

MyEconLab

School Name Georgia Regents University, Augusta, GA

Course Name Microeconomics, Macroeconomics

Course Format Lecture and online

Key Results Data indicates a statistically significant correlation between MyEconLab homework scores and quiz/exam scores. In addition, students who earn higher scores in MyEconLab's Study Plan perform better on assessments and earn higher final course grades.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Foundations of Economics, Bade and Parkin

Challenges

Georgia Regents University is one of four comprehensive research institutions in the state of Georgia, and serves approximately 10,000 students. Macroeconomics and Microeconomics are offered through the university's Hull College of Business for three-credits each. Combined, these courses explain the various economic problems a society faces and how a mixed economy solves these problems, while focusing on individual economic units: consumers, firms, and industry.

In 2008, Buffie Schmidt, lecturer, started teaching these courses to approximately 250 students each semester. While looking for a software program that would allow her online students a forum to experience community and classroom discussions, she found MyEconLab. The program's interactive and immediate feedback solved the challenges she faced in her online courses, and was also beneficial for her face-to-face classes.

Implementation

Schmidt adopted MyEconLab in 2008 as she redesigned both her lecture and online courses. She has used MyEconLab every semester since, making additional adjustments to both courses as she learns to manage the course to its fullest potential.

In her lecture sections, Schmidt assigns MyEconLab homework for each chapter. Students are limited to three attempts on each assignment to dissuade students from guessing in place of studying. The assignments are due the morning of the class meeting. The curriculum also includes presentations and a professional debate in order to engage students in real-life applications of economics and help prepare them for their careers.

In her online course, students are allowed unlimited attempts on MyEconLab homework, a reflection of Schmidt's view of homework as a primary teaching tool. She allows two attempts at each MyEconLab quiz, and offers step-by-step guides to studying to help students improve their grades on the second attempts (the recorded grade is the average of the two attempts). Students are allowed one attempt on MyEconLab exams, and they are required to use Pearson's adaptive Study Plan for at least ten hours during the semester.

Because MyEconLab automatically grades the assignments, Schmidt can assign more problems and more-complex problems than ever before. The additional work enables students to practice the concepts more fully.

Assessments

Lecture

45 percent	Exams (3)
25 percent	In-class debate
20 percent	MyEconLab homework
10 percent	Graph presentation

Online

20 percent	MyEconLab homework
20 percent	MyEconLab quizzes
20 percent	MyEconLab Discussion Board participation
15 percent	MyEconLab exams (3)
15 percent	MyEconLab final exam
10 percent	MyEconLab Study Plan

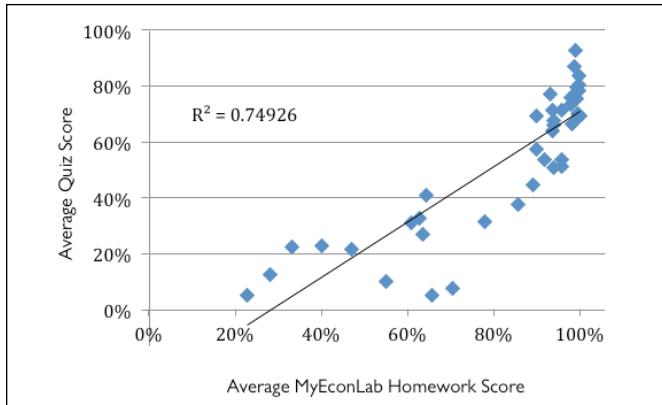


Figure 1. Correlation between Average MyEconLab Homework Scores and Average MyEconLab Quiz Scores, Macroeconomics, Spring 2013 (n=46)

