

Undergraduates Can Still Play: Nontraditional Means to Assess Students' Learning

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INTRODUCTION

As psychology subjects are generally theory-heavy, students find the amount of information to be learned overwhelming. This poses a greater challenge during online learning, in which students have reported lower levels of engagement and academic motivation (Ang et al., 2021; Cleary, 2021).

Further, traditional assignments like essays and term papers may not be as exciting and equitable for students, as they tend to favor students who have fluency in writing (Ryan, 2022).

STRATEGIES

1. Mini-games were incorporated during live classes, as formative assessments. Examples:

- *Wordwall.net (wordwall.net): anagram, maze chase, airplane, balloon pop.*
- *Educaplay (www.educaplay.com): matching columns, froggy jumps.*



This practice is consistent with literature that has established the positive effect of educational games on students' engagement, motivation, learning outcomes, and satisfaction (Yu et al., 2021).

2. Most summative assessments were redesigned by incorporating nontraditional elements (occasionally inspired by current trends in popular culture). Examples:

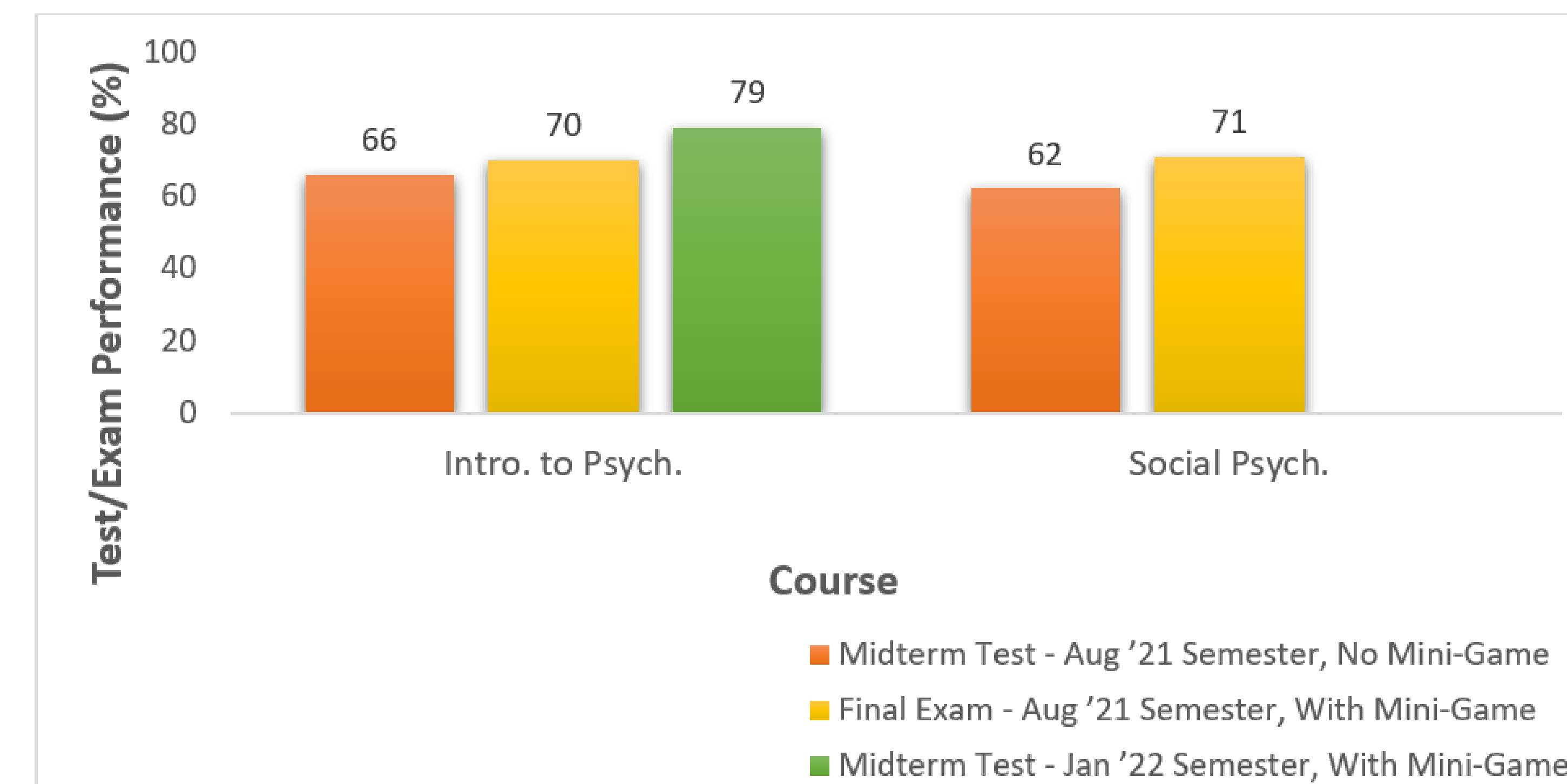
- toy review video, song, talk show, meme, children's storybook, and poetry slam.*

This practice is informed by current literature that proposes nontraditional assessments as means to enhance student motivation and learning (Pearson, 2021). Further, nontraditional assessments are regarded to be more equitable, especially for students without existing fluency in writing (Ryan, 2022).

OUTCOMES

Mini-games promote greater student engagement, evidenced by the lecturer's classroom observation.

In addition, mini-games played a role in students' improved performance in summative assessments, as seen in graph below.



Further, student evaluation of subject and teaching reports from June '21 to June '22 revealed that:

1. Mini games during live classes:
 - promote interest (“... keep us awake and interested.”).
 - facilitate understanding (“... helped strengthen our understandings on the topics taught.”).
 - make learning fun (“... makes learning fun.”).
2. Nontraditional assignments:
 - promote deeper processing of course content (“... assignments ... really made me think a lot more deeply about the subject.”).
 - make learning fun (“... non-conventional assignments ... kept the class interesting and fun.”).
 - encourage creativity (“...freedom given in the assignment is good for student's creativity.”).

CONCLUSION

Mini-games during lessons can serve as alternative formative assessments that are more interesting and fun for students.

Nontraditional assignments can serve as more intellectually stimulating, fun, and equitable alternative ways to assess students' learning.

Rubrics for nontraditional assignments can be continuously improved to reduce ambiguities, as students would not be as familiar with these nonconventional assignments.

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