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Background

In Academic Year (AY) 2004-2005, the University of Massachusetts selected WebCT as its new learning management system (LMS). The campus determined that training would be mandatory for all users of the system. Training on the Worcester campus falls into three major categories:

- Train the Trainer
- Faculty Development
- Student Orientation

An institutional strategic partnership between Academic Computing (ACS) /Information Services and the Lamar Soutter Library (LSL) was formed to support our eLearning efforts. As part of this collaboration the library focused on a comprehensive student orientation program. The orientation was offered in multiple venues within the School of Medicine, the Graduate School of Nursing, and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.

Purpose

Face-to-face orientation continued under the direction of the library throughout AY 2006 and 2007. Simulated course environments for each school were created by ACS for demonstration purposes. Each customized session included the "Top Six Things to Know About WebCT" and a functional orientation to each school's online course s.

Concerns about a mid-year LMS upgrade during a one week semester break prompted discussions among campus wide curriculum committees on how best to orient students to the new system, and reach a wide audience in this compressed time period.

In addition ACS recognized the unique needs of health science faculty in the e-learning cycle: our faculty often request a reorientation to the LMS as their teaching duties are clinical and research responsibilities balanced with. ACS and LSL staff responded to these needs by developing an on-demand online orientation. The technological solution presented itself in the form of AnyStream Apreso™ Classroom.

Method

Anystream's Apreso ™ Classroom was implemented as the campus lecture capture system in Spring 2006. Apreso ™ is an automated capture and Web publishing system that produces online versions of the classroom experience for on-demand learner review. Five permanently installed systems are used to record daily lectures in three amphitheatres and two lecture halls, and a mobile unit is available for use in any room at the University Campus.

Using the mobile system we chose to produce an in-studio version of the LSL orientation. With 1.5 hours of production time, the orientation was completed and uploaded to the media server for immediate viewing. Resources required included:

- Audio Visual technical support for mobile unit operation (1 FTE)
- LSL facilitator (1 FTE)
- Instructional Technologist (1 FTE)

UMass Medical School	AY 2006-07	AY 2007-08
Courses in LMS	98	400+
Student Enrollment (School/CE combined)	640	1877
LMS Live Orientation Sessions	30+	On demand* *Orientation added to WebTrends reporting to track actual hits

Results

Since 2005, more than 30 live orientation sessions have been offered each academic year. Translating the training to an online, on-demand format, learners may now view and repeat the orientation session at their convenience. Unanticipated findings include the number of faculty members that have viewed the orientation and the reduction of high volume Help Desk calls at the start of each semester from users needing assistance with LMS basics. The orientation has also been able to reach a learner population previously not served by the live sessions—namely our growing Continuing Education students from around the world.

This project has not only become a successful instructional tool but also serves as a model of new ways to use electronic tools in support of campus educational technology initiatives. The institutional collaborations begun in 2005 have enabled the campus e-curriculum inventory to grow from 98 courses in 2005 to the current catalogue of more than 400 online courses. This partnership continues to develop and evolve—adding new methods to our collaborative training portfolio.