

Offering education 24/7 with first-rate content



TeleLearn Academy (TLA)

Founded in December 2000, the TeleLearn Academy gmbH (TLA) is Germany's leading provider of work-based learning for media professionals and has pioneered the delivery of effective blended learning courses to busy working professionals. Learners choose to study at the TLA due to its flexible learning approach which enables them to fit study around their hectic lifestyles.

The institution deploys numerous degree programmes, including its flagship Bachelor of Media Engineering. Each course runs on a 6 month rotation with only 160 out of 800 hours required to be completed within the classroom and the remaining to be completed anytime, anywhere online within 18 months. To facilitate the learning, the TLA employs 31 teachers and has over 200 learners.

The TLA also holds the exclusive license to run Dr. Gilly Salmon's world-renowned E-Moderating course in Germany and Switzerland, which instructs teachers and lecturers on how to harness e-Learning technology to improve the learner experience.

Helping Non-Traditional Learners

In 2009 the TLA was challenged by the German Federal Government to run a pilot project designed to help mothers return to the workforce by allowing them to update their skillsets in line with the needs of a modern workforce. Two key issues prompted the Government to take such action. The first being a seismic change in culture - mothers now want to return to work and it is no longer deemed unacceptable to do so. The second is that Germany is facing a future labour shortage, which emphasizes the need to support skilled working mothers.

Having successfully offered degree programmes since 2000 to working

professionals, the TLA had gained considerable experience in delivering degree courses for those working irregular hours or with unpredictable schedules.

Yet, with a relatively small number of permanent staff tasked with running and uploading content to the e-Learning platform, their challenge was to find a best practice solution enabling tutors to develop and upload content without the concern of system maintenance. The TLA's primary objective was therefore to find a solution that could be accessed 24/7 so learners could study at a time convenient to them but that would also allow its staff to focus full-time on pedagogy and providing first-rate educational content.



Blackboard

The TLA also recognised its students' growing use of collaborative web 2.0 tools as a way of keeping in touch with friends and colleagues and managing their busy lifestyles. With learners regularly visiting sites such as Facebook or accessing the web via mobile devices such as their iPhones, the TLA wanted a solution that could reach the students via these mediums; ensuring their educational experience was relevant to their daily lives.

Selecting the platform that best met their needs

To meet this challenge for new projects supported by the Government, and in line with the institution's long-term goal to provide companies, groups and organisations of all sizes with custom-fit blended learning, the TLA's strategy was to review its e-Learning requirements to find the online learning platform most attuned to its learners needs – busy working professionals and return to work mothers alike.

Consequently the TLA commissioned a comprehensive Learning Management System market research report. This revealed there to be no satisfactory solution with a high quality of hosting and support in the open software field. The TLA then evaluated a select number of proprietary solutions but found Blackboard to be the only provider able to satisfactorily migrate its extensive existing educational content and courses from its current virtual learning environment.

The TLA proceeded to implement Blackboard Learn™, Release 9, taking advantage of Blackboard Managed Hosting learners were guaranteed with 24/7 access. Furthermore, in line with its secondary objective of engaging with learners in a manner relevant to their daily lives, the academy began to look into Blackboard's building blocks to investigate how the online learning environment could be further customised to meet its learners' needs. The Facebook and Apple iPhone applications were selected as a way of allowing learners to be notified when new content had been uploaded to their course, allowing them to check if

new posts were waiting for them before logging into the Blackboard online learning environment.

More time to focus on pedagogy and education as a result

The TLA's strategy of reviewing its eLearning requirements and migrating to a managed hosting solution from Blackboard Learn, Release 9 has proved a huge success. With the burden of establishing and maintaining the IT infrastructure lifted from the institution's shoulders, the TLA's staff are now able to focus solely on pedagogy and delivering high-class educational content. Consequently, mothers looking to return to the workforce can benefit from the excellent content being supplied by the TLA's staff, safe in the knowledge that it will be available via the Blackboard Learn platform whenever gaps in their schedule allow.

Furthermore, the greater use of more collaborative means of learning, through the blogs and forums supported by Blackboard Learn, Release 9, and the integration with Facebook and the Apple iPhone has had a really positive effect on the TLA's learners who value being able to maximise their time through notifications of when new material has been posted to their course page before logging in to sit down and complete a piece of work.

Verdict

“Our main purpose as a private educational institution is delivering excellent course content, not the establishment and maintenance of IT solutions. Blackboard Learn is an open tool and the fact it is used by the world's leading international universities, schools and educational institutions means we are confident it will continue to rapidly evolve to the benefit of the TLA's learners. Additionally, the unprecedented reliability of Blackboard Managed Hosting and its round-the-clock support lets us sleep soundly at night knowing that the content we provide will be readily available to all our learners whenever they choose to access it.” Olaf Dierker, Director, TLA

For More Information

If you are interested to learn more on how Blackboard can help you and your organization increase the impact of education, please contact your account manager or visit us at www.blackboard.com

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