz scores were 17 percentage points higher.
- Average exam scores were 6 percentage points higher.
- Average final course scores were 15 percentage points higher.

### Average quiz, exam, and final course scores

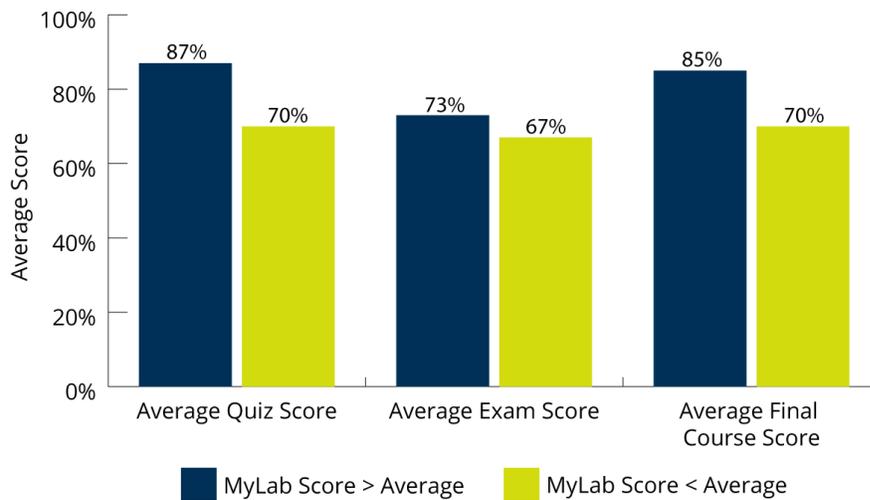


Figure 1. Quiz, Exam, and Final Course Scores based on Average MyLab Score, Spring 2018 (n=248)

Similarly, figure 2 uses the average MyLab score of 81% to examine the distribution of final course letter grades.

- 79% of students scoring above average on MyLab assignments earned an A or B as their final course letter grade, while just 19% of students scoring below average on MyLab assignments earned an A or B.
- 35% of students scoring below average on MyLab assignments earned a D or F as their final course letter grade, while just 2% of students scoring above average on MyLab assignments earned a D, and none of these students failed the course.

### Final course letter grades based on average MyLab score

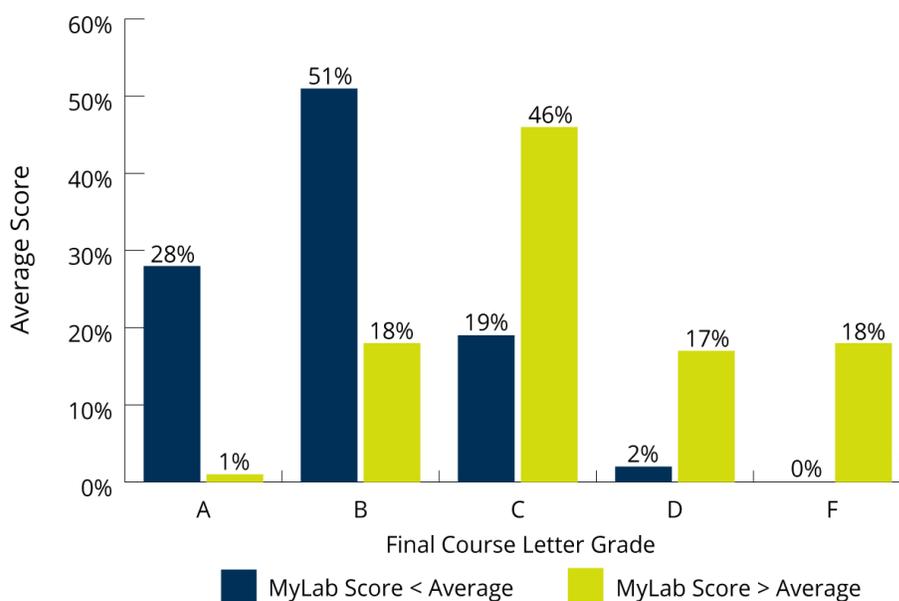


Figure 2. Final Course Letter Grades based on Average MyLab Score, Spring 2018 (n=248)

## The Student Experience

Results from the Spring 2018 end-of-semester survey of Atkin's students indicate that the majority of responding students recognize the value of MyLab Marketing.

- 91% of respondents agreed that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyLab.
- 79% of respondents agreed that MyLab homework assignments positively impacted their exam scores.
- 91% of respondents would recommend MyLab to another student.

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

- *"Going through the vocab prior to the lecture for the chapter helped give me a general idea of the concepts behind the chapter."*
- *"Forced me to look at the material before class and helped work with it interactively more than I would on my own."*
- *"I was able to apply what I learned in the DSM to real-world situations [in the Mini Simulations]."*
- *"It was a beneficial tool when it came to learning because of the repetition. The many different ways the same material was portrayed really helped me to learn differently than I did in class with the PowerPoints."*
- *"The benefits of MyLab were being put in real-life situations and having to make choices on your own."*
- *"MyLab helped me understand the material better and forced me to read the material and get more studying done."*

## Conclusion

Often, large class sizes can create a barrier to meaningful homework and assignment completion. To challenge her students to be responsible for their own learning, Atkin adopted MyLab Marketing so they would read the appropriate chapter content and complete assignments prior to attending lecture, hoping to impact long-term retention. In fact, data suggest that those students successfully completing the MyLab homework earned higher quiz, exam, and final course scores than those who earned lower scores on these formative assignments. Additionally, simulations added a critical thinking component to Atkin's course. Based on survey responses, these assignments were challenging, but helped students develop important decision-making skills.