

MyEconLab

School Name University of Hawaii at Manoa, Manoa, HI
Course Name Principles of Microeconomics
Course Format Lecture

Key Results Students who worked additional practice problems in MyEconLab earned higher homework, quiz, and exam scores than students who attempted only required problems.

Submitted by

Jackie Lindo, PhD, Lecturer

Course materials

Economics Today, Miller

Challenges

The University of Hawaii system has 10 campuses and serves more than 55,000 students; Manoa is the oldest and largest campus, with approximately 19,000 students. Principles of Microeconomics is required by several majors, including Business, Engineering, and some of the Social Sciences.

This introductory economics course examines the mechanisms by which the market allocates scarce resources. Students learn to apply various economic models to analyze markets, evaluate public policy, and examine other related phenomenon. The course focuses on individual household and firm behavior, as well as their collective market interactions.

Jackie Lindo, economics lecturer, sought a way to (1) keep large sections of 125–175 students each on track, and (2) evaluate and grade homework without the additional time necessitated by hand grading. Although the course has teaching assistants (TAs), she sought the consistency of online grading and the automated assessment of student progression.

Implementation

Students attend two 50-minute lectures each week, plus a discussion section led by a TA. Discussion sections may include group work assignments, student-led presentations, oral Q&A, games, practice exercises, extensions of lectures, or lecture reviews. They are an opportunity for students to actively absorb course material, engage with peers, and receive individualized attention. Each week, students complete required MyEconLab homework assignments. Assignments are by chapter, and are available immediately after the lecture in which that chapter is covered. Students have one week to submit their assignments, which are due by 8am on the date due. Lindo also offers her students optional, no-credit MyEconLab practice assignments for each chapter.

“The goal of our course design,” says Lindo, “is to ensure access to instructional staff, personalized assistance, and a small group environment to enhance the learning process.”

Assessments

30 percent	Final exam
20 percent	Midterm exam 1
20 percent	Midterm exam 2
10 percent	MyEconLab homework
10 percent	Unannounced quizzes
10 percent	Discussion participation

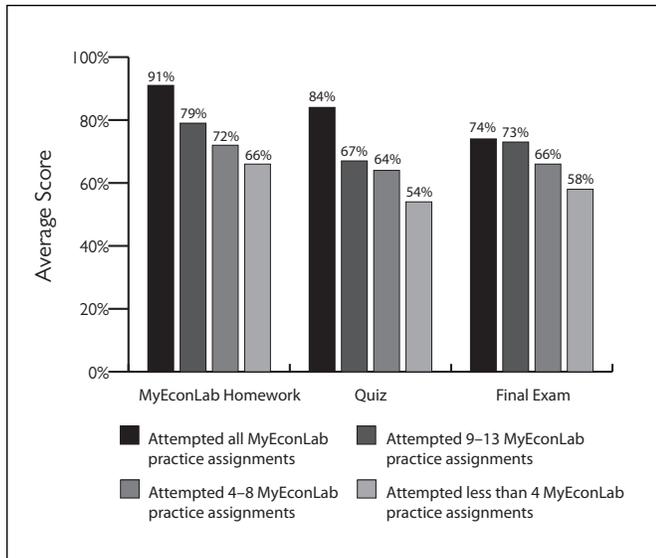


Figure 1. Average MyEconLab Homework, Quiz, and Final Exam Scores by Number of MyEconLab Practice Assignments Attempted, Spring 2013 (n = 115)

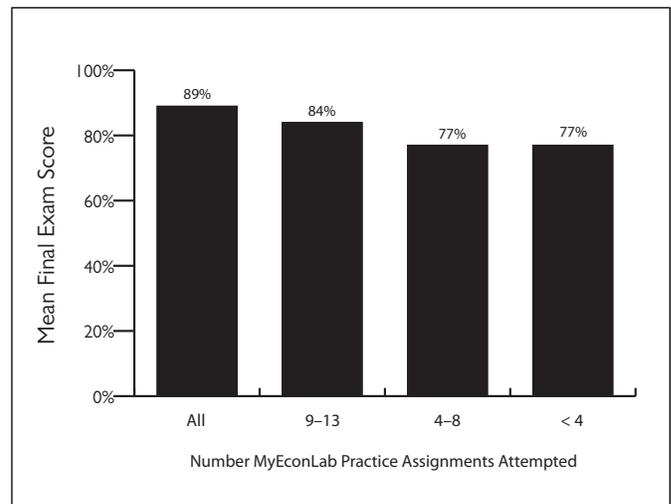


Figure 2. Average Final Exam Scores by Number of MyEconLab Practice Assignments Attempted, Fall 2013 (n = 129)

Results and Data

After reviewing student use of the optional practice assignments in both spring 2013 and fall 2013, students were categorized into four groups based on how many of the 14 practice assignments were attempted: all, 9–13, 4–8, and fewer than 4. Results were then cross-referenced with the average of their MyEconLab homework, quiz, and final exam scores.

Figure 1 shows that students who attempted all of the optional practice assignments scored consistently better on their assessments than those students who did not attempt all of the optional assignments. In fact, the grade distribution shows a distinctly higher score as more practice assignments were worked.

The data was replicated in fall 2013 with a focus on just the final exam—and all analyses held true (figure 2). The increase in final exam scores was significant as students attempted more practice assignments.

The Student Experience

Lindo reports that using MyEconLab helped keep students on pace throughout the course, and promoted greater student accountability. Most important, students indicated that they liked having the homework and additional practice problems to keep on task.

In addition, because MyEconLab enabled students to practice problem solving until they mastered the material, students were more prepared for the type of assessments they saw on quizzes and exams.

In an end-of-semester survey, students strongly agreed or agreed with the following statements:

- 84%** My understanding of the course material increased as a result of using the MyLab.
- 84%** I would recommend the MyLab program in courses for which it is available.
- 72%** Use of the MyLab positively impacted my exam scores.

Conclusion

The additional practice in MyEconLab enabled students to master the material more completely, as indicated by their assessment scores and overall course grades. Students who attempted more of the additional practice homework problems per assignment performed better on all course assessments. Similarly, students who did not attempt the extra assignments performed more poorly. As a result, those students who attempted more of the additional practice problems also achieved higher letter grades for the course.