

Report on MyLab

MyBusinessLab & MyMarketingLab
PearsonEd.ca

Sorry for the delay in sending this report. You asked for it.

My procrastination was due to several factors:

- Since I have no intention of ever using MyLab (MyBusinessLab, MyMarketingLab) again, I no longer have any motivation to invest any more time for it.
- There are so many issues and problems involved with using MyLab that procrastination was the most attractive alternative.
- I may list more factors later ...

First, I would like to thank the Technology Specialist (Josh Ballem) and the Senior Director of Technology Specialists (Robin Strang). They were both very helpful and supportive throughout all of the difficulties and complications caused by PearsonEd's MyLab.

- **Theory**

- In **theory**, MyLab is an excellent idea. There is the promise of great online instructional materials for each textbook that could allow intensive student involvement, immediate feedback, and individualized evaluation.

- **Practice**

- In **practice**, MyLab is a nightmare. The MyLab software engine is poorly designed, not entirely user-friendly, and still very buggy. (Are there really different MyLab engines driving different MyLabs for different subjects?) The materials from the textbooks were poorly prepared and not properly proofed. The material is sloppy and error-filled and untested and a real headache for both faculty and students.

- **Experience**

- I used MyLab one term and the students revolted and MyLab was dropped for the rest of that term. The Pearson representatives then convinced me that major changes had improved MyLab significantly. I used MyLab for another term, but I quickly saw right from the beginning of the term that any improvements to MyLab were invisible, so the students again convinced me that MyLab was a mistake. For those two terms using MyLab, I spent more time trying to fix MyLab problems for my students than I spent preparing lessons or correcting papers or any other school-related activity.
- Now I understand why nobody else is using MyLab.
- Never again!

- **Cost**
 - In spite claims to the contrary, MyLab is not free for students. It increases the cost (by about \$20) of the textbook. (Does it add enough value?)
- **Registration**
 - When the student buys the book with the student access code and then goes to MyLab (<http://www.pearsoned.ca/mybusinesslab/> or <http://www.pearsoned.ca/mymarketinglab/>) the MyLab Student Registration page makes it obvious that the correct link is to the “Self-Study course” since this is prominently displayed in the middle of the page. This causes problems. The student should have clicked on the obscure graphic link  in the corner of the page to the course that was set up by the teacher for the course (‘Enroll in a Course’). The student’s code is then not accepted. The student invariably panics and calls the MyLab technicians who don’t understand and can’t help. Then the student contacts the teacher or unnecessarily buys a new student access code. The teacher then must call the MyLab technicians (for each and every student) and explain to them how to cancel the “Self-Study course” for that student and provide an access code so that the student can register for the MyLab course that the teacher set up.
- **Errors**
 - There are **errors and omissions** on the MyLab site. MyLab content often contradicts the content in the textbook.
 - MyLab technicians don’t know how to (or are not allowed to) modify the course material.
 - Students get very upset and frustrated when they do work on MyLab and lose marks because the questions are poorly written or the answers are wrong or incomplete.
 - MyLab does not allow intelligent interpretation of online work. For example, MyLab will not accept that ‘600000’ and ‘600,000’ are equivalent.
- **Technical Support**
 - The MyLab technicians always have trouble communicating (listening, reading) and understanding technical questions and always need to “escalate” the issue to someone else (‘level 2 support’) who also can’t answer the question. (It seems that it is always necessary to repeat EVERYTHING to these technicians. Note that this does not seem to be a language issue.)
 - Open 8h00-20h00. Closed Saturday.
 - ‘Experts’ not always available.
- **Technologies:**
 - MyLab does not work well with the all modern technologies (MSIE-8, MSIE-9, Firefox, **MacOS**, Flash, etc.)
 - Pop-ups blocked - Some items require that the computer's security settings be changed to allow pop-ups. The online messages do not make this obvious. Students do not always find the bar with the pop-up options. Even once pop-ups are allowed, there is a very annoying and confusing message that remains on the screen (as a pop-under window).
 - E-mail – It is not possible for teachers or students to set up automatic e-mail forwarding (see Moodle). Mail will not automatically go to the e-mail account that the individuals use on a regular daily basis. It is necessary to log into MyLab to receive mail messages.
 - It is impossible to send messages to anyone not listed on the drop-down menu (Classmates? Teacher?).
 - It is impossible to type in an e-mail address, even though there are fields (To:, CC:, BCC:) for typing in e-mail addresses.

- Date formats are illogical. Why is YYYY-MM-DD format not available?
- Preferences for the default font. Even if 'small' is selected in the Preferences, 'large' fonts are always displayed upon login.
- 'In Progress' is a very confusing message for students.
 - If a student completes a module, but the calendar still shows that the work is 'In Progress' - it means that the student still has unused attempts to redo the quiz. It could also mean that there is no limit to the number of attempts to do that quiz. It could also mean that the student has not yet reached the required passing grade. This message is unclear. It is not clearly explained in the MyLab user manual.
 - 'Incomplete' - Does this mean the same thing?
- The MyLab interface clunky and not at all intuitive. Not up to the latest standards of Website usability. MyLab is NOT user-friendly.
 - Options/Preferences/Profile settings are missing or unavailable.
- **Student Issues:**
 - Students reported that they found the MyLab site frustrating and difficult to navigate.
 - Students find it very difficult to change their personal settings. For instance how to change the Login Name, StudentID, Student Name, etc.
 - Grades - Often the grades do not show up in MyLab, even when the student has completed the work. There is no way to allow the student to redo the work.
- **Teacher Issues:**
 - MyLab does not allow teachers to modify any of the online material for the course.
 - The teacher is not always allowed to assign certain modules to students. (MyLab engine error? Missing MyLab content? Other reason?)
 - When the teacher attempts to correct/modify preferences for assigned modules, the modifications are refused if the start date or the due date of the module was originally assigned before the current date and time.
 - The teacher can't change the number of attempts a student is allowed for any particular activity. (Although the MyLab technicians couldn't help, a workable case-by-case manual solution was finally found after an extensive Google search.)
 - Getting reports on student progress is difficult. It seems that the best that MyLab can offer is the option to download a report in CVS (spreadsheet) format to your computer for viewing. It is impossible to create an online report to show all students' marks for all activities.
 - User guide is incomplete.