

**CASE STUDY**

## Metropolitan State College Denver, Colorado

**INSTRUCTOR** Dr. Lunden E. MacDonald, Assistant Professor of Spanish

**COURSES** SPA 1010 Intro to Spanish I  
SPA 1020 Intro to Spanish II

**LEVEL** Elementary

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

**TERM COVERED** Spring 2009

**CONTRIBUTION OF MYSPANISHLAB TO FINAL GRADE** 50%

**TYPES OF DATA REPORTED** Student performance

**COURSE STRUCTURE** Wired classroom

FOUNDED IN 1965, Metropolitan State College of Denver offers an affordable, quality education in a downtown setting to a large and diverse population. In keeping with Metro State's commitment to provide a relevant education with strong technology integration, Professor Lunden MacDonald coordinated a review of available online resources for the Modern Language department's introductory Spanish courses. In addition to improving student performance and equipping students with a suite of 21st century skills through more technology integration, the department hoped to:

- Ensure a uniform curriculum and testing platform for more than 1,000 introductory Spanish students annually
- Engage an automated grading system to relieve time-crunched faculty
- Enhance faculty's professional skills development by training them to teach using cutting-edge technology resources

The department determined that ¡Arriba! with MySpanishLab was the best fit for their students and began integrating MySpanishLab in Intro to Spanish I sections in fall 2008. In spring 2009, the department required MySpanishLab for all students in

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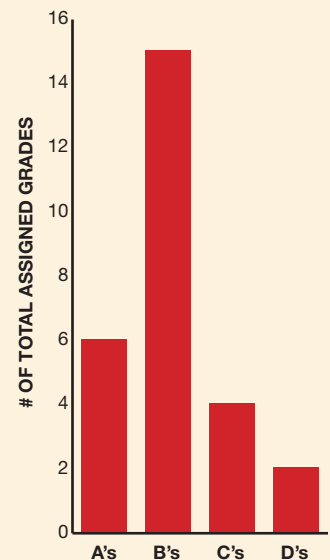
—Dr. Lunden E. MacDonald

all sections of both Intro to Spanish I and Intro to Spanish II. MySpanishLab accounts for 50% of students' final grade. Readiness Checks, Student Activity Manual exercises, and Oral Practices are 15%; the mid-term exam is 10%; and the final exam is 15%.

### RESULTS

Instructors have responded very positively to MySpanishLab's automated grading and to the performance notification system that displays students' progress on MySpanishLab assignments. The performance notification system quickly displays overall course performance and individual student performance, allowing instructors to identify students

### Final Grade Distributions



Spring 2009 section of Spanish I using MySpanishLab. Average final grade for 27 students was 85

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who are struggling in the course. The automated grading saves instructors time that they can dedicate to engaging with students and helping them to stay on track.

Students’ performance improved with MySpanishLab. “Grades were noticeably higher this semester with MySpanishLab,” asserts Professor MacDonald. Professor MacDonald feels that MySpanishLab’s SAM activities are a key contributor to students’ higher grades. She says, “The machine-graded SAM activities force the students to keep up with their homework, whereas in prior semesters I noticed that students didn’t even bother to do workbook activities. MySpanishLab’s instant feedback really motivates students and makes their homework assignments meaningful. Students either understand the grammar concepts prior to class or they come to class with informed, intelligent questions due to the SAM practices.” And, because less time in class is devoted to grammar review, says Professor MacDonald, “we are able to focus more on speaking and communicative practice. MySpanishLab has made for a noticeably higher level of communicative ability among my students.”

In a representative section of Intro to Spanish I for which final grades were recorded in spring 2009, the average grade for 27 students was 85. Grade distribution was: A 6; B 15; C 4; D 2.

#### **EXPANDING USE OF MYSpanishLAB**

Professor MacDonald is exploiting more of MySpanishLab’s features in two accelerated summer courses (5 credits in just 5 weeks.) She reports, “These classes are normally delivered over 16 weeks. In the summer, it is not infrequent to have a quiz over a chapter on one day and then a big exam or midterm the next day. By doing SAMs and quizzes in MySpanishLab, I know that my students are getting the immediate feedback without having to wait a night for me to take the quiz home, grade it manually, etc. They can use the grading feedback immediately and we can maintain our extremely tight schedule.”

Reflecting on the department’s choice to integrate MySpanishLab, Professor MacDonald says, “MySpanishLab helps teachers teach better and students learn better! MySpanishLab provides best-practice technological support for instructors’ pedagogical goals while effectively meeting the varied learning needs of students. We will absolutely continue to use MySpanishLab and incorporate it further and further into our daily instruction.”

#### **FUTURE**

Looking ahead to fall, Professor MacDonald expects to continue expanding the use of MySpanishLab in the introductory courses and is reviewing MySpanishLab for use in a new pre-introductory course and for courses at the intermediate level as well. She reports that her colleagues teaching Italian have adopted MyItalianLab for their program and that the German faculty are eagerly awaiting MyGermanLab, currently in development.



For a product tour or to find out more, please visit [www.myspanishlab.com](http://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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