

Community College of Baltimore County Baltimore, Maryland

INSTRUCTORS Patricia Harrigan and Soumaya Long

COURSE NAME Introductory Spanish I

CREDIT HOURS 3

COURSE FORMAT Traditional; Online; Hybrid

TEXT *¡Arriba!* by Zayas-Bazán, Bacon, and Nibert

CONTRIBUTION OF MYSpanishLAB TO FINAL GRADE 25% or more

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Improvement in final course grades

MYLAB USER SINCE 2008

THE INTRODUCTORY SPANISH COURSE at Community College of Baltimore County serves 1000+ students each year on CCBC's three main campuses. MySpanishLab was adopted at CCBC in 2008 after a comprehensive review of available resources. In selecting MySpanishLab, Professor Patricia Harrigan and her colleagues concluded that MySpanishLab was the best resource to help them meet the following course goals. The Introductory Spanish course will:

- offer students a consistent learning experience across multiple campuses
- provide consistent instruction and course execution from instructor to instructor
- address the individual learning needs and learning styles of a diverse student population
- curtail the dependence on physical language labs
- enable the implementation of both online and hybrid course formats

According to Patricia Harrigan, "We took a careful approach to examining a course that serves over a thousand students on three campuses each year. We did not have language labs available on all of our campuses. Through the implementation of MySpanishLab and other improvements, we hoped to address inconsistencies in both physical resources and in instruction for our students."

She continues, "We wanted to provide a single location for students to access all course materials and instruction. We wanted to ensure a consistent, high-quality learning experience for all of our students. And we knew that we could serve more students if we could adapt our course to fit a hybrid or purely online model. For all of these reasons, we chose to make MySpanishLab central to our course."

ASSESSING STUDENT PERFORMANCE

In spring 2010, Professors Patricia Harrigan and Soumaya Long spearheaded a thorough assessment of student learning outcomes in Introductory Spanish. Harrigan and Long used the college-wide CCBC Learning Outcomes Assessment process. They chose to conduct an assessment across all sections of one course over one semester. All course types (traditional, online, hybrid) were subject to the same assessment. Competencies to be measured were linked to the course objectives, and the assessment exam was developed using the textbook's ancillary materials.

"In fact, the **major takeaway** from our initial assessment was that maximum, **consistent use** of MySpanishLab was the key to realizing our goals for student learning outcomes."

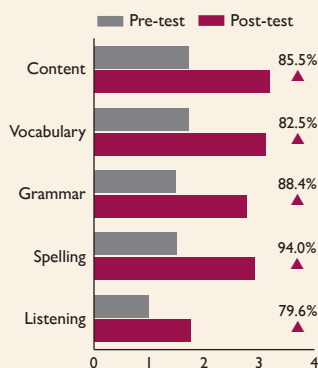
—Professor Patricia Harrigan

“We compared the performance of students using MySpanishLab to that of students not yet using it—the results definitely proved the case for MySpanishLab.”

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Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test scores

Initial assessment spring 2010: 555 students



ANALYSIS

Students using MySpanishLab in the Introductory Spanish course made consistent gains across all areas.

At CCBC, all Introductory Spanish instructors use a common syllabus and require MySpanishLab. Students' competencies were measured at the beginning of the semester with an initial Pre-Test; a Post-Test given at the end of the semester measured students' progress.

RESULTS

In the initial assessment of students in the spring of 2010, scores in the areas of content, vocabulary, grammar, and spelling showed consistent improvement.

“We gleaned a number of insights from the assessment,” says Harrigan. “We found that MySpanishLab delivered consistent learning improvements for our online students equal to those achieved by students in the traditional, face-to-face course. By contrast, we compared the performance of students using MySpanishLab to the performance of students in sections where we had not yet implemented MySpanishLab—those results definitely proved the case for MySpanishLab.”

“Students were very pleased with MySpanishLab,” says Harrigan. “MySpanishLab makes it easy to see progress, and students found this very motivating. Instructors, too, quickly understood how MySpanishLab helps them and their students. The automatic grading is a real time-saver, and the ability to monitor every student's progress—at a glance—empowers instructors to target struggling students immediately and intervene to help them succeed.”

She continues, “At the outset, we said it was essential that students meet pre-set goals for learning in the course. Based on the initial assessment, we agreed that students' listening and speaking skills needed to be strengthened further, and that we would require MySpanishLab listening activities going forward. We recognized that MySpanishLab allows for a virtual classroom to be in session all the time. Students can and do access instruction outside of class, on their own schedule. Class meetings are not the sole focus but rather a beginning for the learning that continues in MySpanishLab. We also realized that MySpanishLab has a rich set of capabilities that were not being used consistently by all faculty, resulting in inconsistent outcomes. In fact, the major takeaway from our initial assessment was that maximum, consistent use of MySpanishLab was the key to realizing our goals for student learning outcomes.”

“Effective course design and implementation is an iterative, continuous process,” Harrigan stresses. “The data we collected from our first assessment showed us where we were succeeding and pointed to areas for improvement. Focusing on outcomes and measurements enables us to continue improving our instruction and student learning outcomes.”

CONCLUSION

Harrigan sums up, “Our overarching goal in undertaking the assessment process was to make learning more student-centered. MySpanishLab was central to this transformation. Our instructors no longer direct but rather guide, coach, and facilitate. And our students now pursue an active, thoughtful learning process, continually measuring their performance against their academic goals. In this way, MySpanishLab helps us to improve students' performance, not just in our Introductory Spanish course, but in students' academic and career paths beyond this course.”

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