

Product Name MyPsychLab/MyVirtualLife*

Course Name Lifespan Development

Course Format Traditional

Key Results: With MyPsychLab, students are increasing their mastery of course content as evidenced by a significantly greater percentage of students achieving overall course grades of A and B.

Course Materials: Arnett, *Human Development* with MyPsychLab

The lifespan development course examines human behavior from conception through old age in terms of psychological, social, and biological processes. At the end of my course, students should be able to summarize the major changes associated with each stage of development; describe the major theoretical approaches and research methods used; evaluate information related to lifespan development in a manner that is consistent with current thinking and research in the field; and recognize the diversity of development across individuals and across cultures.

Students taking this course are mostly psychology majors, along with a few education and health science majors, in their sophomore or junior year.

Implementation:

I decided to adopt Arnett, *Human Development* with MyPsychLab because of its cultural approach—in both the text and the online video series. My students come from a very homogenous community, and Arnett with MyPsychLab helps me fulfill one of my key learning goals, to expose my students to similarities and differences in development across cultures.

I had been using MyVirtualChild for years as a way to engage students in course content and apply what they are learning, and I moved to MyVirtualLife when it became available with Arnett. MyVirtualLife actually contains two simulations in one. In the first simulation students raise a child from birth to age 18, making parenting decisions and monitoring the effects of these over time. In the second simulation students answer questions about their own life choices—from emerging adulthood through late adulthood. My TAs are responsible for grading the MyVirtualLife assignments. Students need to show that they thought critically and put effort into their response.

I recently started assigning additional MyPsychLab resources (other than MyVirtualLife) in an effort to provide students with more opportunities to practice. A huge benefit of the MyPsychLab study plans, video assignments, and chapter exams is that they are automatically graded. With large class sections of up to 160 students, I would not be able to offer

these types of assignments without this feature of MyPsychLab. I assign the chapter study plans, which tell students where they can more efficiently focus their study time, and include the study plan post-test as part of their grade. I also include a wide range of video assignments, many of which are cross-cultural videos. Plus, I assign the chapter exams for each chapter which help students study for their in-class exams.

Students can access all of their assignments from the MyPsychLab calendar, helping them to stay on track throughout the semester. To make grading easier on my end, I've set up a custom view of the MyPsychLab gradebook.

Assessments:

38.46 percent	Exams (five)
30.77 percent	MyVirtualLife
15.38 percent	MyPsychLab study plans (average of all study plan post-tests)
7.69 percent	MyPsychLab video quizzes (1/2 average of all video quizzes)
7.69 percent	MyPsychLab chapter tests (1/2 average of all chapter tests)

Results and Data:

In an effort to measure how MyPsychLab has impacted student learning in my course, I partnered with Pearson on an efficacy study. The results indicate that, since integrating MyPsychLab, students are learning more, with 33% more of my students achieving overall course grades of A and B (Figure 1). While we saw only a slight increase in overall success rates (Figure 2), these findings suggest that MyPsychLab has proven most beneficial to students who in the past would have been more likely to receive an overall grade of C. Many of my “average” students produced good or excellent work.

In addition, study plan post-test scores and MyVirtualLife assignments correlate strongly with performance on in-class exams (Figures 3 and 4). Students who do well on the MyPsychLab/MyVirtualLife components clearly do better on actual exams.

