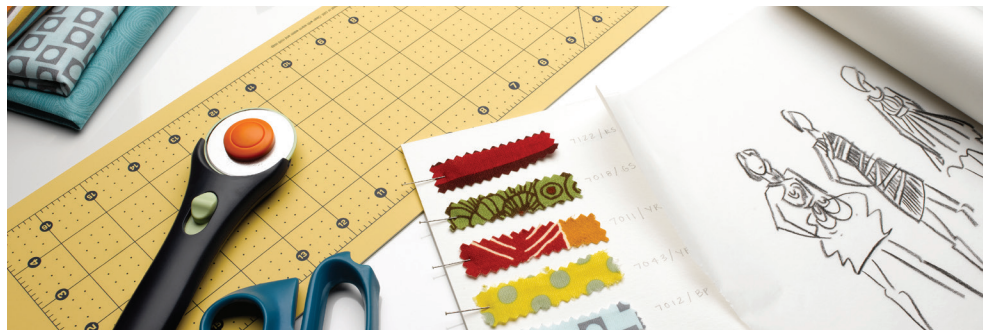




**Fashion Institute  
of Technology**

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Jeffrey Riman, assistant professor and coordinator of the FIT Center for Excellence in Teaching



## FIT supports and inspires campus with online training

The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) is an internationally recognized State University of New York (SUNY) college for design, fashion, art, communications, and business. Founded in 1944, FIT has 1,300 faculty members, 10,000 students, and more than 1,000 staff members; the campus covers an entire city block in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City.

### Multiple challenges, one solution

Several pressures on faculty, students, and staff led FIT to lynda.com online training. Chief among these were a need for a wide range of instructional videos to supplement classroom teaching, and a desire to ease demand on technical support staff and facilities.

The school researched several online training providers. In 2010, FIT deployed 50 pilot licenses of lynda.com. As word spread, the service became increasingly popular. In 2012, the school purchased more than 9,000 licenses of lyndaCampus, which lets users create personal profiles and access the lynda.com library of instructional videos from any location with an Internet connection.

“The lynda.com tutorials were broken down into chunks that faculty and students were comfortable with,” said Gregg Chottiner, FIT vice president of information technology. He described the courses as high quality and current.

Today lynda.com is used on desktop and mobile devices by thousands of FIT faculty and students as well as staff members, who can develop software, creative, and business skills at their own pace.

### Easing demand on technical support staff

FIT makes a wide variety of software applications available to all students and professors, regardless of their expertise. The software is loaded onto computers located across campus including those in student labs and the

**BENEFITS**

- Enables a “flipped classroom” teaching model
- Helps students, teachers, and staff find quick answers
- Lets technical support teams focus on big projects

school’s Center for Excellence in Teaching, which are open around the clock. This broad access encourages interdisciplinary exploration, but also challenges technical support teams, Chottiner said.

“The challenge for technical support is supply and demand,” he said.

“There aren’t enough support staff members and lab computers to accommodate all of the demand for assistance.”

“With lynda.com, we can do more,” said Jeffrey Riman, an assistant professor who coordinates the FIT Center for Excellence in Teaching, which helps faculty members implement academic strategies and classroom technologies.

“lynda.com gives technical support staff more room to put things into context, and to focus on the more complex tasks,” Riman said.

“It expands our ability to reach faculty who never would come to training.

It gives faculty as well as students who are challenged by technology a way to learn on their own.”

**Enabling the flipped classroom learning model**

Some of the demand for technical support came from faculty members independently creating video tutorials for their classes. But with lynda.com, FIT professors no longer need to create their own tutorials. And professors increasingly follow a “flipped classroom” model, in which homework consists of online video lectures while class time is reserved for concept mastery and one-to-one assistance.

“The idea of faculty curating resources as opposed to creating them is where lynda.com really fits in very nicely,” Riman said. “Such an important part of teaching is not just to say, ‘This is an airbrush, and this is how you use it,’ but ‘This is where you use it, and these are the ways you can use it.’ Students can watch a lynda.com tutorial at home to learn the basic functionality of software and then put it into context with their professors. It’s a more efficient use of time for everyone.”

In addition, Chottiner said lynda.com helps academic programs embrace not just business applications such as Microsoft Excel but software they otherwise never would use. “For example, business students are now starting to scratch the surface and leverage Adobe Creative Suite tools. They never did that before because there wasn’t a tutoring strategy for them.”

**Technical instruction—anytime, anywhere**

In addition to enhancing their curricula, FIT faculty members grow professionally using lynda.com, Riman said.

“Faculty members need to constantly renew skills,” he said. “For instance, someone who’s been teaching here for 10 years and who’s gone through every level of a software program doesn’t necessarily need to get

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**The Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT)**

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recertified. They can, however, visit the Center for Excellence in Teaching to see and learn what's new before they integrate it into a new curriculum."

Though the center is popular, professors sometimes get too busy to visit. And adjunct instructors who work other jobs during the day are at a particular disadvantage. While the center is open 24/7, it's not staffed at night. This means adjunct faculty can use the center's computers, but no staff members are on hand to answer questions.

Teachers often can watch lynda.com tutorials in lieu of visiting the Center for Excellence in Teaching. It gives FIT faculty members another way to stay current with software, expand their skills, and manage their careers.

Students also personally benefit from lynda.com instruction.

Due to the popularity of computer labs, FIT struggles to ensure students get enough time and attention in them. And remote distance learning students in the growing FIT Online Learning program have no lab access.

In addition, new students regularly arrive to campus with computers loaded with the latest software. But FIT tutorials didn't always keep pace.

lynda.com gives students an up-to-date and comprehensive learning resource. For distance learning students, located off campus with no easy access to technical support, lynda.com is particularly helpful, allowing them to tap into technical instruction from home.

"I've used lynda.com for Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, and Lightroom," said Amanda Barlow, who studies photography at FIT and works at the school as an associate training assistant, helping teach faculty and other staff software. "A lot of these people don't have time for six-hour tutorials. It's great how lynda.com breaks courses into short segments, for when you're looking for something quickly."

**Looking ahead: building on success**

As part of its lynda.com deployment, FIT displayed posters and used handouts to promote the service. Incoming freshmen and transfer students learned about lynda.com at orientation. They soon realized that the FIT web portal links directly to lynda.com. All of that, plus word of mouth, drove adoption.

FIT administrators expect lynda.com usage to grow each semester with the arrival of new students.

Chottiner foresees a day when lynda.com helps attract new students. "As lynda.com expands, it could almost become a marketing tool for recruiting students to the school."

Riman is equally optimistic about the future. "I think it surprised everybody how much lynda.com was embraced, and how fast. We expect the enthusiasm to continue."