

MyWritingLab®

EDUCATOR TESTIMONIAL UNIVERSITY OF GREENWICH

COURSE:	Foundations of Scholarship
USED SINCE:	2011
SUMMARY:	By using MyWritingLab to support international students in improving their academic writing skills, the lecturer found students were also more aware of the need to continue developing their skills after the course finished.
SUBMITTED BY:	Pearson and Joanna Molyn, Department of Accounting and Finance

Course design (background)

STUDENT PROFILE

There are 150 students on this course, mostly international in origin – many from China. They are Masters Students so on average are slightly more motivated.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course runs from September to December with the final assessment in January. Students attend a weekly 2 hour lecture and 2 hour tutorial. Previously, they were set homework every 2 weeks which was not marked but discussed in the tutorials. Last year, they used MyCompLab and were assigned three set exercises which counted towards 10% of the final mark.

CHALLENGES

Although English is a pre-requisite for this course, students still struggle and have three tests throughout the year to show progress. If they do not show progress, they can be kicked off the course, so there is pressure to improve. Specific challenges; reading with understanding, writing academically and referencing.

Implementation

Joanna required that students complete 5 exercises every month in MyWritingLab. She required that both the Recall and Apply

exercises were completed and made all sets available so that they had plenty of opportunity for practice. The Recall exercises were purely for practise but the scores for the Apply exercises counted towards 10% of their final mark. She set it up so that the 'Highest' mark in Apply was the one that was recorded in the Gradebook.

Course results

98% of students completed all of the required exercises before the due dates and most achieved relatively high scores. The student group achieved an average of 80% for all required Recall exercises and 84% for all required Apply exercises.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

Students fed back verbally to Joanna and their tutors and a small number of them completed an online questionnaire. They reported that although they felt some initial frustration



[students] felt like they definitely benefitted from completing the exercises in MyWritingLab and enjoyed the experience of working online.



with registration problems, they also felt like they definitely benefitted from completing the exercises in MyWritingLab and enjoyed the experience of working online.

All students who filled out the online questionnaire felt that it either had a 'somewhat positive' or 'very positive' impact on their performance within the module and that it either had a 'somewhat positive' or 'very positive' on their enjoyment of the module. When asked what the main benefits were, students reported that it 'improved their writing skills' and helped them 'understand the main concepts of academic writing'. Finally students were asked to provide a quote about their overall feelings for MyWritingLab. All quotes were very positive, for example:

"Useful for practice and convenient to apply it."

"You should try it or you will regret it."

"It can help you to achieve the best result in your degree."

Conclusions

Joanna Molyn found MyWritingLab easy to use, although she thought that some of its functionality was somewhat limited. Overall, she noted that the students' grammar, referencing and general writing skills did seem to improve somewhat but most importantly their awareness of the importance of continuing to improve these skills dramatically increased.

Joanna also reported that she benefited from having less marking to do, and was able to make use of 'more varied types of assessment which tap into using new technologies which means that students are more engaged'. In her own words...

"MyWritingLab really helps my Masters students practise their academic writing skills through a combination of rich media and exercise activities. My students value receiving instant feedback and using the software has been of invaluable help to them."



Students value receiving instant feedback and using the software has been of invaluable help to them.

