Product Name   MyITLab

Course Name   Business Problem Solving with Information Technology

Credit Hours   Three

Key Results   Students who took advantage of practice exam opportunities performed better on course exams. Student survey data indicated that MyITLab helped students understand course content.

Text

Exploring Office 2010 Plus, 1e, Robert Grauer, Mary Anne Poatsy, Michelle Hulett, Cynthia Krebs, Keith Mast, Keith Mulbery, Lynn Hogan; *Visualizing Technology Complete*, 2e, Debra Geoghan

Implementation

Business Problem Solving with Information Technology is a required course for all business majors; about 900 students a year take it. The course exposes students to the basic concepts and terminologies of computing and information systems. Students gain experience using Microsoft Office applications to facilitate communication, decision support, and process support in typical business settings.

I adopted MyITLab because of the unique way it teaches and assesses students: by physically utilizing the actual applications. MyITLab is the cornerstone of our course, including course management. With each reading assignment, we require students to complete hands-on exercises that apply the concepts. These are graded for completion only. I also use MyITLab for in-class activities (students earn credit for completion), and I assign Grader assignments as homework. Students are allowed two attempts at homework assignments so that they have an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and maximize their score. Lecture demonstration documents are posted in MyITLab for reference. In fall 2012, I began offering an optional practice exam prior to each exam.

Assessments

50 percent   MyITLab exams and quizzes

42 percent   MyITLab homework activities and trainings

8 percent   Project and presentation

Results and Data

After implementing the optional practice exams in fall 2012, I considered their impact on the exam scores. On exam 1, students who attempted the practice exam scored higher than those who did not. Interestingly, for the second exam, 101 students took advantage of the practice exam opportunity—a 90 percent increase over the number of students who had taken the first practice exam; and students who took the practice exam again outperformed those who did not (figures 1 and 2).

"Thanks to MyITLab, my students are better prepared for class and are more confident in their abilities."

MyITLab enables me to create a baseline for my students, which makes my job easier because some students enter the course with a background in Microsoft applications and others do not. The Grader is a benefit, too, because I am able to grade each assignment at a more detailed level. In addition, MyITLab's grading capabilities save me a great deal of time. I now use that time to prepare for class, and I no longer need to hire help to grade assignments.
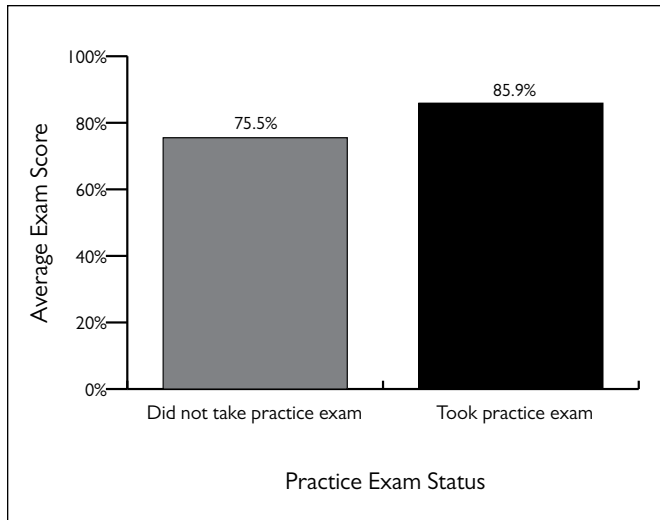

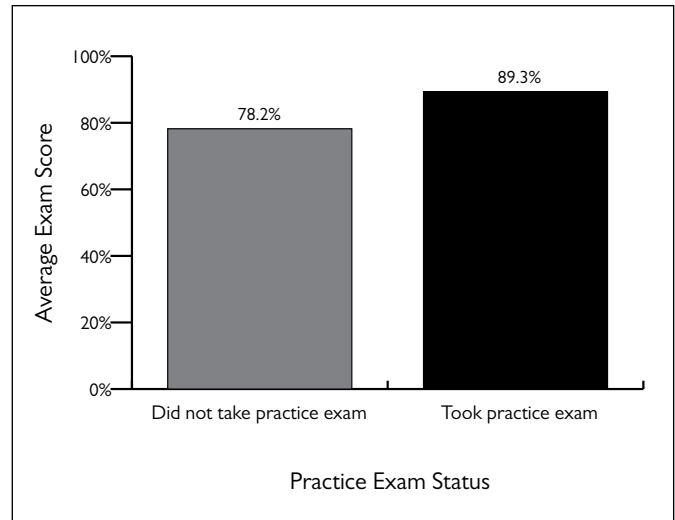Figure 1. Relationship between Exam 1 Scores and Use of the Practice Exam, Fall 2012

Figure 2. Relationship between Exam 2 Scores and Use of the Practice Exam, Fall 2012

The Student Experience

MyITLab also benefits my students. Its simulations provide each student with a customized experience: students spend their time focusing on the specific concepts they need to learn. Although most students are resistant to reading, MyITLab helps them overcome that roadblock by engaging them in the material, identifying any gaps in their knowledge, and guiding them to pages they need to read. The Grader helps them become better students because they receive immediate feedback on what they did right and what they did wrong.

At the end of fall 2012, I surveyed students about their MyITLab experience. More than 94 percent of students surveyed indicated that MyITLab had improved their understanding of course content. Nearly 90 percent said that they would recommend MyITLab to future students (figure 3).

Open survey comments reflect that students recognize the value of MyITLab:

• "The greatest benefit of MyITLab is the simulations. They show me step by step how to figure out the problems I don't understand. They're very helpful."

• "The activities are helpful and easy to understand and perform. The repetition made learning the material easy."
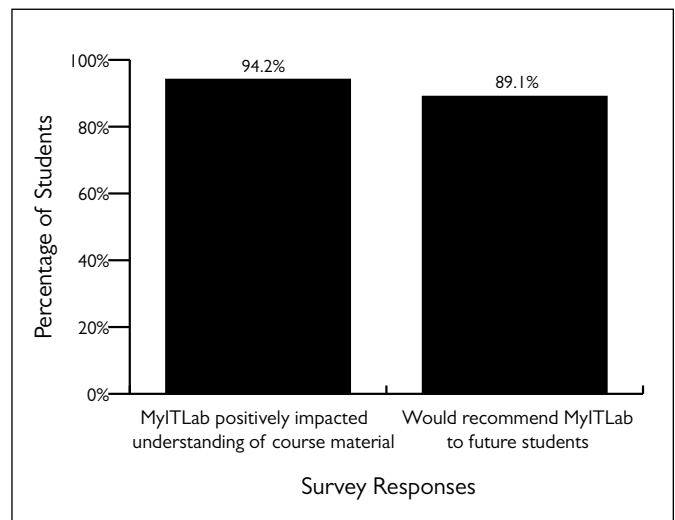

Figure 3. Student Survey Responses, Fall 2012

Conclusion

Thanks to MyITLab, my students are better prepared for class and are more confident in their abilities. Also, MyITLab enables me to spend less time grading and more time preparing for class.

Submitted by Amy Rutledge
Oakland University