

MyEconLab

School Name Northern Virginia Community College—Loudoun Campus, Springfield, VA

Course Name Principles of Macroeconomics

Course Format Lecture

Key Results As students gain mastery of the material through multiple attempts at assigned and required MyEconLab homework, average quiz, test and final course grades increased significantly as compared to students who only attempted their assignment once.

Submitted by

Edward Creppy, PhD, Associate Professor

Course materials

Foundations of Macroeconomics, Bade and Parkin

Challenges

Northern Virginia Community College, which serves more than 75,000 students, is the largest educational institution in Virginia and the second-largest community college in the United States. Principles of Macroeconomics primarily is offered to business majors, but may be offered as an elective to select nonbusiness students. The course covers a body of economic knowledge designed to help students understand the operation of the U.S. economy and the current economic issues and problems that affect our day-to-day lives.

With the goal of increasing student mastery of course content and thereby increasing the course pass rate, Edward Creppy, associate professor, sought an online component to introduce course material to students *before* lecture. “I wanted students to be able to practice and perfect their understanding of the material on their own time,” says Creppy, “so I could spend class time interacting with the students and focusing on the material’s real-life applications.”

Implementation

Most of the course assessments are delivered via MyEconLab. Creppy creates a homework assignment for each chapter and encourages students to work the problems while referencing their textbooks. To further enhance the skill-building potential of MyEconLab homework, he offers students up to four attempts on each assignment.

Each MyEconLab quiz is timed and covers three chapters. He allows multiple attempts on the quizzes to offer students additional opportunities to learn the material before the midterm and final exams. He also gives in-class pop quizzes as needed to reinforce the importance of attending lecture and participating in class.

For both homework and quiz scores, all attempts are averaged for a final grade. The midterm and final exams are both comprehensive and timed.

Assessments

31.2 percent MyEconLab homework

20.0 percent MyEconLab quizzes

16.7 percent MyEconLab final exam

13.4 percent In-class quizzes

13.4 percent MyEconLab midterm exam

5.3 percent Attendance

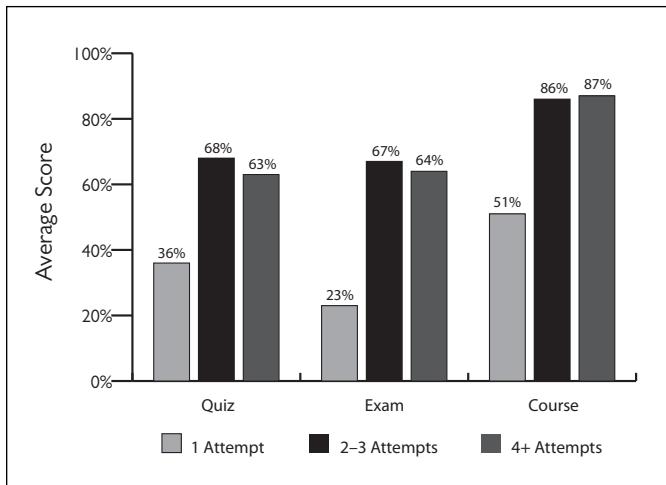


Figure 1. Average Quiz, Exam, and Course Grades by Number of MyEconLab Homework Attempts, Spring 2013 ($n=82$)

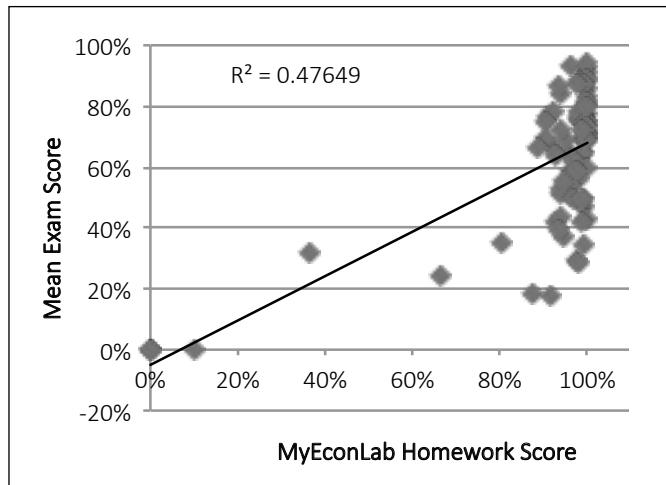


Figure 2. Correlation between MyEconLab Homework Scores and Average Exam Scores, Spring 2013 ($n=82$)

Results and Data

By cross-referencing average quiz, exam, and final course grades with the average number of attempts on homework assessments, Creppy concluded that students who reworked incorrect homework problems gained greater mastery of the course material. Specifically, he found that students who attempted problems two to three times saw significant increases across all assessment scores (figure 1).

In addition, Creppy observed a positive correlation between mean MyEconLab homework scores and average exam scores (figure 2). “I believe that required homework plus the ability to repeat homework problems as desired helps students prepare for their midterm and final exams,” he says.

The Student Experience

End-of-semester student survey results indicate that the majority of Creppy’s students view MyEconLab as an invaluable contributor to their success in the course.

- 85%** Strongly agree or agree with the statement:
Use of MyEconLab positively impacted my exam scores.
- 84%** Strongly agree or agree with the statement:
My understanding of the course material increased as a result of using MyEconLab.
- 81%** Strongly agree or agree with the statement:
I would recommend MyEconLab in courses for which it is available.

Conclusion

Students who are allowed to rework required MyEconLab homework assignments are more likely to continue learning, reinforce correct concepts, master the content, achieve higher scores on assessments, and do better in the course. Beyond outcomes, administering assessments via MyEconLab saves valuable class time that can be spent answering questions, working problems, reviewing concepts, and working one-on-one with students unable to get to office hours due to work or home schedules.