

MyCJLab

School Name **Colorado Mesa University, Grand Junction, CO**
Course Name **Introduction to Criminal Justice**
Course Format **Lecture**

Key Results MyCJLab interactive resources keep students engaged in course content, thereby improving learning and overall course success. Data show a positive correlation of $r = .81$ between MyCJLab homework scores and both exam scores and final course grades.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Criminal Justice: A Brief Introduction, Schmallegger

Challenges

Colorado Mesa University, formerly known as Mesa State College, is a four-year, state-supported institution serving approximately 10,000 students a year in the Rocky Mountain region. Introduction to Criminal Justice is a three-credit course taken by criminal justice majors. The course introduces students to the philosophy, history, development, and functions of the American criminal justice system. Upon successful completion of the course, students can demonstrate understanding of the criminal justice system, and can practice and apply a range of skills related to criminal justice research methods and practical field concepts.

Jane Quimby, instructor, first taught Introduction to Criminal Justice in spring 2013. To prepare for the course, she sought an additional resource to promote maximum student learning and mastery of course objectives. She reviewed MyCJLab, and concluded that (1) the program's Pre/Post-Test format supported her goals, and (2) its interactive simulations provided the kind of interesting visual applications that would keep her students engaged.

Implementation

Students critically examine various aspects of the criminal justice system via participation in Web-based learning activities, group assignments, class exercises, and discussions.

MyCJLab is a required component of the course. Students must complete assignments for each chapter that include a Pre-Test, a Post-Test, and a simulation. After Pre-Tests are scored, MyCJLab provides each student with an individualized Study Plan that includes FlashCards and PowerPoint lectures. Although completion of the Study Plans is optional, Quimby reports that many students put in the extra effort to better prepare for exams. In addition, students work through simulations for homework, which is revisited in class for further discussion and active learning.

Quimby administers two midterm exams and a comprehensive final exam—each comprising approximately 100 questions. Students have access to all previous MyCJLab assignments and Study Plans to prepare for exams.

Students also complete a writing assignment that focuses on a career profile in the field of criminal justice, and a small group presentation in which four students present a topic or controversial issue to the class.

Assessments

200 Points	Exams
150 Points	MyCJLab homework
150 Points	Final exam
70 Points	Writing assignment
30 Points	Group presentation

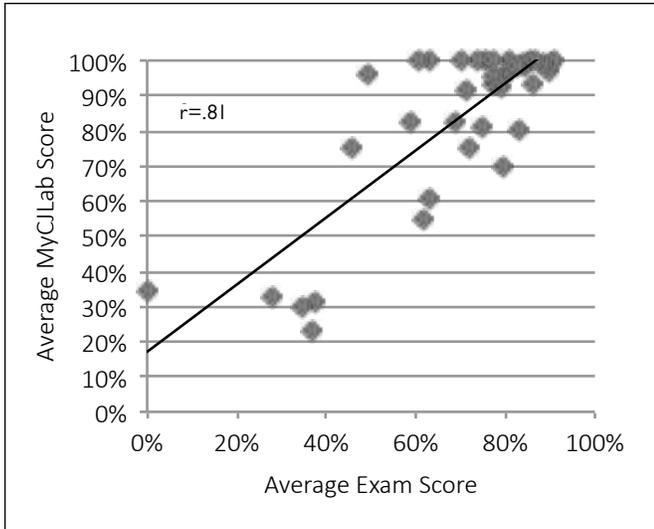


Figure 1. Correlation between Average MCJLab Scores and Average Exam Scores, Spring 2013 ($n = 37$)

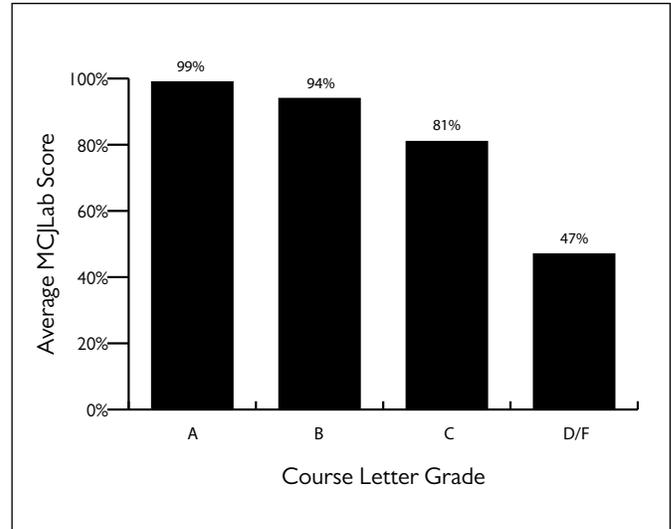


Figure 2. Grade Distribution and Average MCJLab Scores, Spring 2013 ($n = 37$)

Results and Data

Data from students who completed all exams indicate a positive correlation between MyCJLab scores and exam scores (figure 1). The correlation suggests that when students successfully complete MyCJLab homework assignments, they are able to transfer that knowledge to other course assessments.

In addition, an analysis of course grade distribution indicates a relationship between success in MyCJLab assignments and higher course letter grades (figure 2). Students who earned As and Bs in the course also scored an average of 99 percent and 94 percent respectively on MyCJLab assignments; students who earned Ds and Fs earned an average of 47 percent on MyCJLab assignments.

The Student Experience

Student survey results illustrate that students have overwhelmingly positive attitudes about MyCJLab.

- 97%** Strongly agreed/agreed that their understanding of course material increased as a result of using MyCJLab.
- 97%** Strongly agreed/agreed that use of MyCJLab positively impacted their exam scores.

When asked what they liked best about MyCJLab, students comments included the following:

- “I liked the resources for additional study.”
- “[MyCJLab] gave me all the tools I needed to study for tests and quizzes.”
- “The Pre- and Post-Tests were very helpful. They helped me prepare for quizzes and exams.”
- “The quizzes and how [the program] explained why I was right and why I was wrong.”
- “I liked the simulations.”

Conclusion

MyCJLab provides Quimby’s students with highly engaging, interactive ways to learn and practice course material. Because students practice material prior to lecture, they are now more able to participate in class time discussions and use class time for targeted review. In addition, Quimby uses the MyCJLab gradebook to identify at risk students and intervene before they fall too far behind.

Future plans include adding in-class quizzes based on MyCJLab quizzes. The goal of these regularly scheduled quizzes is to keep students on pace with assigned reading material, thereby facilitating even more class discussion and interaction.