

Product Name MyMathLab

Course Name College Algebra

Course Format Fully online

Key Results Students in a fully online college algebra course who take advantage of an option to retest experience an average test score improvement of 11.56 points.

Materials in Use

College Algebra, Lial

Implementation

At St. Philip's College, part of the Alamo College district, Professor Tony Bower teaches several college algebra sections in a fully online environment. His online students typically are not STEM majors, some are attempting the course for the second time, and many are nontraditional students. Students are required to come to campus only to take the proctored final. Those living outside of the county may, with Bower's permission, take the final in a confirmed-secure, off-campus, proctored location.

Bower requires that all students register in MyMathLab by the end of the first week of class. Students who do not are dropped from the class. MyMathLab's 14-day trial period option helps alleviate any issues students may have getting registered due to financial aid issues, so most students are able to comply with this policy. To further help students get started, the first graded MyMathLab homework assignment covers how to use the program, and completion of that assignment is a prerequisite to opening the next three assignments.

Bower generally assigns one homework assignment per section covered in the course; each assignment contains a multimedia feature to be viewed prior to opening the problems. Due dates keep students on track, although there is no penalty for late submissions. Homework assignments remain open for the entire semester, thereby enabling students to work ahead if they wish. Students have unlimited attempts, and all learning aids are available. Students must score at least 50 percent on every homework in order to take the test.

MyMathLab quizzes also remain open all semester, but are timed at approximately 45 minutes. Students may use MyMathLab to both review for the quiz and complete a post-quiz review if they aren't satisfied with their quiz score.

Students are required to complete a MyMathLab review for each MyMathLab test. Reviews reflect the content of the tests but contain twice as many problems. Students have one attempt at completing each test. If they are not satisfied with their grade, they may complete a post-test review—a Personalized Homework based on the results of their test, on which they must score at least an 80 to regain access to the test for one week. Tests are timed at 120 minutes and must be taken in one sitting.

Assessments

45 percent	MyMathLab tests (3)
25 percent	Final exam (in a proctored facility on or off campus)
15 percent	MyMathLab quizzes (2)
15 percent	MyMathLab homework

Use of MyMathLab contributes 75 percent to each student's final course grade.

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—Student

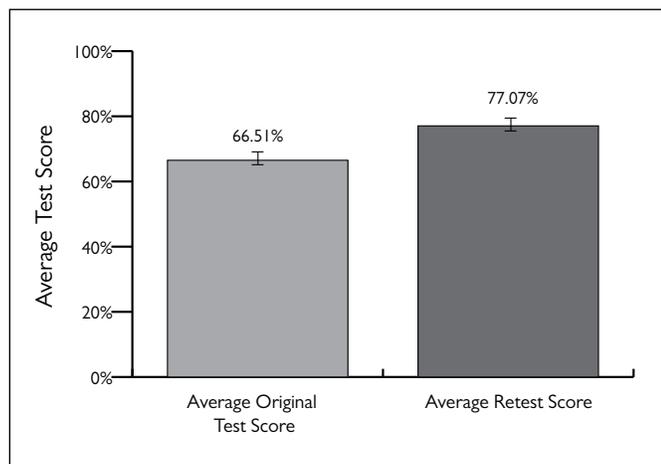


Figure 1. Average Original Test Score and Average Retest Score, Fall 2012–13 (n=71)

Results and Data

The majority of students who took advantage of the test-review-retest option showed significant improvement. Although score improvements ranged from 48 points to -46 points, the average improvement was 11.56 points, a full letter grade (figure 1).

The Student Experience

Bower's online students appreciate the abundance of material available to them via MyMathLab. End-of-semester feedback included the following comments:

- “Doing the course with MyMathLab was fantastic. It kept the material moving, and the notes and videos were easy to follow.”
- “I appreciated the multiple resources for each homework lesson. It provided more than enough information and examples to fully learn the concepts.”
- “I liked that the course used Pearson's MyMathLab. It was very successful in making sure I understood how problems are solved. The “Help Me Solve This” feature was very helpful. I'd like to take more courses using this program.”
- “Being allowed to complete homework and tests past the due date was key to me being able to pass homework assignments and tests. I have not done algebra in almost 30 years, so I needed more time to work the problems. Although I work full-time, I was able to catch up and spend extra time on assignments on weekends and days off.”

Conclusion

Bower is happy with his online course. “Flexibility is the biggest reason students take online courses,” he says. “I would encourage other online instructors to use MyMathLab to maintain it in their courses.” To those who are concerned about the integrity of online courses, Bower answers that he tries to ensure academic integrity via the proctored final.

Future considerations including weighting the final exam more and requiring students to achieve a minimum score on the final exam in order to pass the course.

Submitted by Tony Bower, Professor
St. Philip's College