

MyFoundationsLab®

CASE STUDY

North Dakota Center for Distance Education Fargo, North Dakota

INSTRUCTOR Tammy Fitting

COURSE NAME College Readiness

COURSE FORMAT Online

PROGRAM MATERIALS MyFoundationsLab

CONTRIBUTION OF MYFOUNDATIONS LAB TO FINAL GRADE 100%

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Improved scores on the ACT College Entrance Exam

WITH A MISSION to “ensure that all North Dakota middle and high school students regardless of location have access to educational opportunities that meet or exceed expectations,” the North Dakota Center for Distance Education seeks to bolster student learning outcomes. The NDCDE is one of many academic partners who advised Pearson during development of the new MyFoundationsLab. Upon the launch of MyFoundationsLab, the NDCDE identified a student population and conducted a pilot to assess the efficacy of MyFoundationsLab to improve actual student learning outcomes. This case study describes the 2011 pilot and analyzes student performance results.

PURPOSE OF THE PILOT

For its MyFoundationsLab pilot, the NDCDE identified 12th grade students who had taken the ACT College Entrance Exam as high school juniors. The NDCDE sought to determine “the extent to which an online course originally intended to remediate college freshmen in content areas that paralleled the ACT test sections and subsections could be used to assist students to prepare for and improve their performance (as determined by test scores) relative to an ACT test retake.”

In its letter to prospective participants (high schools and students), the NDCDE said, “Unlike most test prep programs, this program is much more than a few practice tests

“The results of the pilot indicate to NDCDE that the MyFoundationsLab course should be offered to all students who are seeking to increase their performance on the ACT exam.”

—North Dakota Center for Distance Education

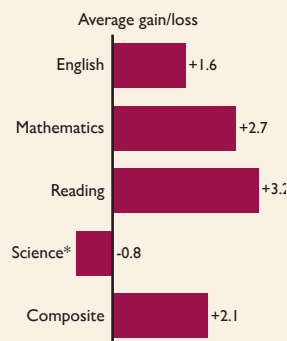
and a testing acclimation tool. MyFoundationsLab is a program that makes use of the latest in online technology, including front end diagnostic testing, multiple types of formative testing, several types of interactivity, help with pacing, ACT practice tests, and access to and guidance provided by a NDCDE teacher.”

Students were motivated to improve their individual ACT scores but may not have been aware of further implications of improved test scores, i.e. admission to certain universities, access to scholarships, placement out of remedial courses and directly into credit sequences, etc.

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December 2011 ACT Exam Retake Results After MyFoundationsLab Pilot



* Note: The ACT exam assesses students in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. MyFoundationsLab does not contain a section on Science. Students were given access to ACT practice tests; the ACT practice tests included the Science section.

ANALYSIS

Students who completed the MyFoundationsLab pilot course achieved across-the-board gains in the ACT exam. The average gain for ACT exam sections and subsections preceded by a student-completed MyFoundationsLab set of modules was four points. The only area where students did not improve was Science—the one subject area not covered in MyFoundationsLab.

Features of the ACT Exam Preparation pilot course based on MyFoundationsLab:

- Fully online
- Self-paced, with tutoring support from NDCDE teachers
- 10 weeks in duration
- Conducted prior to the December 2011 ACT retake exam

IMPLEMENTING MYFOUNDATIONSLAB

Students begin working in MyFoundationsLab by completing the Path Builder diagnostic Pre-Test for each section: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Based on the results of the assessment, MyFoundationsLab provides a personalized Learning Path for each student. Students then work independently in MyFoundationsLab, pursuing their personalized Learning Path with highly interactive learning activities designed to build mastery of the required skills. When ready, students can attempt the Post-Test for each section, achieving mastery by scoring 70% or higher.

RESULTS

Students who completed the MyFoundationsLab pilot and retook the ACT exam achieved consistent gains in three of four sections of the ACT exam: English, Mathematics, and Reading. The fourth section of the ACT exam, Science, is not covered in MyFoundationsLab. Students were given access to ACT practice tests to prepare for the Science section.

CONCLUSION

The NDCDE concluded that “MyFoundationsLab has a positive impact on the performance of a student retaking the ACT exam. That conclusion is derived from the overall gains attained by the students in the pilot and is confirmed by their performance in the one test section, Science, not specifically addressed in the MyFoundationsLab course.”

Deploying MyFoundationsLab to help 12th grade students become more college-ready is an innovation based on the NDCDE’s understanding that raising students’ ACT scores can increase students’ options for admission to certain universities, improve students’ chances to win scholarships, and propel students directly into credit-bearing course sequences, bypassing remedial studies. MyFoundationsLab is a modest intervention with potentially enormous benefits for students.

Based on these positive results, the NDCDE summed up, “The results of the pilot indicate to NDCDE that the MyFoundationsLab course should be offered to all students who are seeking to increase their performance on the ACT exam. It can be marketed in particular to those students who wish to qualify for the ND scholarship which has as one of its requirements a 24 composite on the ACT exam and/or to those students who have not achieved a college admission score of 22. The pilot indicates that those two motivating factors appear to produce the highest gains.”

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For a product tour or to find out more, please visit www.myfoundationslab.com