

School Name University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, HI

Course Name Child Development

Course Format Traditional

Key Results With MyPsychLab students come to class more prepared to participate and engage in class discussions. Additionally, 9 percent more students earned a final grade of A or B with MyPsychLab.

Submitted by

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Course materials

Child Development: A Cultural Approach by Arnett and Maynard with MyPsychLab

This course is a general introduction to biological, social, and cognitive development from infancy through emerging adulthood. I also like to include significant coverage of culture because it helps us understand what is universal in human development and what is variable in different parts of the world. In the past it was hard to find course materials that integrated culture throughout the text and online resources. Consequently, I decided to co-author *Child Development: A Cultural Approach* complemented by MyPsychLab to give my students more information about this important topic.

Also, I teach large sections, which makes it especially challenging to keep students engaged during long lectures. I decided to use MyPsychLab's cross-cultural video series and MyVirtualChild not only to present valuable content and simulations but also to engage students outside of class and to prepare them for more informed and interested class discussions.

Implementation

Students complete their choice of 5 of 9 chapter exams within MyPsychLab and must achieve at least 70 percent before they take the corresponding in-class exam. Each student also raises a "virtual child" from birth through age 18 using the MyVirtualChild simulation within MyPsychLab, applying the developmental concepts they are learning in class and in their textbook. Students bring their MyVirtualChild writing assignments to class to use while discussing important topics, after which they submit the assignments for grading. These writing assignments are valuable because they correlate closely to the material they must master to pass their exams.

Assessments

40 percent	Three Exams (the lowest score is dropped so only two are counted)
37.5 percent	Final Exam
10 percent	Five MyPsychLab chapter exams
12.5 percent	Four MyVirtualChild assignments

Benefits

- Overall student performance has improved with more students achieving an A or B in the course.
- Final exam scores have increased since using MyPsychLab.
- Students feel MyVirtualChild assignments help them analyze, apply, and think critically about course content.
- Cultural coverage is seamlessly integrated throughout the text and in MyPsychLab's exams and videos.

Results and data

I pulled data from the last time I taught the course (2006) without MyPsychLab to analyze how MyPsychLab with MyVirtualChild is impacting student learning. Grade distributions with MyPsychLab showed that 78 percent of the students earned an A or a B in the class compared with 69 percent of the students taking the course without MyPsychLab. In addition, 43 percent of the students earned an A for the course, compared to 26 percent without MyPsychLab (figure 2).

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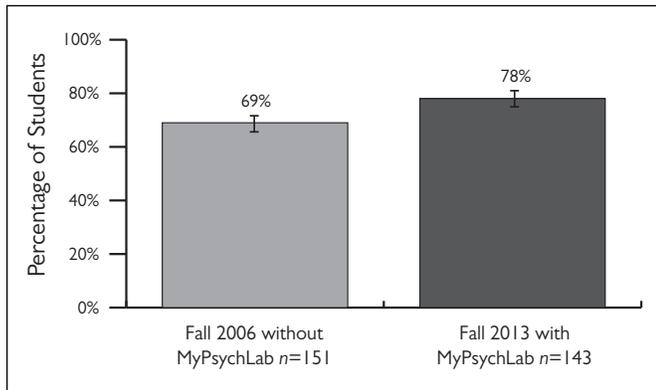


Figure 1. Overall Course Grade of A or B with and without MyPsychLab, Fall 2006 vs. Fall 2013

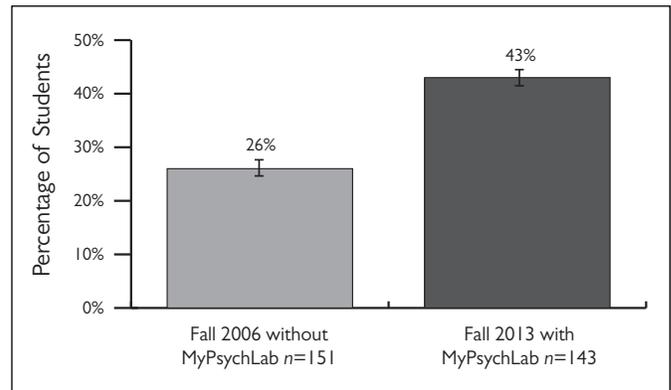


Figure 2. Overall Course Grade of A with and without MyPsychLab, Fall 2006 vs. Fall 2013

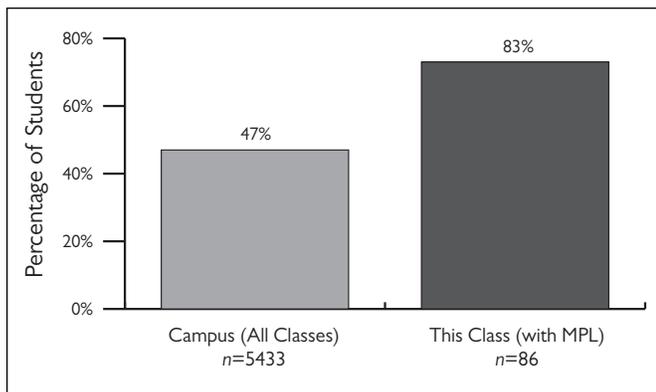


Figure 3. Comparison of Student Survey Results in this Class with MyPsychLab vs. All Other Classes on Campus, Fall 2013

The student experience

Because students come to class prepared they are better able to participate in class discussions that further enhance their understanding and their ability to apply the major concepts. Also, students report that my class exams are quite challenging, which makes the increase in overall course grades even more impressive (figures 1-2). Students' preparation outside of class—reading the assigned text and completing the MyPsychLab assessments at home before taking my in-class exams and working on MyVirtualChild writing assignments—helps them improve their performance.

On our university-wide survey focused on students' opinions about their courses, 73 percent of my students “strongly agreed” that the course materials made a valuable contribution to the course, compared to 47 percent of students taking other courses (figure 3).

Conclusion

I am pleased to see the data show that I am making solid progress toward my goal of improving student learning outcomes. Their higher grades indicate they are gaining greater mastery of the subject matter than they have in the past, and students are now clearly more engaged in the course—both in and outside of class. In the future I plan to dig deeper and analyze student performance on chapter exams vs. in-class exams to see if requiring more low-stakes exams in MyPsychLab would have a positive impact on students' overall performance.

“I thought the MyVirtualChild and MyPsychLab programs were very important in helping me succeed in this class. Also, I thought raising a virtual child was fun and gave the theories we were learning in class real-world applicability.”

—Student