



# Customised MyLab for Marketing and Management

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## General information

### Could you say a few words about your course in general?

The course in question is BE 401. You may hear me refer to that, but its actual title is Introduction to Management. It's a first-year undergraduate course, so it's the first thing that new students encounter when they walk through the door.

We use MyLab in two ways. One as an **assessment tool** and second, as a **repository** for the source materials if students wanted to take what they had heard in lectures further, or revise what they had covered. We'll come onto the details of that in a moment.

Other things we use alongside the traditional lecture format is PowerPoint, face to face and several books from the library, of course.

MyLab comes in again here because it supports the hybrid or composite book that we put together virtually, but there are other reading materials as well that we direct students to through the library.

### How do you work together with Pearson?

It's gone back a while now. We're in the third year and about to go into the 4th year. When we began, we looked essentially for the nearest book that supported the existing course as it previously existed, and Pearson actually had two books at that time, one on Management, one on Marketing. In those days, **the course had two modules within it**. It's very large, so there was some mapping across, not everything fitted perfectly, but it was a good enough fit for us which was super.

We began a long conversation of **course mapping**. It's been an evolution. I think we've got to a better place over time, partly because the course is short and now only one module just on management, so we've adjusted over several years. I think now it's a lot smoother. So, that's how we've worked on the materials.

We've also worked a lot on the assessments. What's been nice is that I've had very **efficient and effective guidance from Pearson** operatives on how to operate the functionality of the system in many ways. Although I'm still quite reliant on them, there are lots of ways now in which I can use the system myself without having to refer to them.



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## How are you using the e-book and what functions are you using in the course?

The e-books are great because they are **embedded** in Moodle. It's obviously embedded in MyLab, too. We asked Pearson to put a link **directly** to the e-book in Moodle as well, so it's very easy because there are lots of ways to get in. We encourage the students to follow the course of the lectures through the book. I always present that as the minimum necessary requirement for the reading. That seems to work quite well.

We also set little **tasks**. We don't set revision formally, but I put a very strong steer that people may wish to use the revision functions because they are, in my opinion, incredibly useful.

I use the **dashboard** a lot to just work out what students are doing and what they're not doing.

Lastly, we use the **MCQ** function as well.



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## Why did you decide to use this platform?

In 2019 there was a general awareness that more courses were moving online or developing their online materials. The university itself has a platform called Moodle, but it's a relatively simple online system. It does the job and you know it's a secure place to put content and material, but you can do limited things with it. In our finance and accounting departments, they realised how effective MCQ type tests were for mathematical assessment and they had already bought into MyLab.

There was some discussion going on in 2019 when I first took this module over about whether it would be a good idea to bring MyLab or something similar over to what I would call a humanities type of module. There are difficulties with that. You can't rely entirely on numerical assessment.

Then, of course, we had the pandemic and suddenly what had been a nice discussion became an absolute necessity. It was therefore essential that the materials and the conduct of the course moved remotely in its entirety, and that expedited the process. We purchased MyLab in July and it was up and ready for October.





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## What were your aims or objectives for using MyLab?

Several things. Of course, we had Moodle, but it's quite an issue of expectations. I think if we were going to tell students that they had to remain at home and they would not be on campus, I think our offering, especially to newly arrived students, had to be quite slick, interactive and modern.

MyLab fulfilled a lot of those things. It was going to have to allow a lot of **functionality** in a sense, a lot of **interactivity** to move out of the lecture theatre and on to someone's computer screen. We knew we needed to do that.

We also knew that the **administration** of assessment had become a colossal workload and that needed to be both rationalised and streamlined.

And again, students need to have access to **revision materials** that did not take the form of revision lectures per se, because that wasn't realistic.

So, those were the aims and I think MyLab amply fulfilled all those requirements, it's been brilliant.

## How did it meet your goals?

There are always people who just will not use it. There are various things that we do to minimise that, but I don't think we can ever overcome that entirely. But in all other ways it does everything that we could ask.

