

MyEconLab

School Name [Marshall University, Huntington, WV](#)
Course Name [Principles of Microeconomics](#)
Course Format [Lecture](#)

Key Results Required MyEconLab homework assignments + optional Study Plan problems provide students with the hands-on practice they need to master course material. Data indicates a positive correlation between MyEconLab homework scores and both exam scores and final course grades.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Microeconomics, Hubbard and O'Brien

Challenges

Marshall University is a public university serving approximately 13,000 students from four campuses. The three-credit Principles of Microeconomic course is primarily taken by business majors, and covers basic economic analysis, analytical and critical thinking, and problem-solving techniques related to supply/demand, opportunity cost, and price/wage determination.

Like many universities, Marshall University is being challenged to do more with less—state and local support is shrinking and the university must find creative ways to leverage its budget. To that end, Robin McCutcheon, assistant professor, sought to increase the number of students-per-section in her Principles of Economics course, while not overwhelming herself with grading tasks. She explored MyEconLab as a way to support her lecture-format classes, and was convinced to implement the program for (1) its capacity to ensure consistency across sections, (2) its automatic grading feature, and (3) its immediate feedback feature.

Implementation

MyEconLab is a required component of the course, and serves as the course portal for all homework assignments and exams. Each week, McCutcheon assigns up to two chapters from the text and a 30-problem MyEconLab homework assignment. Because each course concept builds upon another, homework assignments may include material from previous chapters. Students have unlimited attempts to complete homework assignments, which are due by Friday at 5pm in order to receive full credit. Late homework assignments may be submitted through the final day of the semester with a 20 percent penalty.

McCutcheon offers students extra credit for completing MyEconLab Study Plans. She designed a Study Plan to cover each of the nine core chapters covered in the course. Study Plans contain 40 problems and are open until the last day of the semester.

Both the midterm exams and the final exam are cumulative and cover 4–5 chapters. Students are allowed unlimited attempts to complete exams within a three-hour period—only the highest score earned is recorded. Exams are opened at midnight on Sundays, and are due Fridays at 5pm. To prevent cheating, pooling is used to deliver multiple versions of the exams.

After each assessment, McCutcheon uses the gradebook to identify common misconceptions and adjust lectures accordingly. Lecture time is spent applying the concepts learned to the students' lives, when applicable.

Assessments

40 percent	MyEconLab homework (10)
30 percent	MyEconLab midterm exams (3)
30 percent	MyEconLab final exam

Results and Data

Data indicate a positive, significant correlation between average MyEconLab homework scores and both average exam scores (figure 1), and final course grades (figure 2). Figure 3 shows the average exam grade distribution per average MyEconLab homework score. All three figures show that MyEconLab homework scores are an early indicator of both student success and the need for early intervention.

- Students earning As and Bs on midterm exams averaged 98 percent on MyEconLab homework assignments.
- Students earning Ds and Fs on midterm exams averaged only 65 percent on MyEconLab homework assignments.

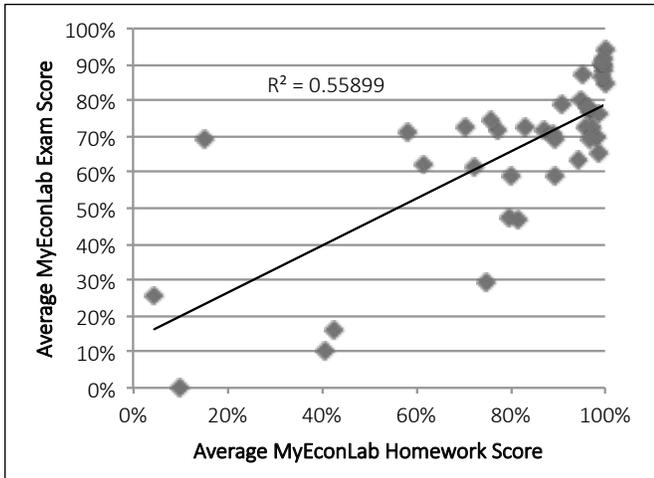


Figure 1. Correlation between Average MyEconLab Exam Scores and Average MyEconLab Homework Scores, Fall 2013 ($n=39$)

