Transforming Continuing Education for America’s Nurses

The ANA Enterprise is working with D2L to build an engaging and personalized continuing education experience.

To improve engagement and knowledge retention among its members, the ANA turned to D2L’s learning experience platform, Brightspace, and the latest theories in brain science to move beyond flat “death by PowerPoint” learning by creating a highly interactive, dynamic learning experience.

Company

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is the oldest professional organization in the United States and the premier organization representing the interests of the nation’s 3.6 million registered nurses. ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting a safe and ethical work environment, improving the health and wellness of nurses, and advocating on healthcare issues that affect nurses and the public.

INDUSTRY
Healthcare

CHALLENGE

- Consolidate eight learning management systems (LMS) into a single system with streamlined e-commerce
- Introduce interactive, modular content to improve learner engagement and knowledge retention

SOLUTIONS

D2L’s Brightspace platform
- Brightspace Capture
- Intelligent agents for online and blended learning
- Surveys, polls, discussion forums
- Course Merchant for e-commerce

RESULT

- Improvement in Net Promoter Score from 5 to 8 through 10 on new interactive courses
- 4,000 new members accessing the learning portal—double the number previously accessing multiple learning systems
- 60% increase in conversion to purchase of courses due to redesign of course catalog and implementation of e-commerce capability
- Over 400 courses delivered to ANA members using D2L’s Brightspace platform
The Challenge

Professional development in nursing is about leveraging ongoing education to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality healthcare to the public. As the premier professional association serving America’s 3.6 million registered nurses, the ANA has a mandate that provides continuing education activities to help its membership accomplish that task.

Like many organizations, the ANA comprises multiple subsidiaries. Each subsidiary had its own LMS and its own way for members to purchase content. This resulted in the siloed delivery of learning content. ANA members lacked one portal where they could access learning. Learning engagement was low, and the ANA had no easy way to solicit feedback from its members on topics of interest or modalities of learning that might help them stay engaged.

To address these issues head-on, the ANA embarked on a mission to make learning more engaging, personalized, and easier for its members to access.

“Learner engagement is not a nice-to-have for us; it’s mandatory,” says Dr. Nancy Robert, EVP and chief product and marketing officer with the ANA. “What we sought to determine at the ANA was how to combine the latest in brain-based learning with adult learning principles to better understand how technology can help people migrate to new learning patterns, in order to create a more interactive, engaged learning experience.”

To achieve its “one portal” goal, the ANA wanted to consolidate its eight existing LMS into a single system with a streamlined e-commerce process, permitting members to purchase continuing education credits and enroll in online courses available through the ANA’s Nursing Knowledge Center.
The ANA was looking for a learning platform that could not only improve learning engagement and effectiveness, but also grow with the organization and support rapid response to an ever-changing healthcare market. It also wanted to partner with an innovative vendor that could bring learning expertise to the table and provide exemplary customer service.

“We needed a smart and flexible learning platform to help us deliver content in creative ways,” says Ashley Lee, education program coordinator for the ANA. The ANA sought a system that would allow it to customize content for learners and improve their engagement with the content. Desired capabilities included discussion boards, interactive content, and intelligent agents, as well as gamification and badging to reach learners individually. To better integrate ANA learning with academia, the organization also sought a platform that could support competency-based learning and aggregate learner data so it could measure engagement and learning outcomes.

Following a comprehensive 18-month RFP process that had the organization looking worldwide for a solution, the ANA chose D2L’s next-generation learning experience platform, Brightspace, to support the new dynamic, interactive model of learning it was looking to build.

Brightspace Capture, the platform’s video capture software, is used extensively to record and incorporate learning content, and to capture and stream live webinars. Gamification features such as badging are also used within Brightspace to further encourage learner engagement.

“Strategically, we were very precise that the features of our platform needed to do more than provide a flat ‘death by PowerPoint’ learning experience,” says Robert. “We took the stand that what we would build would be of the highest quality and provide a high degree of engagement.”

“Compared to our last LMS, there’s now a lot more personalization and engagement between our learners and subject matter experts and a lot more peer-to-peer communication and interaction. That simply wasn’t possible before.”

Dr. Nancy Robert, EVP and chief product and marketing officer
AN IMPROVED LEARNING EXPERIENCE
To build engaging, focused activities and content and provide learners with a bigger distribution of topics, the ANA uses D2L’s Brightspace platform to leverage external content providers and subject matter experts through easy linking to external content.

“Even if we don’t have certain pieces of information within our platform, Brightspace gives us the ability to go find it and link to that content directly from inside the platform,” says Robert. “This was really important for our user base.”

Brightspace’s simplified user interface allows ANA’s members to track their learning progress, which helps keep them on task. The association also leverages D2L’s intelligent agents in almost all of its live courses, which allows it to easily communicate directly with members and large numbers of course registrants within the platform. Polls and surveys are used to solicit continuous feedback from learners so the ANA can flexibly adjust its content and modalities of learning to address knowledge gaps and individualize learning paths. Release conditions in Brightspace help learners navigate their continuing nursing education credits, which are required for renewal of nursing licensure.

“Having a system that allows you to reach out when you need to at certain points of a course, send reminders, and get people moving in the right direction or drive them to discussion boards is very important,” says Robert. “Compared to our last LMS, there’s now a lot more personalization and engagement between our learners and subject matter experts and a lot more peer-to-peer communication and interaction. That simply wasn’t possible before.”

AN INNOVATIVE PARTNER FOR THE LONG TERM
Beyond the learning technology, the ANA was also seeking an innovative partner that could help it grow with and respond to a changing healthcare market.

“Brightspace makes it easier for us to deliver creative and innovative content to our nurses. It is smart and easy for our staff to use,” says Lee. “The platform is extremely flexible, but it also fits with our IT infrastructure, allowing us to offer single sign-on authentication and gain access to connected systems. D2L’s service is excellent. When we have a new idea of something we want to implement for our nurses, D2L helps make our vision a reality.”
The Results

IMPROVED PARTICIPATION AND SATISFACTION AMONG LEARNERS

More than 400 courses are now delivered to ANA members through D2L’s Brightspace, and the platform has attracted more than 4,000 new users a month since its implementation—nearly double the number of users on the previous individual learning systems.

To measure performance and satisfaction of its members and the quality of its content, the ANA uses a Net Promoter Score (NPS), with performance tracked at the course level. Learners are surveyed for their opinions on the presenter, the content, its impact on their practice, and its future usefulness. From 2015 to 2016, the average NPS satisfaction ranking on a scale of 1 to 10 went from a score of 5 when learning was accessed across multiple systems to a score of 8 to 10 with Brightspace.

“The platform was easy to use and intuitive, and when I needed tech support it was readily available,” says Jennifer Graebe, MSN, RN, NEA-BC, who recently attained her master’s degree and used Brightspace to prepare for her ANCC NEA-BC certification exam. “The NEA-BC review question modules allowed me to test my knowledge and provided me with an opportunity to learn when I did not answer a question correctly. These supportive and appropriate resources enabled me to become confident with the ANCC certification test platform.”

Over a three-month period, the organization experienced a 50% month-over-month increase in participation for self-directed courses. The newly redesigned “Amazon-like” e-commerce system, delivered through D2L’s partnership with Course Merchant, also resulted in a 60% improvement in the progression of a site visitor from viewing available courses and materials to actually purchasing.

“We promote nursing excellence. To do that, we want to bring the best of class content and courses to our nurses around the globe,” says Robert. “We believe that D2L and the flexibility of the Brightspace platform have positioned us to be a leader and to stay a leader in the educational professional development space.”

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