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Pat LaMorte, assistant principal for technology curriculum and professional development,
Bishop Moore Catholic High School

Bishop Moore Catholic High School offers video instruction to every student

Located in the College Park neighborhood of Orlando, Bishop Moore Catholic High School is the largest private high school in Central Florida. Its 80-plus faculty and staff members are dedicated to helping the more than 1,100 students in grades 9 to 12 grow “personally, spiritually, and intellectually to achieve their potential as individuals and leaders within a global society,” according to the school.

Established in 1954 and named for Bishop John Moore, who played a key role in expanding Roman Catholic schools in Florida, the campus spans more than 50 acres. Bishop Moore students regularly score 45 percent above the national average on Advanced Placement tests. An impressive 99.2 percent of them go to college.

Challenge: reduce barriers to technology

In recent years, Bishop Moore undertook a comprehensive visioning process to reevaluate how children learn and how they might be better served. The review drew on input from staff and alumni as well as research and experts from top academic institutions. It resulted in the creation of four Technology Enhanced Active Learning (TEAL) labs, modeled after labs at MIT and the University of North Carolina.

“We determined that students would benefit from more time for collaboration,” said Pat LaMorte, assistant principal for technology curriculum and professional development. “Students typically sit in rows from kindergarten to grade 12, and then in college lecture halls. So when they get to the professional work environment, and you put them around a conference table, they aren’t always prepared.”

In its new labs, the school deployed 14 databases offering 140,000 primary research resources as well as other technologies, encouraged brainstorming, and focused on helping students learn to solve problems. The labs feature touchscreen monitors, Apple TV®, microphones, cameras, laptops, iPad® tablets, and more. Students can write on the glass walls and make presentations.

BENEFITS

- Supports a wide range of technologies available on campus
- Supplements classroom curricula
- Eases the burden on technology trainers

The labs were quickly booked. To support their heavy use, Bishop Moore sought an online training provider that could supplement the work of staff members tasked with training students and faculty and reducing barriers to technology. The school needed an on-demand solution that could teach a wide range of software and creative applications.

Solution: lyndaKiosk and lyndaPro

When the TEAL labs came online, Bishop Moore already subscribed to an online training provider. But LaMorte and others believed the campus could benefit from an easier-to-use solution with more content.

In 2012, Bishop Moore purchased several licenses of lyndaKiosk and lyndaPro. lyndaKiosk connects designated workstations to the vast lynda.com library of instructional videos; it is specifically designed for libraries, learning labs, or similar settings. lyndaPro enabled Bishop Moore to assign and reassign licenses to specific users, who were able to connect to the lynda.com library on a rotating basis.

Result: easy-to-use training for students, faculty, and staff

lyndaKiosk and lyndaPro provided students and teachers a go-to training resource that supported classes as well as projects in the TEAL labs. For example, a student using Adobe® Photoshop® could search bite-size tutorials for just-in-time answers to questions about the software. Or someone needing to learn Microsoft® Excel® could view a comprehensive course covering a wide range of tips and tricks.

"The response to lynda.com was overwhelmingly positive," LaMorte said. "It was slicker and easier to use than our previous solution on all devices in our labs. The content aligns so well with what our labs offer, and is broken down into digestible chapters. The instructors are great. They go right to a particular point without wasting time. lynda.com supported our curricula without taking it over, and was relevant to the resources at our school.

"Teachers and students found it easy to use," LaMorte said, adding that "our tech trainer loves it. He doesn't know day in and out what sort of technology questions teachers are going to have. He can point to lynda.com and say, 'Hey, check this out. This is what we were talking about today.' He's not pulling from 19 different sites, with the teacher wondering, 'Which site did you send me to? I can't remember.' With lynda.com as a central destination for learning, they remember."

Faculty members are using lynda.com to explore new applications, LaMorte said, recalling how a religion teacher and her students used Photoshop training to learn how to arrange iconographic images for a project.

"I love lynda.com," said Sharon Dearman, who teaches computer science. "I used it in my Animation and Simulation class. The courses were clear and explained concepts in ways the students could understand. We all felt like we were on a first-name basis with the instructor after a couple weeks."

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Bishop Moore High School

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lynda.com helps teachers as they guide students one-on-one. In some cases, the service fills gaps in teacher knowledge about software, LaMorte said. "It gives students real-time access to the help they need."

Looking ahead: lyndaCampus provides simultaneous access for all

Building on the success of its labs, Bishop Moore embarked on another ambitious technology initiative. Starting in the 2013 fall term, every student was issued an iPad.

"This type of program is where we need to be to prepare kids for the future," LaMorte said. "As long as we tackle this with the notion that the curriculum comes first, and the device is just another tool to enhance learning, we are in good shape."

To support its one-to-one iPad program, Bishop Moore needed an online training provider that could reach all its students with a wide range of skills instruction on their tablet devices, anytime and anywhere. In addition, it needed to offer students training on using the mobile devices and, for more advanced students, on creating mobile applications.

Bishop Moore chose lyndaCampus, giving all students, faculty, and staff simultaneous lynda.com access through personalized accounts that track user training histories. Users can access the lynda.com library of instructional videos on smartphones, tablets, or desktop computers from any location with an Internet connection. In addition, users get full access to lynda.com exercise files.

With access available campus-wide, administrators anticipated that lynda.com would become even more popular at Bishop Moore. To supplement classroom curricula, they shared lynda.com course playlists with teachers at the start of the school year. Teachers could in turn assign these playlists to students, or create their own.

"With 1,100-plus students having tablet devices, the tech team cannot be at their beck and call every day," LaMorte said. "They wouldn't get anything done. lyndaCampus is going to help take the burden off our tech team."

Staff will benefit too, LaMorte said. "We are creating a whole initiative offering staff training in Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and more."