## How did customising the materials help your work?

There were two years in which we split the materials. We selected **two textbooks from Pearson**, went through them and **mapped** the pieces - we asked the operatives essentially to create a hybrid composite book that didn't really exist in hard copy, but it existed on MyLab itself. We haven't used whole books, **only select chapters**. That was a very nice solution.

## Has it made life easier or better for you?

**Unquestionably.** It allows us to do several things that we could never have previously done.

Firstly, it provides our students **access** to the core material at any time. So, there are **no more queues in libraries** and that is immensely useful.

Secondly, it allows our students to **revise in their own time**. In some ways more effectively when it comes to the factual acquisition of knowledge. What they really like about it is that it **scores** them, so they get a sense of where they are, they don't have to refer to me.

I introduce them to that part and it's very interesting for me to watch on the display panel who has engaged without me and who has not. Some people really engage with the materials very thoroughly.

The final point that's very useful for us is that while we will always have to have an analytical assessment in the form of an essay, which we must mark by hand, it has **allowed us to run an MCQ system as part of our assessment process**. Just incredibly efficient and effective, and it's incomparable. So, there's been a huge **workload saving**, which is very considerable.



## How did you integrate it into your curriculum?

It was fairly straightforward, really. I think the hardest bit initially was that we needed to look at the current curriculum and pattern of content delivered, and that was based around a different book in those days. The lecture pattern really followed a series of chapters as these modules often do, and the Pearson equivalent was probably about 80%.

It wasn't quite where we wanted it, but over time we have bought in extra resources because Pearson's book covers things that the other one doesn't. We have taken out some lectures that we feel are less relevant. It's been a pretty smooth process.

## Did you give any credit to your students for working in MyLab?

Nothing explicit, but there were two things I pushed very hard and continued to do so. One is having the **central e-book online** is immensely useful, we can see that from the student usage data we gather. It suggests that people use it as we would intend.

The other thing that I push very heavily and some students use evidently very heavily is the **amazing revision tool** for factual knowledge. We couldn't reproduce that in a lecture, the system does that better than we ever could.



## How did you communicate the use of MyLab with students?

Initially, this was difficult because in an ideal world what we should have done is humanise it and there should have been an opening lecture from me and a visit from Pearson operatives. In the pandemic, of course, none of that was possible. So, we had to communicate it through Moodle and the existing university email system. This is what we're doing now.

I think it's much better to do these things face to face, so the following year we had people back in the lecture theatre.

Then, last year was best of all. We had the **opening lecture** with me as the module leader - I very carefully explained MyLab. We also had two **people from Pearson in the room**. They talked a little bit about MyLab and we were then able to open up a discussion. We had about half an hour where we asked students just to log on and register, and Pearson colleagues were able to go around the room and sort out one or two problems. In fact, there was a repeat letter visit later in lecture 3.

We communicate by email, but most importantly, MyLab gets an endorsement in person from me and the lecturing team plus Pearson colleagues.

**It's absolutely essential to remind students of the most important things.** I also keep an eye on what's going on through the dashboard.

My guess is about 1/3 of people register immediately. Then, there is a steady flow through the first weeks of term. And then, there's another little spike just before the MCQ assessment at the end of the term and to be honest, by that point, if students haven't registered for that assessment, we get very few registrations after that.

We've probably got about 90% of people on board. It's a very confusing picture though, because some of the reasons why people are not registered on MyLab is because they've actually left the university.



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### What do your students say about the platform?

Most are **positive** things, we get very little that's negative at all. Students generally don't offer a great deal of feedback, but when we do receive feedback, it's generally positive. They like the use of the **revision tool** and having the **textbook** or the core text to hand.

### Has MyLab had any impact on your students engagement?

My academic career only began in 2019, and within eight months of arrival the world had been turned upside down. So, I don't know is the honest answer to that. It's just another thing which made life simpler and easier, but a little bit more remote.