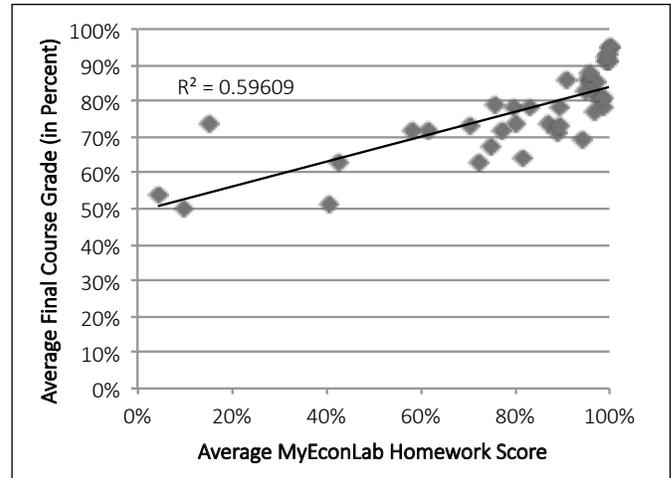


Figure 2. Correlation between Average Final Course Grade and Average MyEconLab Homework Score, Fall 2013 ($n=39$)

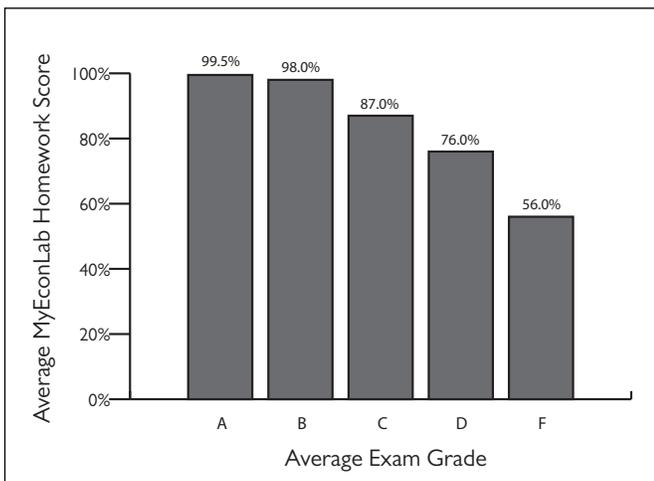


Figure 3. Comparison of Average MyEconLab Homework Grades and Average Exam Grades, Fall 2013 ($n=39$)

- Students earning As and Bs for the course averaged 97 percent on MyEconLab homework assignments.
- Students earning Ds and Fs for the course averaged only 53 percent on MyEconLab homework assignments.

The Student Experience

Results from a fall 2013 survey indicate that students value MyEconLab and believe it positively impacts their performance.

91% Strongly agree/agree that their understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyEconLab.

91% Strongly agree/agree that use of MyEconLab positively impacted their exam scores.

Student comments on the fall 2013 survey include the following:

- “[MyEconLab] kept me on task as to due dates.”
- “The feedback after each question helped me understand *why* the correct answer was correct.”
- “I enjoyed practicing at my own pace, the multimedia features, and the material relative to current events.”
- “I liked that if I got a problem wrong [MyEconLab] gave me hints to point me in the right direction.”
- “The questions allowed for many tries, and the examples and help were useful.”

Conclusion

McCutcheon cites step-by-step problem solving, immediate feedback, and automatic grading among MyEconLab’s most powerful and valuable features. Because repeated practice is the key to course success, she assigns more than 30 required MyEconLab problems per week, plus an additional 40 optional ones. Student outcomes indicate that this heavy emphasis on problem solving works—students who complete these MyEconLab assignments earn higher exam scores and experience greater overall course success.

The automatic grading feature saves McCutcheon a tremendous amount of time. “I now have more time to develop lessons that apply economics to real life,” she says. “It makes my lectures more relevant to students, and that makes lectures more fun.”