

School Name Harper College, Palatine, IL

Course Name Art History

Course Format Face-to-face

Key Results Data indicate a positive correlation between MyArtsLab with Writing Space scores and exam scores. Engaging students with interactive media and incorporating writing led to a better understanding of course content as indicated by an average increase in exam scores of seven percent.

Submitted by

Stephany E. Rimland, Associate Professor

Course materials

Art History, Stokstad; MyArtsLab

Background

Harper College is an accredited, two-year institution with just over 5,500 undergraduate students. Fifty-four percent of students receive financial aid (approximately twenty percent fewer than the national average for two-year public institutions).

This course covers the history of art from the medieval age to the end of the eighteenth century. Focusing on major artistic styles, and works of art and monuments, the course follows the historical development of the visual arts produced by western civilizations. A wide range of students take this course, including both traditional and non-traditional aged students, and art majors and non-majors.

Challenges and Goals

I decided to implement MyArtsLab with Writing Space as a way to engage students and prepare them for success on their exams and final research papers. My exams measure students' ability to identify artists, artworks and architecture, and the important changes and developments made within different cultural and historical periods. The exams consist of multiple-choice questions that assess students' basic understanding of course content and two comparative essays, which require demonstration of higher-order thinking skills. The exam essays are designed to prepare students for their final research paper by providing a foundation in academic writing and critical reasoning. Because MyArtsLab assignments encourage students to read the book more carefully and interact with course material outside of class, I believed I would see improved class results with its implementation.

Implementation

I've been using MyArtsLab for three semesters. Although it contains a wealth of resources, I decided to start slowly when integrating MyArtsLab into my course. I started by requiring weekly "Closer Looks" and "Architectural Panorama" media assignments. Closer Look assignments model how art historians talk about a work of art and teach students to focus on key details they might not otherwise see. They provide engaging facts and include audio to help with pronunciations of unfamiliar names and terms. The Architectural Panorama assignments provide 360-degree views of major monuments featured in the textbook.

I've steadily increased my use of MyArtsLab. Because an important part of my course involves developing students' writing and critical thinking skills, this past semester I used Writing Space's instructor-created assignment functionality to assign, track, and grade my students' final research papers. I inserted a customized rubric directly into the Writing Space component of MyArtsLab which made it easy to grade my students' final research papers and to provide personalized feedback to them all in one place.

Benefits

- Students come to class better prepared for discussions.
- Closer Look and Architectural Panorama media assignments provide an easy way to assign and grade frequent assessments throughout the semester.
- Assigning the final research paper in Writing Space allows me to track and grade student papers.
- Writing Space automatically checks students' work for plagiarism using the built-in Turnitin feature.

Assessments

60 percent	Exams (three)
40 percent	MyArtsLab (Writing Space; Closer Look and Architectural Panorama media assignments)

“The Closer Looks and online assignments greatly improved my understanding of art history. It was an extremely helpful supplement to reading the textbook because it was interactive.”

– Student

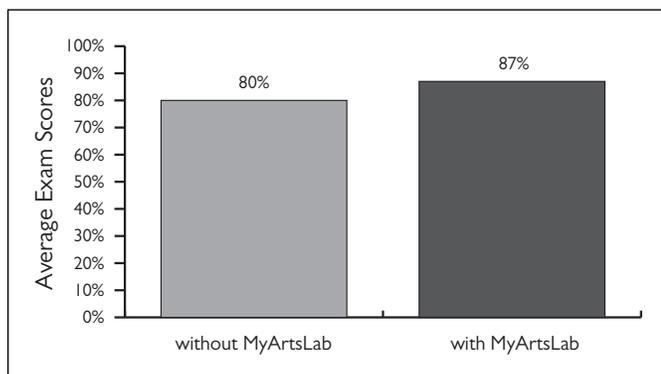


Figure 1. Average Exam Scores (Exams 1–3) without MyArtsLab (Fall 2012–Spring 2013, $n=50$) vs. with MyArtsLab (Fall 2013–Fall 2014, $n=72$)

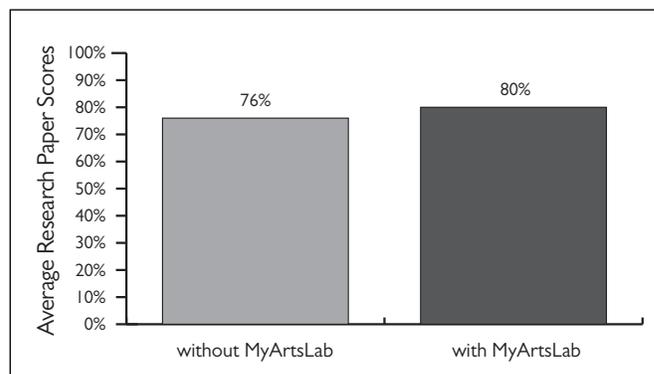


Figure 3. Average Research Paper Scores without MyArtsLab (Fall 2012–Spring 2013, $n=50$) vs. with MyArtsLab (Fall 2013–Fall 2014, $n=72$)

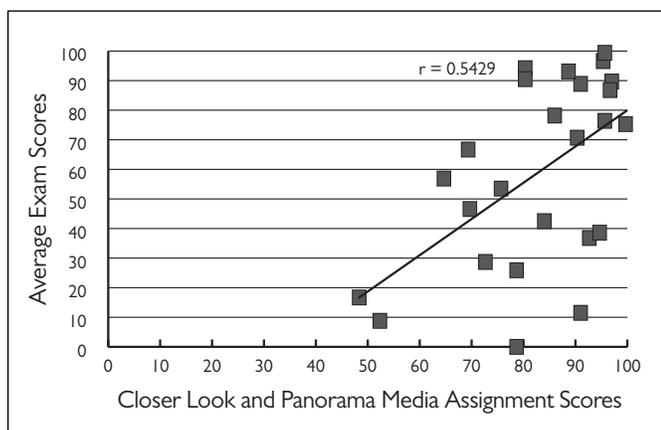


Figure 2. Correlation Between Student's Average Exam Scores (Exams 1–3) and MyArtsLab's Closer Look and Architectural Panorama Media Assignments (Fall 2014, $n=25$)

Results and Data

Since implementing MyArtsLab, I've observed, and data supports, improvements in exam scores (Figure 1). I've assigned the same exams each semester, making it easier to measure MyArtsLab's impact on student learning. The data from fall 2014 also shows a positive correlation between student performance on MyArtsLab's Closer Look and Architectural Panorama media assignments and their performance on exams (Figure 2). Because Closer Look and Architectural Panorama media assignments are designed to address specific topics in each chapter, not the entire chapter, I expected a correlation somewhere in this range. In addition, student performance on the final research paper has improved (Figure 3).

The Student Experience

When students were asked to provide one “best practice” to share with other students, use of the eText and media assignments were two of the most common responses. One student in my class provided the following advice: “Definitely utilize the Closer Looks. I also find it helpful to listen and follow along with the text at the same time.”

Conclusion

The data indicate that MyArtsLab—in particular, the Closer Look and Architectural Panoramas—is having a positive impact on student learning in my course. The program allows me to emphasize and elaborate on specific topics. Because MyArtsLab assignments are graded (required), students come to class more prepared for vigorous class discussions—a much more active form of learning than a traditional lecture format. In addition, Writing Space has made the process of assigning a research paper as an end-of-semester summative assessment easier and more efficient by providing built-in tools like Turnitin.

Source for demographic information:
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d13/tables/dt13_331.20.asp