



About East Career & Technical Academy

East Career & Technical Academy is a magnet high school serving 1,700 students in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas. Its 300 teachers and staff members are dedicated to graduating technologically literate, ethical problem solvers who can effectively collaborate and communicate to meet the challenges of the changing global workplace.

Magnet school preps students for the workplace with on-demand instruction

Like many K-12 schools, East Career & Technical Academy has increasingly embraced project-based learning (PBL), a teaching method that emphasizes hands-on experiences and in-depth inquiry. More and more, the school also has adopted blended learning, in which video-based instruction supplements classroom education.

"We needed something that would help support these initiatives," said Steven New, who teaches video production and graphic design. "And teachers were faced with a dilemma. Would they have to go out and create their own videos, or was there someplace else they could go and get them already made?"

Academy students choose a personal learning path focused on a future career in education, medicine, culinary arts, entertainment marketing and hospitality, automotive mechanical technology, IT, construction technology, or electronics. Curricula include rigorous coursework, hands-on projects, job shadowing, internships, and opportunities to earn college credits.

The academy needed to supplement classroom instruction with on-demand videos covering a wide range of topics—to match the diverse subjects taught across campus.

Solution: lynda.com

A lynda.com user for several years personally, New relied heavily on the service to keep his own video production and graphic design skills current. Seeing the potential for students and colleagues to benefit similarly, he suggested the academy make lynda.com widely available.

Recognizing lynda.com could support the academy's push toward project-based and blended learning, administrators in 2013 purchased lyndaCampus, which provides site-wide lynda.com access to all teachers, staff, and students. The Clark County School District has since introduced lynda.com to other district campuses and offices.

BENEFITS

- Supports project-based and blended learning
- Keeps teachers and staff up to date with technology
- Prepares students for the workplace

“With lynda.com, I’m not locked into being in the front of the classroom having to do every single demo in front of the kids. I have a whole library of experts who are working right alongside me online.”

Steven New,
Video Production and Graphic Design Teacher

At the academy, New and others announced and promoted lynda.com with emails and demos to generate excitement and inspire people to adopt the service.

Result: students, teachers, staff all benefit

lynda.com has transformed how New and other teachers at the academy approach teaching.

New uses lynda.com across all grade levels to help teach graphic design fundamentals, typography, color theory, and more, and to instruct students on Adobe® Photoshop®, Illustrator®, InDesign®, and other software applications.

“lynda.com freed up a lot of my time,” New said. “For example, most teachers will have one or two prep periods. I’ve basically gotten rid of all my preps and then this year I’ve taken on the yearbook on top of it all.

“lynda.com has helped me with blended learning,” he said. “And I’m able to take more of a personalized approach to keep students interested. I can ask them, ‘Where do you see yourself going? Do you want to specialize in product graphics or do you want to be more on the artistic side?’ Knowing what they like, I can do a little research and work one-on-one with them on more specific techniques. I can offer a more personalized approach to how they use software.”

In addition, “With lynda.com, I’m not locked into having to do every single demo in front of the kids. I have a whole library of experts that are working right alongside me online.”

Freshman Studies Teacher Jaquiline Key added: “It keeps me from having to take time to teach to the masses what only a few need. I also like that it’s user-friendly, with shorter or longer videos and step-by-step instruction. It puts the students in charge of their learning, and they can access it as often as they need.”

In addition to supporting project-based and blended learning, lynda.com helps the academy with its core mission of preparing students for the workplace and life after graduation.

As students get ready to interview for internships, they are watching lynda.com business skills tutorials, New said, adding that this provides a big-picture view of the world beyond the classroom—and reinforces the imperative of lifelong learning.

Dr. Lisa Edler, community partner specialist, works with students on building career expertise. She has assigned students the lynda.com course *Acing Your Interview* and others. “I required them to watch the career advice videos and then write a summary. I also asked them to explain what they had learned from their own viewpoints, and how they would use the advice in their own personal lives.”

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East Career & Technical Academy

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New said lynda.com empowers students, adding that courses on marketing, resume writing, portfolio creation, and other business skills benefit students in all academic departments. "Now, when students have an issue or problem, rather than always running to a teacher for answers, they are able to look at lynda.com sources outside of the classroom."

Students use lynda.com for a wide range of instruction—from learning Modern Language Association (MLA) style for research-paper formatting, music production, free-hand drawing, and photography to applications that include Adobe® Premiere Pro® and After Effects®, Apple® Final Cut Pro X®, and more.

"I used lynda.com for my graphic design class," said Arnold Placencia, a senior, who described it as "an excellent source of reference."

Staff members also benefit from professional development opportunities. For example, tech team members who maintain academy computer systems have increasingly referenced the growing library of lynda.com IT courses. "lynda.com tutorials often are superior to the software developer's tutorials," said Arnie Rose, computer specialist.

Looking ahead

The academy plans to keep promoting lynda.com, and to do so more heavily at strategic times of the school year—including before end-of-year projects are due.

With planning underway for a campus-wide migration to Google Apps, New anticipated that lynda.com would play a critical role in providing training on a wide range of new software tools including Gmail™ and Google Docs™.

As time goes by, New said he hopes to demonstrate positive return on investment by correlating student test scores with lynda.com usage. "I am looking at some of the numbers that I had from my test last year and I'm looking at the areas where the students weren't doing as well, and this year I know already those scores will probably go up because they are directly related to some of the video projects I have already have them work on."