Text

*Exploring Microsoft Office*, 2e, Robert Grauer, Mary Anne Poatsy, Michelle Hulett, Cynthia Krebs, Keith Mast, Keith Mulbery, Lynn Hogan

Implementation

Each year, more than 1,200 students take Introduction to Business Computing. Because MyITLab reduces the amount of instructor-graded homework, two colleagues can serve every one of those students without diminishing academic rigor, student service, or student success.

For each chapter, we assign PowerPoint presentations, videos, and the ebook so that students can learn the course material in the most impactful manner. Students then take a skill-based quiz of which they are allowed three attempts, and we record the highest score. To promote greater understanding and better performance, after their first attempt we encourage students to redo the trainings and focus on the questions they missed. To test students’ understanding of theory, we assign one conceptual, multiple-choice quiz and at least one Grader project for each chapter. We do not limit the number of attempts in Grader, because we find that repetition is key to learning. Finally, students take a higher-stakes, skill-based exam for each application.

Assessments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 percent</td>
<td>Skill-based, MyITLab quizzes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 percent</td>
<td>MyITLab exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 percent</td>
<td>MyITLab Grader projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 percent</td>
<td>Multiple-choice, MyITLab quizzes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and Data

Students who used MyITLab developed stronger foundational skills, which led to improved performance. The retention rate in this course increased from 70 percent to 81 percent (figure 1) and increased in the subsequent course from 50 percent to 80 percent (figure 2).

In addition, since the adoption of MyITLab, we’ve become able to we’re able to cover more academic ground each semester. Students master more skills faster than ever before.

—I am extremely confident about the reliability of MyITLab. I know that when students call me with problems, the problems are not with the program. This product works.”

—Maurie Lockley
The Student Experience

Students come to UNCG from around the world; at least 15 percent of each of our classes consists of nonnative speakers of English. The multimedia assets in MyITLab are very helpful to those international students, who frequently bring headphones to class to use MyITLab’s audio capabilities. When we examine the usage logs, we see that they also use the audio-narrated PowerPoint demonstrations. It takes us only 30 seconds to make those narrated PowerPoint demonstrations available—but those are 30 seconds that can tremendously—and positively—impact a student’s life and increase that student’s chances of landing a job.

MyITLab helps us stay connected to our students. Identify Inactive Students is a favorite feature; with just a click, we can see what’s happening with the entire class. Sometimes we reach out to inactive students, and they respond with, “It’s OK. I worked ahead and finished it all.” Other times, they really are in trouble and we’re able to let them know we care and can get them back on track before they fall too far behind.

Students like using MyITLab. For nontraditional students—those returning to school, already working, or otherwise balancing schoolwork and personal obligations—MyITLab offers the means to study whenever and wherever they want. Their favorite feature is probably Save for Later because it enables them to work on assignments around their own schedule—a particularly helpful feature for distance and adult learners.

In addition, since using MyITLab, we’ve noticed that students read and use their books more than before. For the first time in our careers as instructors, we’re seeing books with notes written in the margins.

Conclusion

MyITLab has enabled us to improve student success while also using fewer resources. Beginning in fall 2014, we plan to move this course to an emporium model, which will free up additional instructor prep and enable us to offer more sections of the advanced course in order to meet higher student demand. We’re confident that with MyITLab, we can make this happen and sustain our level of student success.

Submitted by Maurie Lockley and Janice Knapp
University of North Carolina at Greensboro