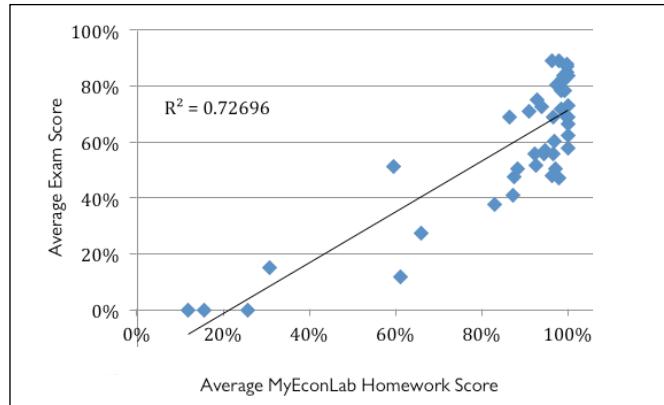


Figure 2. Correlation between Average MyEconLab Homework Scores and Average MyEconLab Exam Scores, Microeconomics, Spring 2013 (n=41)

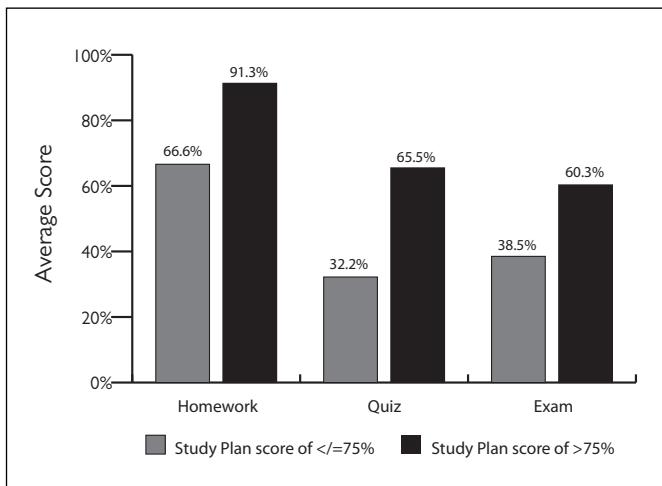


Figure 3. Average Homework, Quiz, and Exam Scores by Study Plan Score of More or Less Than 75 Percent, Microeconomics, Spring 2013 (n=41)

Results and Data

The data presented is based on the online sections, but the results were similar for both teaching formats (online and lecture) and for both courses, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. The correlations showed that students' MyEconLab homework scores are a significant indicator of their scores on quizzes and exams (figures 1 and 2). A strong positive correlation was also identified between MyEconLab quiz scores and exam scores ($r^2 = .7119$). All metrics were overwhelmingly positive, indicating a strong relationship between students' success with MyEconLab and their assessments and overall course grades.

Schmidt also looked at Study Plan usage. She discovered that students who scored at least 75 percent on their Study Plans scored significantly higher on all graded assessments than did

students who scored less than 75 percent (figure 3). Students with higher Study Plan scores also received higher final course grades than those who scored less than 75 percent.

The Student Experience

Students appreciate MyEconLab's hints and the immediate access to its helpful resources. The ability to receive help outside office hours is especially helpful for Schmidt's online students, who frequently have less flexible schedules; but is also a benefit for students overall, who gain from assistance at the moment that they are struggling. When students receive a MyEconLab hint about why their answer is wrong, they can immediately process it, thereby enhancing knowledge integration. Students particularly like MyEconLab's Ask My Instructor button, which enables Schmidt to assist students online and stay connected to them throughout the learning process. Finally, students report that they appreciate being able to see their grades right away.

Conclusion

By redesigning her courses with MyEconLab, Schmidt addressed the community/discussion needs of her online students. A second, major benefit of the redesign is the increased amount of problem solving her students do that leads to higher assessment scores. Thanks to MyEconLab's automated grading, students are immediately aware of their mistakes and remediated via hints and solving strategies. Schmidt spends the time saved by not grading homework communicating with students and developing ways to encourage deeper student engagement.

Future plans include changing both the Discussion Board and Study Plan participation values to 15 percent. The Study Plan is a strong indicator of performance and at 10 percent many students overlook it until the end of the course.