School Name	New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, NM
Course Name	Elementary Spanish I and II, Intermediate Spanish I and II
Course Format	Hybrid, online

Key Results   With MySpanishLab, we are serving more students more flexibly and at reduced cost. Student performance is improved, and our retention rates have increased.

Submitted by
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Course materials
¡Anda! Elemental and *¡Anda! Intermedio*, Heining-Boynton and Cowell; MySpanishLab

About the Course

New Mexico State University serves a large and diverse student population. Many students commute to campus and combine work with academics. In an effort to assess and improve the educational experience for students, the Department of Languages and Linguistics conducted a student survey in spring 2009. The survey results revealed a large demand for Spanish courses. However, many students, juggling work obligations and other coursework, found it difficult to schedule a course that required four on-campus class meetings per week. The survey responses generated a thoroughgoing effort to redesign NMSU's lower-division Spanish courses.

Challenges and Goals

Our goals for improving the student learning experience were to:

- Ease students' scheduling burden by incorporating online learning.

- Serve more students with existing faculty.

- Maximize limited physical classroom space.

- Improve student learning outcomes.

Implementation

In careful consideration of all of these goals, we chose to adopt MySpanishLab for our elementary and intermediate Spanish courses. We revised our syllabus to reflect our learning objectives as set out in the national standards. Our syllabus clearly reflects our five-skills emphasis: communicate in Spanish; gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures; connect with other disciplines; compare new knowledge with concepts learned previously; and actively participate in Spanish-speaking communities.

These objectives are explicitly connected to activities in MySpanishLab and in class. Many activities, like quizzes, in-class and online participation, oral presentations, and chapter exams in MySpanishLab, are required. However, alongside the required activities, we offer a variety of elective activities in the areas of Communities, Culture, Connections, and Comparisons. These elective activities enable students to earn points toward their final grade and allow students to shape their learning experience around their interests.

Our course redesign has been a multistep process of improvement. In the first phase, we adopted a hybrid course format and required that students complete homework assignments and tests in MySpanishLab. At the end of the first term, we were encouraged to see that student learning outcomes had kept pace despite a fairly dramatic change in the course structure. However, we felt that students' speaking and writing skills needed to be strengthened. With fewer contact hours per week, we rely on MySpanishLab to make our online days more meaningful and increase students' contact time with the language. One way we address this is that we require students to visit the language lab weekly. There, students work independently in MySpanishLab but instructors are available to assist them one-on-one or to engage them in conversational practice. Our instructors, who are chiefly graduate assistants, feel much more engaged offering one-on-one instructional support to students in the language lab, rather than holding office hours that only a few students attend. Further, since in the second phase we have moved to an exclusively online course format, this personal attention in the language lab nicely complements the online instruction.

*"Through our course redesign, and with MySpanishLab, we have achieved
a paradigm shift from instructor-centered to student-centered learning."*

Benefits

With MySpanishLab, we are:

- Accommodating more students with our existing faculty.

- Making the best use of limited classroom and lab space.

- Guaranteeing consistent instruction for each student in all sections.

- Improving the classroom experience for students and instructors.

- Enabling students to pursue language learning on a schedule that suits them.

- Recording very satisfactory student learning outcomes.

- Offering student-centered learning in our elementary and intermediate Spanish courses.

- Increasing student engagement and participation.

Our instructors conduct a learning plan interview with each student once the course is underway. Ideally, students frame their responses in Spanish. Since we adopted MySpanishLab, students who do their assigned work in MySpanishLab are able to conduct the entire interview in Spanish, even in the elementary Spanish course.

Assessments

Hybrid Spanish courses: 62 percent of grade is directly related to MySpanishLab*

38 percent	Instructor's choice
23 percent	MySpanishLab activities/homework
15.5 percent	MySpanishLab chapter exams
15.5 percent	Final exam (taken in MySpanishLab)
8 percent	Online participation

Online Spanish courses: 90 percent of grade is directly related to MySpanishLab*

23 percent	MySpanishLab activities/homework
23 percent	Online participation
15.5 percent	MySpanishLab chapter exams
15.5 percent	Final exam (taken in MySpanishLab)
10 percent	Instructor's choice
7 percent	Oral exams
6 percent	Diarios

* Students can earn up to 15 percent extra credit by completing cultural activities in MySpanishLab

Results and Data

Since redesigning our course with MySpanishLab:

- Enrollments are up an average of 10 percent.

- Costs are down ($3,000 savings per year on paper/copying).

- Test scores are level or improved compared to traditional course structure.

- Retention rates have improved; DFW rate is 8 percent less after redesign.

Conclusion

With MySpanishLab, we are serving more students, more flexibly, at reduced cost. Student performance is improved, and our retention rates have increased. Through our course redesign, and with MySpanishLab, we have achieved a paradigm shift from instructor-centered to student-centered learning. For all these reasons, I recommend MySpanishLab as a powerful resource.