

MyITLab

School Name Missouri State University, Springfield, MO

Course Name Computers for Learning

Course Format Hybrid

- Key Results** Students who complete all or most of their MyITLab assignments earn higher average exam scores and higher final course grades than students who skip five or more assignments over the semester.

Submitted by

Sue McCrory, Coordinator

Course materials

eText: *Exploring Microsoft Office 2013*, Poatsy, Mulbery, Krebs, and Hogan; and *Visualizing Technology*, Geoghan

Challenges

Missouri State, the state's second largest university, is an urban public university located in Springfield, Missouri with an official enrollment of nearly 22,000 students. Computers for Learning is a General Education course that is currently required by all students, although it will be optional beginning Fall 2014. The course covers fundamental computer concepts including word processing, spreadsheets, presentation applications, and the responsible use of information and technology.

Sue McCrory, coordinator, and her colleagues have been using MyITLab since its inception in 2007; previously, they were using Train and Assess IT, but segued into MyITLab because of the 'practice without penalty' nature of the program. Students became discouraged doing practice assignments from their textbook because they weren't able to identify their errors and frequently had to start over. The simulation environment in MyITLab allowed for repetitive practice with corrective action, that moved toward success. No other program offered this support at the time.

Implementation

Students complete the majority of their coursework online, and meet once a week for lecture. Because this is a skills-based course, the majority of lecture time is spent reviewing homework topics that caused the most confusion. To promote hands-on, demonstrable understanding of course content, students follow a structured learning path using MyITLab:

- Etext—Read the appropriate chapter.

- MyITLab quiz—Complete the MyITLab end-of-chapter concept quiz for *Visualizing Technology*.
- MyITLab Skill-based Training Simulation (2)
- MyITLab Grader Project (2)
- Unit exams—Exams are offered every four weeks and cover concepts and applications; the final exam is comprehensive.

To encourage practice, McCrory allows students to complete Training Simulations and Grader Projects as many times as they wish, and all learning aids are turned on for all assignments. Because she knows that homework is where the most practice takes place, she also weighs homework heavier than exams. Deadlines are set and MyITLab assignments are due the day of the unit exam. The Study Plan is not required, but students use it for exam review, and may earn extra credit by taking the Pre- and Post-Tests (2.5 points each).

As an incentive to complete all MyITLab assignments before the final exam, students who have earned at least 90 percent in the course may opt out of taking the final exam, in which case their unit exam scores are averaged and used as their final grades.

Assessments

34 percent	MyITLab Grader Projects (8)
17 percent	In-class assignments
10 percent	MyITLab quizzes (8)
10 percent	MyITLab exams (2)
9 percent	MyITLab final exam
7 percent	Group project
6 percent	MyITLab Skill-based Trainings (8)
4 percent	Homework (not in MyITLab)
3 percent	Other MyITLab assignments

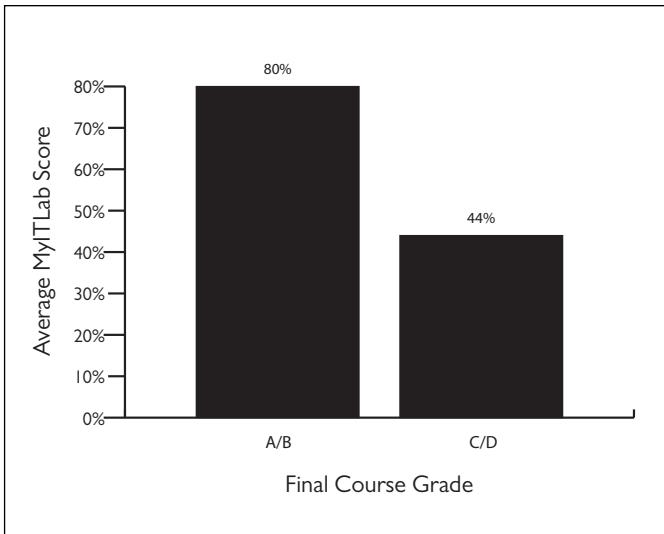


Figure 1. Relationship between Final Course Grades and Average MyITLab Scores, Spring 2014 ($n=26$)

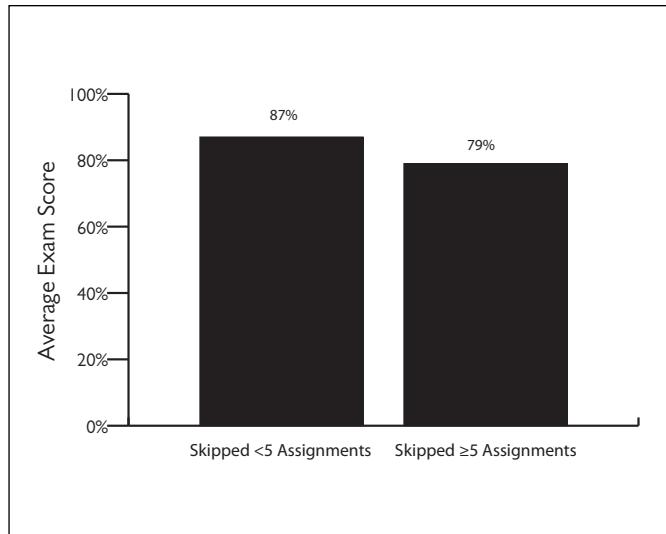


Figure 2. Average Exam Scores for Students who Skipped Fewer than Five and Greater than Five MyITLab Assignments, Spring 2014 ($n=26$)

Course Letter Grade	Average Number of MyITLab Assignments Not Completed
A	2
B	3
C	7
D	12

Table 1. Final Course Grades Compared to Average Number of Skipped MyITLab Assignments, Spring 2014 ($n=26$)

Results and Data

A comparison of MyITLab homework scores and final course grades suggests that MyITLab homework scores are a strong predictor of final course grades (figure 1). Further analysis shows that 84 percent of students who earned an A or B in the course scored at least 75 percent on their MyITLab homework.

In addition, students were placed into two groups based on MyITLab assignment participation: those who completed all or most assignments (skipped fewer than five assignments) and those who skipped five or more assignments. Students who completed all or most assignments earned average exam scores 10 percent higher than students who skipped five or more assignments—87 percent compared to 79 percent (figure 2).

Further analysis indicated:

- Students who skipped fewer than five assignments earned an average course grade of 94 percent—12 percentage points higher than students who skipped five or more assignments.

- Students who did not skip any MyITLab assignments earned an average course grade of 99 percent and an average exam score 88 percent.
- 31 percent of students completed all assignments.
- 12 percent of students skipped more than ten assignments.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the number of skipped assignments and final course grades—as more assignments are skipped, course grades decline.

The Student Experience

According to McCrory, MyITLab's simulated environment helps her students become more comfortable with the applications they are learning. As a result, they aren't as intimidated when assessments require them to work in a live document. They are familiar with how things look and how to interact with the program, which leads to greater success on assessments and in the overall course.

Conclusion

Homework is key to learning Microsoft applications—students need frequent practice in the application environments in order to navigate a workplace setting. MyITLab gives McCrory's students the necessary tools to practice, and repeat as necessary, until they've demonstrated mastery. And it works. Data show a strong relationship between MyITLab scores and overall course grades. In addition, students who complete most assignments (skip five or fewer) earn higher exam and overall course grades.