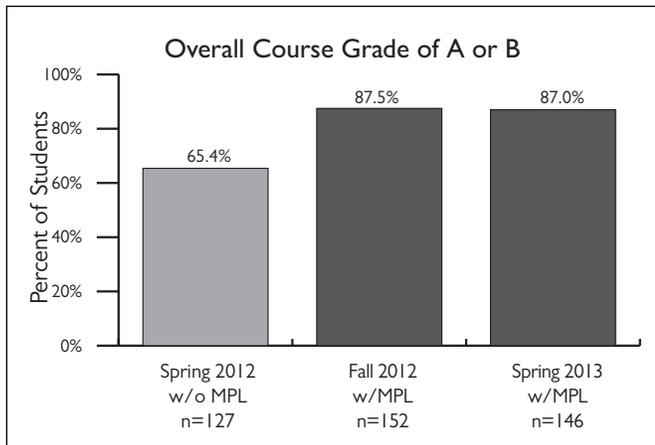


Figure 1. Overall Course Grade of A or B, Spring 2012 - Spring 2013

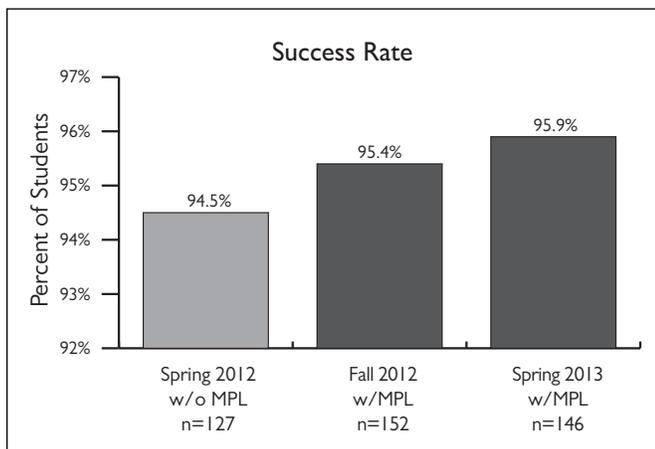


Figure 2. Student Success Rates, Spring 2012 - Spring 2013 (Success rate=the percentage of students who receive an overall course grade of A, B, or C.)

The Student Experience:

In a recent student survey, 51.4% of students (n=34) indicated that they found themselves reading the textbook more because of MyPsychLab.

Also, students often provide unsolicited feedback about MyPsychLab, especially about their own “virtual child.” Many comment that “they miss their baby” after the simulation ended. I received the following feedback from students in my fall 2013 semester class:

“I liked MyVirtualChild because it used real world situations.”

“I like that we can take the post-tests multiple times; it helps me study questions that could be similar to ones on the exam.”

A handful of students come up to me each semester saying things like “I didn’t know I had to do the post-tests in the study plans”. With MyPsychLab being such a significant percentage of my students’ overall course grade, I plan to address this issue. Next semester I will make sure my students sign a syllabus

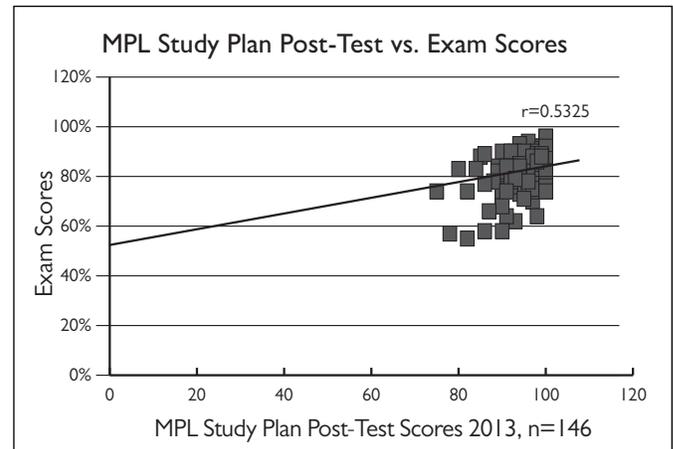


Figure 3. MyPsychLab Study Plan Post-Test Scores vs. Average In-Class Exam Scores (Spring 2013)

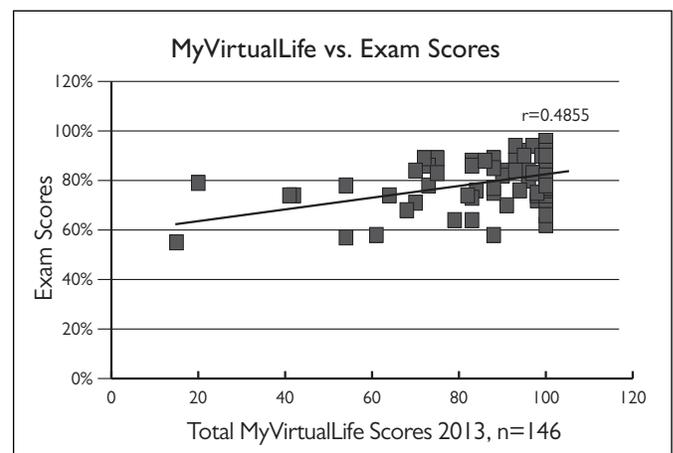


Figure 4. MyVirtualLife Scores vs. Average In-Class Exam Scores (Spring 2013)

contract before they can take the first in-class exam, indicating that they have read and understood the syllabus and all course requirements, including the fact that MyPsychLab will make up 62% of their grade. I will also spend more time explaining the purpose of the study plan and how it can save them time and help them more efficiently prepare for in-class exams.

Conclusion:

It’s great to be able to quantify the impact MyPsychLab is having on my students’ learning. The fact that a significantly greater percentage of my students are achieving overall course grades of A and B is wonderful news and clearly demonstrates deeper knowledge of the subject matter—a trend that I hope to see continue.

*MyVirtualLife is both a feature within MyPsychLab and a standalone product.

Submitted by Renée L. Babcock, Ph.D.
Central Michigan University