

School Name	Northampton Community College, Bethlehem, PA
Course Name	Introduction to Psychology
Format	Online

Key Result Students in a 27-day, compressed CourseConnect Introduction to Psychology course achieved final exam scores an average 21 points higher than students in the full-term course without CourseConnect.

Submitted by

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Course materials

Think Psychology by Baird with CourseConnect Introduction to Psychology

Having taught the Introduction to Psychology course in both online and on-ground formats with a variety of materials, I was interested in trying CourseConnect and to measure how well students learned with it compared to other solutions. Northampton offers a number of courses in a compressed winterim between our fall and spring terms. For my first time teaching the Introduction to Psychology course during winterim—a big course to cover in just 27 days—I chose to use CourseConnect.

“[W]hen I’m evaluating courseware, I look for lots of built-in low- or no-stakes assessments that provide abundant feedback, motivate students to persevere, and build conceptual understanding bit by manageable bit. I adopted CourseConnect because it offers precisely this kind of instructional support for students.”

Northampton Community College students come to Introduction to Psychology with a wide variety of learning styles and skill sets. Most students at this level lack some of the skills that would define them as college-ready. For this reason, when I’m evaluating courseware, I look for lots of built-in low- or no-stakes assessments that provide abundant feedback, motivate students to persevere, and build conceptual understanding bit

by manageable bit. I adopted CourseConnect because it offers precisely this kind of instructional support for students. Lesson Presentations offer new content in accessible chunks; Check Your Understanding reviews give students frequent mini-assessments; and the Study Guide shows students the content areas they’ve mastered and the ones needing further study.

Implementation

I make clear to students that online courses are not easier than on-ground courses; in fact, online courses require a greater degree of discipline and time management—skills that will serve them well throughout their academic and career lives.

CourseConnect gives students all-in-one-place, 24/7 access to rich content as well as assignments organized by due dates, a Study Guide, and more. Students begin each week’s work in CourseConnect with the Lesson Presentation. I recommend that students then work through the chapter in the Study Guide to get an early assessment of their comprehension. The Study Guide gives students a completely intuitive display: green for content they have mastered, amber or red for content that needs further study. At this point, students can review parts of the Lesson Presentation and then begin working through activities and formulating their discussion posts. Frequent quizzes allow me to confirm that students are on track or to intervene one-on-one if students require assistance. After completing the week’s assigned activities, students again work through the Study Guide to confirm mastery of all of the chapter’s concepts and vocabulary. A midterm and a final exam round out the course assessments.

Assessments

72 percent	CourseConnect (learning unit activities, quizzes, discussion board)
28 percent	Exams

“I’m really pleased to see that students scored an average 21 points higher on the final exam in the compressed winterim course with CourseConnect than students in the fall term who did not use CourseConnect.”

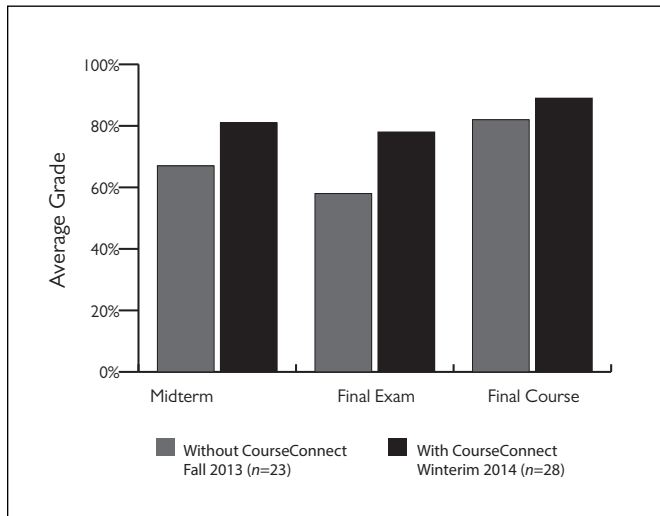


Figure 1. Online Introduction to Psychology Average Midterm, Final Exam, and Final Course Grades with and without CourseConnect, Fall 2013–Winterim 2014

Results and data

The winterim session presented a challenge, both for me and the students. The Introduction to Psychology course is a big course; the new vocabulary and concepts students must master can be daunting even on a regular schedule. Covering it all—and mastering it—in 27 days is really a tall order.

At the start of the course, I predicted that the midterm and final exam scores, rather than just the final course grades, would offer the clearest measure of students’ improved learning. I’m really pleased to see that students scored an average 21 points higher on the final exam in the compressed winterim course with CourseConnect than students in the fall term who did not use CourseConnect. The depth of resources and the superb instructional design in CourseConnect really supported students’ learning and helped them to master a wealth of new material in a short time. The proof is in the exam scores.

The student experience

Students not only performed better with CourseConnect, they enjoyed using it and appreciated the value it offered them.

- *“I liked the use of interactive PowerPoints with a variety of videos because together they kept the course interesting. I also liked the discussions.”*
- *“CourseConnect showed me all the work I needed to get done and the due dates. I was then able to work at my own pace.”*
- *“I liked the Lesson Presentations a lot. They really helped me understand the material, and the Check Your Understanding reviews helped me measure my understanding.”*
- *“CourseConnect is a great source for an online class—very easy to use, especially for a first-timer like me.”*

“CourseConnect showed me all the work I needed to get done and the due dates. I was then able to work at my own pace.”

—Northampton Community College Student

An end-of-term survey revealed the following:

- 89.3% Yes** “Would you take another CourseConnect course?”
- 85.7% Yes** “Would you recommend CourseConnect to a fellow student?”
- 74.0%** Students who used the Study Guide who agreed or definitely agreed that the Study Guide helped them increase their scores on graded quizzes and exams.

Conclusion

I’m pleased both with the results achieved with CourseConnect and with students’ responses to the course. Students in a 27-day, compressed CourseConnect Introduction to Psychology course outscored students in the full-term course without CourseConnect. Those results speak to CourseConnect’s efficacy.