

School Name Metropolitan Community College, Omaha, NE

Course Name Elementary Spanish I

Course Format Hybrid, online, face-to-face

Key Results Final exam area scores in the hybrid course format average three percentage points higher than in the online course format and eight percentage points higher than in the face-to-face course format.

Submitted by

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Course materials

¡Arriba!, Zayas-Bazan; MySpanishLab

Metropolitan Community College is an open institution with five campuses. We are on an 11-week quarter system. The average age of our students is 27. We offer an Associate's degree in Spanish, and many students take Elementary Spanish I (7.5 credits) as a prerequisite.

About the Course

Elementary Spanish I is the first of two introductory courses where students begin to learn the fundamentals of Spanish. We cover comprehension, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and a study of Spanish-speaking cultures. Most students enrolled have had little to no experience with the Spanish language. Elementary Spanish I is offered as a traditional class, online, and as a hybrid of the two. Students in hybrid courses meet face-to-face for half the amount of time as traditional courses; the other half is replaced with online study and learning activities.

Challenges and Goals

I selected MySpanishLab for our elementary Spanish courses because I wanted to make online and hybrid courses as effective and engaging for students as the traditional lecture-format courses. My doctoral research focused on Web 2.0 technologies that facilitate interactive information sharing, user-centered designs, and collaboration on the Internet. I wanted to know who benefits the most from these tools and if every class format should use these tools. The results of my thesis indicated that student achievement significantly improved in the Web 2.0-enhanced courses with MySpanishLab.

Implementation

One of my best practices for getting started is giving students step-by-step instructions, with screen shots, on how to register for and navigate MySpanishLab. It is critical to their success and helps them start strong. We use the course calendar in MySpanishLab to help students keep track of their scores.

For each textbook chapter, students are assigned one exam, one composition, Student Activities Manual (SAM) homework, and oral practice activities. On average, we require 20–25 SAM activities a week. We assign almost all of the computer-graded MySpanishLab activities, including listening, reading, writing, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, and crosswords. Some instructors set daily due dates, while others set due dates for the end of each week. Students in the hybrid class complete oral practice activities in person with their instructor; online students record their voice, and the instructor grades their recording.

Hybrid and online students participate in one or more discussion boards per chapter, based on the *Vistas Culturales* videos. This is enjoyable for students because they get to talk about culture and interact with one another. Instructors interact individually with students online at least every 48 hours, and students are required to collaborate with peers on class assignments each week using chat tools in MySpanishLab.

Benefits

MySpanishLab benefits both teachers and students—it offers one place where students can find all the resources they need. Before MySpanishLab, we constantly had to update our course materials. Now, the process has been automated by the publisher, which has taken a load off instructors. MySpanishLab has made teaching more effective in all course formats. Instructors can now spend more time on one-on-one instruction, intervening when students need individualized attention.

“MySpanishLab offers an engaging environment where learning happens effortlessly and naturally.”

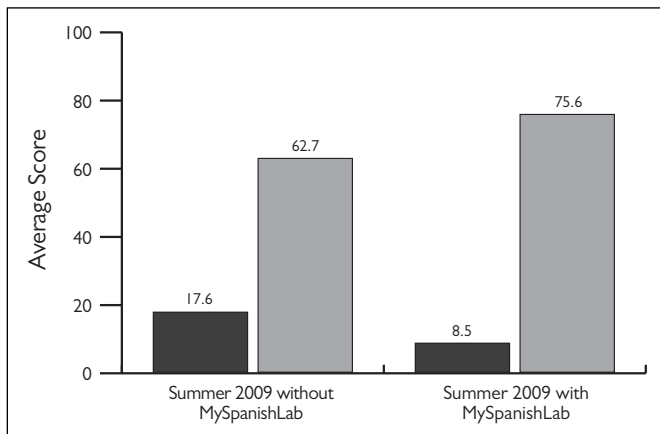


Figure 1. Pre- and Posttest Scores in the Online Course Format: Summer 2009 With MySpanishLab (n = 39) and Without MySpanishLab (n = 61)

Assessments

45 percent	Exams (4)
20 percent	MySpanishLab homework; compositions (5)
20 percent	Participation activities
	Hybrid: culture presentation
	Online: discussion board posts
15 percent	Final exam

The Student Experience

MySpanishLab allows students to practice, attempt activities more than once, and receive immediate feedback. The learning process is tailored to the needs of the student, effectively deepening their learning. MySpanishLab offers an engaging environment where learning happens effortlessly and naturally. Student feedback has been positive: “I liked how the teacher did not lecture in class, but let us do that [type of work] outside of class in MySpanishLab in a fun, hands-on way.”

Results and Data

Figure 1 reports data from my initial research and shows that student achievement significantly improved in the test course using MySpanishLab. The pre- and posttests were identical and included sections on listening, speaking, writing, and reading.

We no longer give pretests because we want to focus on longitudinal data and variance across modes on the posttest/final exam. Figure 2 compares final exam results in our face-to-

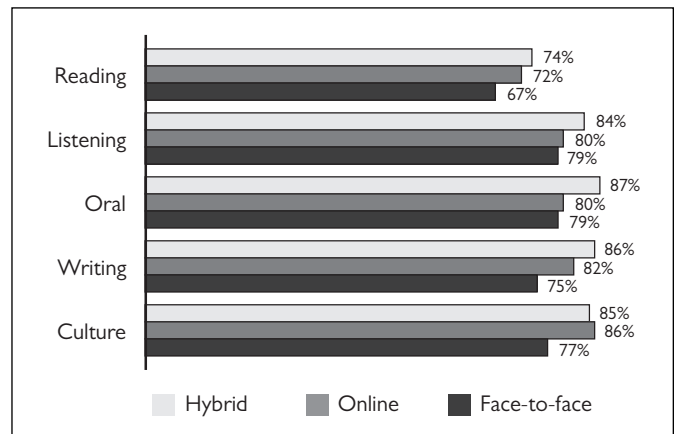


Figure 2. Combined Final Exam Component Score Averages from Fall 2013, Winter 2013–14, Spring 2014, Summer 2014. Hybrid (n = 52)*, Online (n = 202), Face-to-face classroom (n = 110). *No hybrid courses were offered in summer 2014.

face, online, and hybrid Elementary Spanish I course formats. We look at certain question sets on the final exam to assess students’ reading, listening, speaking, and writing skills as well as students’ understanding of culture. These questions match up with our expected course outcomes. We use the data to modify our instruction, support, and types of activities assigned/covered to improve weaker areas the following quarter. All course formats currently use MySpanishLab, but based on the data in Figure 2, which shows higher scores in the hybrid sections (on average three percentage points higher than online and eight percentage points higher than face-to-face), we have focused our energy on moving more face-to-face classes to the hybrid format. In the spring of 2015, adjuncts will begin teaching hybrid evening courses.

Conclusion

Student engagement, active learning, and motivation are key factors affecting student performance, especially in online learning. Tools such as MySpanishLab enhance the importance of community and facilitate communication and collaboration between students and instructors in a more immersive, engaged way.

With MySpanishLab, we can continue to offer online and hybrid courses that are robust, effective alternatives to the on-campus classes. We plan to incorporate podcasts, voice discussion boards, video share, and social media such as Vine, Epub, and Instagram to further enhance students’ learning experience.