School Name	University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
Course Name	Intermediate Spanish I
Course Format	Face-to-face, web-enhanced

Key Results The data suggest a positive correlation between MySpanishLab homework and the overall course grade: students who complete and score higher on MySpanishLab homework also perform better in the course overall.

Submitted by
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Course materials
Conexiones: Comunicacion y Cultura, by Zayas-Bazan, Bacon, García; MySpanishLab

Setting

University of Minnesota (UMN) is the state's flagship, land-grant university, established in 1851 in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Of 62,000 total students, undergraduates represent 66 percent and graduate students 20 percent. Students of color make up 18 percent of the undergraduate population and women 50 percent. In 2015, 90 percent of undergraduates attended full-time.[1]

Four semesters of language courses are required of degree-seeking students at UMN; the majority of students enrolled in Intermediate Spanish are taking it to fulfill a language requirement. Intermediate Spanish is the third course in our Spanish language sequence. It is a 16-week, five-credit course; students meet face-to-face four times a week but are expected to do a considerable amount of homework online. This includes activities created in Moodle and MySpanishLab, thus its denotation as "web-enhanced 4+1". We have used the *Conexiones* text since 2001.

We offer about 20 sections annually with 23–24 students per section. I teach four sections per year. All levels of students are enrolled, from freshmen to seniors, as well as both traditional and non-traditional students. Additionally, UMN offers a College in the Schools program in which college-level courses are taught to high-level high school students. We have 38 instructors teaching Intermediate Spanish I and II and upwards of 1,600 students using MySpanishLab with the *Conexiones* text.

Challenges and Goals

At UMN, we teach Spanish in a communicative manner. Our approach is based on the fundamental premises of Second Language Acquisition theory:

- Language learning is not linear, rather it is a gradual and complex process.

- Learners need exposure to rich, comprehensible input, because in trying to understand the input and paying attention to its meaning, they learn the language forms.

- Learners need plenty of opportunities to use the language in a reality-based interactive context.

The ultimate goal of our program is for students to be able to speak, understand, read, and write in Spanish within certain contexts. We strive to help each student become an independent language learner using rich and exciting cultural content.

The course requires a considerable amount of work to be completed online, outside of the classroom contact hours. MySpanishLab helps us achieve our goals by supplying students with varied and numerous components for ample language practice. MySpanishLab gives students an opportunity to experience a wealth of authentic cultural materials online that otherwise may not be contextualized or readily available to students.

Finally, UMN puts extra emphasis on art and culture through language. It was our goal to match our course objectives by including additional "art tour" content to cover works of art in more depth. We were able to customize the national version of MySpanishLab to accommodate our needs. We also included additional reading strategies from Pearson's *Gente* textbook.

Implementation

We use a Program Version utilizing a template with sections in MySpanishLab for consistent implementation of MySpanishLab

[1] http://www.oir.umn.edu/student/enrollment/term/1153

Being able to customize our resources with Pearson to offer additional realia has been important to our program. We created art tours to serve as a gateway for students to engage in something authentic and real.

homework across sections. Chapters *Preliminar* through 5 are covered in this course.

We assign about 10 Student Activity Manual (SAM) activities each week over the course of 13 weeks, for a total of about 135 activities. The majority of the homework in MySpanishLab is computer-graded. We give students three attempts on their homework to get their best score. All MySpanishLab assignments are due at 11:55PM on the date listed except for those listed on Fridays, which are due on Sunday at 11:55PM.

The following highlights particular assignments in or related to MySpanishLab:

- Five culture video blog activities are assigned in MySpanishLab to guide students in their comprehension of the material before, during, and after the viewing. These cultural videos are both engaging and well-made. We watch portions of the videos in class, and students watch the rest as homework and answer questions.

  The semester culminates with a video blog project based on these assignments that also incorporates the elements of an oral presentation. Completed in groups of six, students film a 10-minute video on a topic related to one of the chapters from the textbook and choose a role of actor, writer, director, or videographer. The students have one class period to present their video with a brief introduction. The class watches the video; then students conduct a follow-up activity with the class.

- Six *Páginas* literary selections are assigned (one for each chapter) with pre- and post-readings and post-reading activities.

- *Ensayos* are 125-word essays submitted through TurnItIn. Completed in anticipation of the *Mesa Redonda* (roundtable) composition, the essays are based on the 3–4 paragraph comparison reading that comes mid-chapter in the text. Students briefly summarize the topic and relate it to their own life.

- *Imágenes* (Art) We assign a few art-tours for homework in MySpanishLab and also spend class time discussing artwork related to the chapter theme.

- One to four grammar tutorials are assigned weekly in MySpanishLab.

- Students are encouraged to complete Extra Practice activities in MySpanishLab. These do not count toward the final grade.

While we do not implement a classic flipped classroom model, we have always asked students to complete grammar work in advance of class, so they come ready to communicate and participate. Before MySpanishLab, students used a paper workbook, but we could not tell if work was being completed. With MySpanishLab, we can require grammar work, set due dates, and count it as part of the homework grade. A benefit of assigning homework in MySpanishLab is that instructors can track student progress—we see how much time students spend on an activity and how well they do via the Student Performance channel on "Today's View" in MySpanishLab.

