

School Name	University of Georgia, Athens, GA
Course Name	Elementary Spanish (4 credit hours)
Course Format	Hybrid, flipped classroom

**Key Results** A redesigned course using a hybrid format allows the University of Georgia to serve more students while seeing improved classroom interaction, increased student engagement, and more active communication.

#### Submitted by

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#### Course materials

*Unidos*, Guzmán, Lapuerta, and Liskin-Gasparro; MySpanishLab

### About the Course

In fall 2012, rising enrollment at the university and an increased classroom cap size caused difficulty in scheduling and reserving enough classrooms. The Department of Romance Languages decided to redesign our Elementary Spanish sequence, changing it from a face-to-face course meeting four days a week to a hybrid format course meeting just three times a week. Credit hours did not change.

### Challenges and Goals

We knew hybrid classes would automatically solve the issue of classroom space, but we decided we also wanted to improve the quality of classroom interaction—this became our main goal. Before the redesign, homework was completed online while all instruction and assessment were conducted in the classroom. We expected students to review material before coming to class, but we had no way to hold them accountable. Often, they skipped this review because they knew the information would be covered in class. Twice a week, TAs led communicative activities to practice material learned the previous day. Students didn't have much to do outside of class except the homework.

We were using MySpanishLab mostly as an online workbook for assignments, and we knew we were not taking advantage of all it had to offer. Our redesign process allowed us to critically assess our program's needs, identify assessments and instructional materials that would work well in a hybrid course format, evaluate available products and resources, and then pilot a product. We chose Pearson's *Unidos* with MySpanishLab, which employs a "flipped classroom" approach and is thoroughly integrated with a broad array of online activities, assessments, and instructional tools.

### Implementation

Instead of listening to classroom lectures and then practicing Spanish outside of class afterward, students now complete multiple assignments in MySpanishLab before coming to class, like watching grammar tutorials or videos online. We purposely assign a completion grade for this pre-classroom work so students come into class better prepared and ready to participate and communicate actively. With *Unidos* we are now able to make them accountable for acquiring the foundation they need to truly engage with the Spanish language.

#### Assessment

75 percent	In class: chapter quizzes (4), midterm exam, final exam, daily class participation, compositions (2)
25 percent	MySpanishLab: homework, interactive presentations, vocabulary/grammar tutorials, auto-graded activities, online oral tests (2)

### Results and Data

In our spring 2013 hybrid pilot sections we did not see any major difference in student grades from the traditional sections. However, since we were able to make better use of classroom space and student grades did not decrease, we considered this a positive result (Figure 1).

In our fully redesigned semester in fall 2013, we did see A grades increase by nine percentage points (Figure 2). Although DFW rates were higher in the redesigned semester, we understand that the redesign transition takes time for both instructors and students to adjust to the change.

Our hybrid format has allowed us to accommodate more students with flexible class schedules and additional sections. We added one more section of 29 students in the redesigned fall 2013 semester. In spring 2014, our enrollment increased by another section of 33 students to 196.

*“The MySpanishLab activities provided extra practice on topics I needed help with, and the quizzes even gave me specific feedback on what I needed to get better at and how to do it! Both the textbook and MySpanishLab corresponded very well with the in-class material, and finishing these digital homework assignments first helped me in class. I’m a big fan of the online portion of this class.”*

—Student

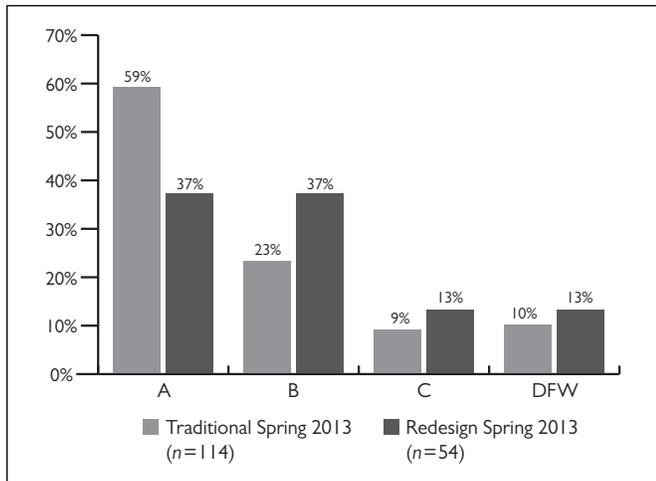


Figure 1. Final Course Grades, Traditional Spring 2013 and Redesigned (Pilot) Spring 2013

After the redesign, students began asking better, more purposeful questions that included informed examples. With a knowledge base from online work completed at home, students became more confident in their language skills and more likely to actively participate.

#### Best practices

Communication among instructors was crucial throughout the redesign pilot. We held regular meetings with the department’s language coordinator, and we met once a month with the other instructors to field questions and receive feedback about our pilot to identify missing elements or to consider new ideas. We wanted everyone to be informed, engaged, and excited about teaching a hybrid course so when the entire program moved to this model in fall 2013, every instructor and TA knew what to expect and was looking forward to the change.

Our graduating PhD students also benefited: when interviewing for teaching jobs, many found their experience teaching hybrid courses made them more attractive candidates.

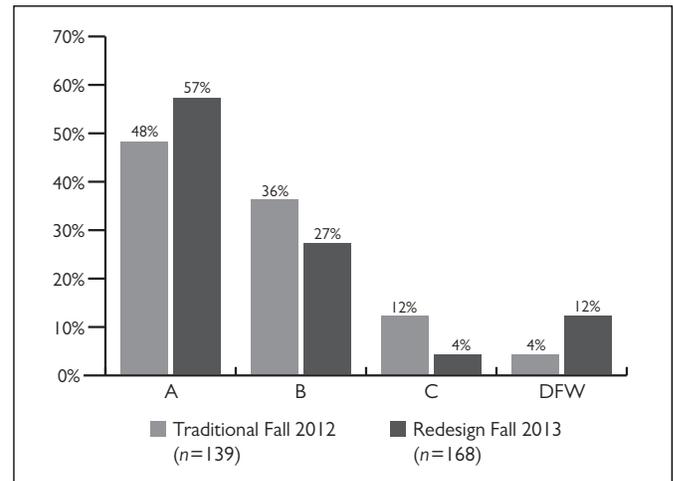


Figure 2. Final Course Grades, Traditional Fall 2012 and Redesigned Fall 2013

## Conclusion

All Elementary Spanish courses are now hybrid, and we will continue to reevaluate and improve the program. Since we now know what students can do in the classroom and online, we are considering adding quizzes to the online work, as they take valuable class time to proctor. The success of our course redesign has encouraged us to “think big.” We will soon offer Elementary Spanish completely online to accommodate students who are away from campus during the summer, and we hope to continue to increase the university’s enrollment.

Moving to the hybrid format challenged instructors to become more active in the classroom with the new focus on group work and conversation. Even though we now meet just three times a week instead of four, face-to-face class time is now more productive because we use it to engage in realistic communication activities rather than simply lecture to review grammar and vocabulary. Our classrooms are very different and much more productive than they were a year ago.

*“Face-to-face class time is now more productive because we use it to engage in realistic communication activities rather than simply lecture to review grammar and vocabulary.”*