

CASE STUDY

University of Mississippi University, MS

INSTRUCTOR Julia Bussade, *Director of Portuguese and Spanish*

COURSES Elementary Spanish I (101); Elementary Spanish II (102); Accelerated Spanish I (121)
Intermediate Spanish I (201); Intensive Spanish I (111); Intensive Spanish II (211)

LEVEL Elementary/Intermediate

TEXT ¡Arriba!: Comunicación y cultura, 5/e, with MySpanishLab
by Eduardo Zayas-Bazán, Susan M. Bacon, and Holly Nibert

TERM COVERED Spring 2008

CONTRIBUTION OF MYSPANISHLAB TO FINAL GRADE 20% traditional courses/30% hybrid courses

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Student performance

COURSE STRUCTURE Traditional/Hybrid

INSTRUCTOR JULIA BUSSADE directs a very large elementary and intermediate Spanish program at the University of Mississippi with seven courses serving approximately 3600 students each year. With so many students engaged in the Spanish program, Bussade wants to ensure an effective learning experience and consistently strong student performance. In summer 2008, Bussade chose to transition from Course Compass to MySpanishLab. Among the benefits she hoped MySpanishLab would deliver were:

- flexibility in staffing to ensure that all students' course needs would be met
- improved student performance
- an immersive, always-available learning resource to deliver instruction on students' own schedules

With the transition to MySpanishLab, Bussade adopted a dual traditional/hybrid course structure. Students with less than two years of high school Spanish are placed in a traditional course with three contact hours per week; these students complete homework assignments using MySpanishLab and also write six compositions (three of them in the lab during regular class time) each term. MySpanishLab comprises 20% of students' final grade. Students with more than two years of high school Spanish experience are placed in a hybrid course with two class meetings per week and the remaining time for independent learning with MySpanishLab. In addition to the homework assignments and in-lab compositions required in the traditional courses, the students in the hybrid courses are also required to complete online textbook quizzes with MySpanishLab. For the hybrid students, MySpanishLab comprises 30% of their final grade.

RESULTS

Bussade notes that MySpanishLab has delivered all of the expected benefits for students and faculty.

The hybrid course format allows more experienced students a degree of self-direction in their studies and the ability to access high-quality instruction 24/7. And it allows faculty (some of whom teach six courses per week) enough flexibility to staff all seven Spanish courses without increasing section sizes.

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Bussade conducts monthly training sessions with her faculty; each session explores a different feature of MySpanishLab in depth. As faculty gain experience with MySpanishLab, they are eagerly embracing features like the PowerPoint presentations in the Instructor's Resources. As she conducted observations of each class this spring, Bussade observed that all twenty faculty (15 full-time instructors and 5 teaching assistants) were using the PowerPoints to teach. "It's fabulous," Bussade noted, "we now head off to the classroom to teach with our slides on a jump drive!"

And student performance has improved. Bussade reports that the number of students who complete all activities in MySpanishLab is significantly higher than when the department used Course Compass. She posits that students persevere through

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the activities because they know MySpanishLab will display the correct answer after three attempts, and students really like the feature. Students also respond to the English Grammar Readiness Checks; the grammar quiz and animated tutorials give students a solid preparation before class so they ask fewer grammar questions in class and score higher grades on tests. With less class time dedicated to grammar questions, instructors are able to engage students in more communicative activities—a powerful benefit.

In a representative section of Spanish 101 (the least experienced students) in spring 2009, 14 out of 20 students who completed the course scored either an A or B.

Bussade asserts, "Before MySpanishLab we couldn't get students to understand certain basic concepts, like demonstrative pronouns, that are always tested on the final exam. Now students clearly do understand—the test results prove it. I want to give the credit to MySpanishLab. The textbook hasn't changed—MySpanishLab has made the difference."

In summary, Bussade says, "I don't know of any program that is so complete. The games, the tutorials, the electronic gradebook, the ability to create and import activities, the eText—these are tremendously valuable features. And we continue to explore and exploit new features in the product. MySpanishLab is simply the best product available in the market today."

FUTURE

Bussade's colleagues in the French program have closely followed her experience with MySpanishLab. Based on the Spanish program's positive results using MySpanishLab, faculty in the French program have recently adopted MyFrenchLab.



For a product tour or to find out more, please visit www.myspanishlab.com

ALSO AVAILABLE: MyFrenchLab and MyItalianLab

AVAILABLE FOR FALL 2010 CLASSES: MyChineseLab

AVAILABLE FOR SPRING 2011 CLASSES: MyLatinLab

COMING SOON: MyGermanLab, MyPortugueseLab, MyRussianLab

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