MyBCommLab with Writing Space

School Name	Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH
Course Name	Business Communication
Course Format	Flipped classroom

Key Results   Students who achieved higher scores on MyBCommLab homework assignments also earned higher final course grades. In addition, Writing Space's automatic grading saved the instructor time and provided students with consistent, objective evaluations of their written work.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Business Communication, Shwom and Snyder

Challenges

Bowling Green State University is located in northwest Ohio, and serves approximately 20,000 students a year. Business Communication, offered by the school's College of Business Administration, is a three-credit course taken by nearly 350 students a semester, primarily Business and Sports Management majors. Students learn to effectively communicate through written documents, such as reports and memos, and oral presentations for small groups and individuals.

Ruth White, instructor, decided to redesign her course in a flipped classroom model whereby students read, do activities, and take quizzes on basic course content *before* coming to class, and class time is spent on realistic applications and group activities. White had used Pearson's MyMarketingLab in a previous course and was eager to bring similar tools and content assets to her Business Communications course. She also sought a way to make grading less subjective and less time consuming. Writing Space, a feature included in MyBCommLab, offered a solution in its objective and unbiased automatic essay grading—students receive fair grades and specific, immediate feedback on their writing.

Implementation

More than two-thirds of the assessment points for this course (63 percent: 926 out of 1376 total) come from MyBCommLab assignments: homework that includes chapter Pre- and Post-Tests, timed Chapter Objective-based exams, and Writing Space assignments. Prior to attending class, students read the assigned chapter, complete a Pre-Test to identify topics they may not completely understand, remediate on those topics

using the textbook and MyBCommLab study aids, and then take a Post-Test. The class meets either twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday) or three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). The first session is spent reviewing content—students arrive prepared with specific questions, and White adapts her lectures to expand on areas of interest and topics that the Post-Tests indicate are problem areas. The second and/or third sessions are devoted to lively discussions and real-life applications, including breakout sessions, group work, and oral presentations.

The Writing Space assignments are a critical component for success in this course—they are the students' bridge between concept mastery and critical thinking. Writing Space enables students to craft well-reasoned and logical documents informed by concepts they have learned from the text and the in-class activities.It includes customized rubrics that objectively and consistently grade essays and generate immediate, personalized feedback to help students focus their thoughts and sharpen their writing.

Assessments

446 Points	MyBCommLab chapter pre- and post-tests
300 Points	MyBCommLab Writing Space assignments (3)
180 Points	MyBCommLab chapter exams (12)
135 Points	Attendance and participation
100 Points	Final business strategy memo report
65 Points	Oral presentation
50 Points	Movie assignments
50 Points	Resume project
50 Points	Business strategy memo report

Total: 1376 points

*The Writing Space assignments are a critical component for success in this course—
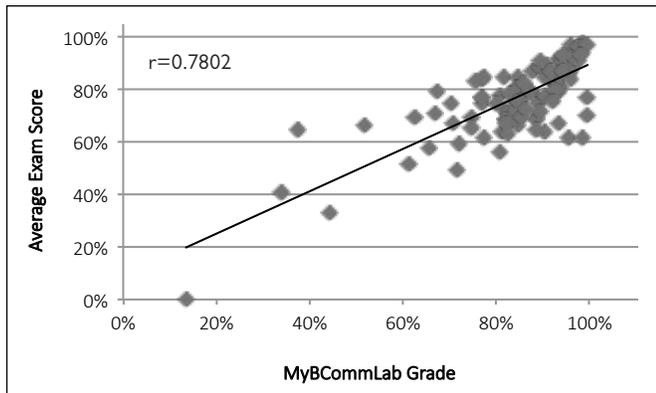they are the students' bridge between concept mastery and critical thinking.*

Figure 1. Correlation of Average Exam Score and MyBCommLab Grades, Fall 2013 (*n*=116)

Final Course Grade	Average MyBCommLab Homework Score
A	96%
B	88%
C	78%
D	57%
F	28%

Figure 2. Comparison of Final Course Grades and MyBCommLab Homework Scores, Fall 2013 (*n*=116)

Results and Data

Data indicate a strong, positive correlation between MyBCommLab Pre- and Post-Test scores and chapter exam scores, where r=.7802 (figure 1). The pattern of required Pre-Test/remediation/Post-Test appears to effectively prepare students for their exams.

A comparison of final course grades and average MyBCommLab homework scores shows that students who earned higher MyBCommLab homework scores acheived higher final course grades (figure 2).

The Student Experience

Students believe the Pre-Test/Post-Test sequence helps prepare them for both exams and the first weekly class meetings. Because they have put effort into MyBCommLab materials before coming to class, they arrive ready to ask targeted questions about challenging topics and to participate fully in group work and application activities. Although initially nervous about having their written assignments digitally graded, students quickly realized that Writing Space grades are accurate for both format and content.

Conclusion

Now that students are doing so much preparatory work in MyBCommLab before class, White can adapt her teaching to focus on topics of particular importance and explore students' questions about concepts they don't fully understand. She also has the time to research new and more interesting activities that offer her students opportunities to apply what they learn on their own time. Further, MyBCommLab's Writing Space feature enables White to require more writing in her course, thereby helping students improve their critical thinking skills without having to worry about subjective or inconsistent grading.

As a result of her students' increased success after completion of MyBCommLab assignments, White will delve even more deeply into the program in fall 2014. Plans include decreasing lecture time to include more small group work, creative activities, and oral presentations. Finally, she anticipates that MyBCommLab's forthcoming Knewton Adaptive Learning feature will provide students with even more focused and personalized instruction, freeing her to meet more often with students and coordinate their group work outside of class.