### What are the main benefits of using MyLab for you?

For me, as a member of staff I can mention two things.

**Firstly, setting up assessments is just phenomenally easy.** Just incredible.

**Secondly, I can keep an eye on what is going on within the course.** Perhaps something I should have mentioned earlier, Introduction to Management is an enormous course. We teach **550 students**, and it's not realistic to be too granular about what I see on the dashboard. What I'm looking for is the big trends. I have to paint in big numbers because 550 is not a number where you can individualise responses. That's not a realistic workload, but it does mean I can see who's going in, what's going on and when people bring me individual incidents.

I can see the **pattern of their engagement**, and that can be quite useful sometimes in **arbitrating disputes** over whether people have had a legitimate complaint.

The other thing I would say from a staff perspective, which has been very good about MyLab indeed, is that it's absolutely essential that I can completely trust that if something goes wrong, I can pick up a phone or rattle off an email to one of Pearson's technical operatives and they are with me in minutes. You need that assurance and confidence that someone will pick up the phone or respond very quickly when things begin to go awry. Assessment understandably focuses people's minds, students are often very panicky, very stressed, and I can rely on **Pearson's technical know-how** in certain situations.

If I couldn't do that, staff would lose faith quickly. So, that support is absolutely essential. I have to say, happily over three years there have been only one or two incidents, but I've always been able to **contact Pearson staff very quickly and get the problem fixed**, which is amazing.

For the students it's the same benefits as we've covered before. Access to the core text and access to revision documents.

### What is your personal favourite feature?

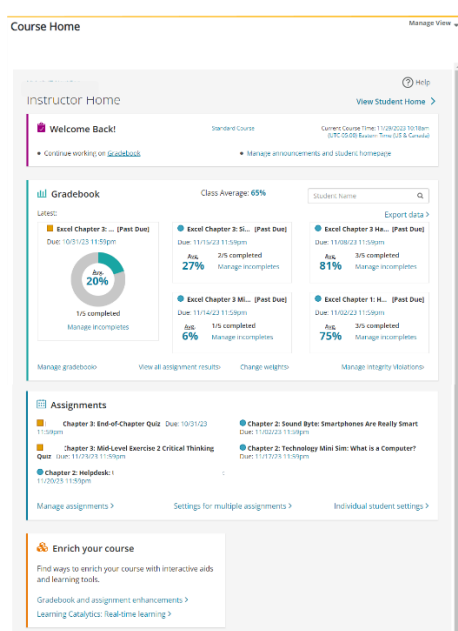
#### **The MCQ functionality.**

I was taken through it by a Pearson colleague, and I had to note it all down quite carefully because that there is a lot of functionality. There are a lot of choices and you do have to get it right. But after three years I've generated a lot of MCQ's and now I'm pretty comfortable with it.



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For more information about MyLabs please visit our [MyLab site](#)

### What advice would you give to a first-time user now?

One is to **spend the time with the technical operatives**, they are very helpful people. Make sure they take you through it slowly. Everything they say write down sequentially in a notebook and pay attention to what they have to say.

Then go on to MyLab and do two things: **spend some time** just messing about with it. Don't try and achieve anything, just understand or begin to understand its parameters.

When you need to do something important like set up a test, set some work or do something that has a consequence, **give yourself the time** because you must be patient. When you don't understand it very well you may find that you need to contact a Pearson operative. So, I think it's not something to do at the last moment, spend the time just playing with it.

Then, when you do need to do something, give yourself a big empty space in which to do it. It's usually quite simple, but it can get complicated if you're not confident about how everything works.

### Would you recommend MyLab for your colleagues?

Yes, I would, no question about it.

Available for these disciplines

Select your discipline to register/login or discover more about how MyLab can support your course.

Accounting	Management	MIS
Business	Marketing	Operations Management
Communication	Mathematics	Psychology
Economics	Mathematics (Español)	Statistics
Finance	Mathematics (Global version)	Strategy
IT	MathXL for School	Writing