Assessments

25 percent	Exams (3)
20 percent	Final Exam
10 percent	MySpanishLab
10 percent	Video blog project
10 percent	Interpersonal exchange
10 percent	Composition (*Mesa Redonda*)
5 percent	Essays (5)
5 percent	Moodle forums and quizzes
5 percent	Participation and preparation

Results and Data

We found a strong correlation between MySpanishLab homework and the overall course grade, $r = .65$, $p<.01$ (Figure 1). The data suggest that students who complete and score higher on MySpanishLab homework also perform better in the course. It should be noted that MySpanishLab homework scores made up 10 percent of the final course grade, influencing this relationship.

The success rate for students taking Intermediate Spanish in the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015 was 97 percent. When we look at average MySpanishLab scores grouped by course letter
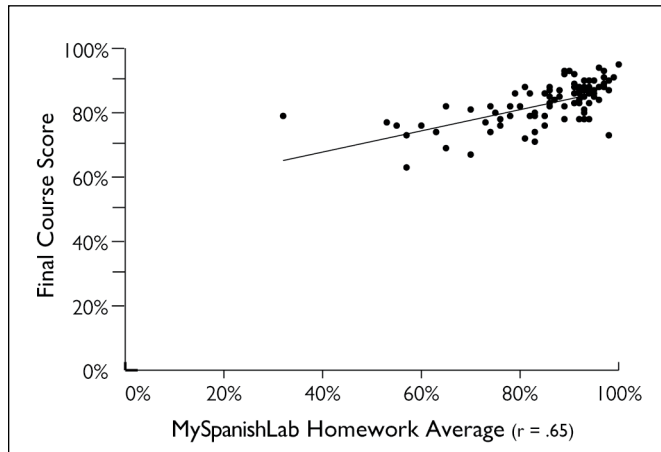
Figure 1. Correlation between MySpanishLab Homework Average and Final Course Score, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 ($n = 92$)
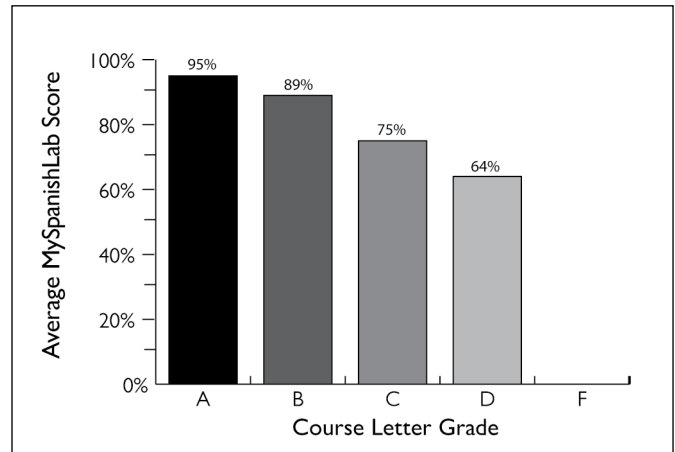

Figure 2. Average MySpanishLab Homework Scores Grouped by Course Letter Grades, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015 ($N = 92$): A ($n = 15$); B ($n = 50$); C ($n = 24$); D ($n = 3$); F ($n = 0$)

grade, we can see that there is a positive relationship between MySpanishLab scores and the final course grade achieved. I plan on sharing these data in my orientation sessions to help students see the relationship between MySpanishLab work and overall course success. MySpanishLab is an essential piece of the course that can have an impact on student's ability to understand and demonstrate core concepts.

The Student Experience

While students do complain that the program can be difficult at times, and sometimes tedious, those students who make an effort to complete the activities perform better, and they know it! Last semester, students were asked what they would tell the incoming class to do in order to succeed in the course. Unprompted, many students listed MySpanishLab as a top recommendation. The following quotes highlight some of those recommendations:

> "MySpanishLab really helped."

> "Practice the grammar in MySpanishLab."

> "Do your homework on time, don't procrastinate."

> "Keep up with MySpanishLab and take notes on grammar."

> "Do your Extra Practices."

> "Don't forget MySpanishLab."

Conclusion

By incorporating culture into language learning, we open up a whole world of meaning for students, and that's what we want to do—make language learning meaningful. Being able to customize our resources with Pearson to offer additional realia has been important to our program. We created art tours to serve as a gateway for students to engage in something authentic and real. The following quote from an instructor teaching at UMN's College in the Schools program explains how MySpanishLab helps us achieve our goals:

> "I love the art supplement with MySpanishLab. It's wonderful! On a side note, the art activities are an awesome supplement to class discussions. When we magnified the painting Juanito en la Laguna, a student pointed out that one of the red eyes from the lamb in Juanito's arms is laying in the pile of garbage. It added a lot to our discussion as no one noticed it in the book until we magnified it on the screen. The students also like the reflection music and hearing the details in Spanish. It helps them focus in on interpreting the art. Super cool addition to MySpanishLab!"

It's been gratifying to see the language resources evolve and improve in MySpanishLab each year, and even more gratifying to see that students understand the value of MySpanishLab to their success in language acquisition.

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