



Building a Collaborative Learning Platform

ANZCA connects medical professionals across Australasia with the resources they need to excel with D2L.

ANZCA is the body that supports 87 percent of anaesthetists in Australia and New Zealand. To empower thousands of potential learners with ready access to the education and training resources they need to thrive in their fields, ANZCA uses a learning management system powered by the D2L platform.

Company

The Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA) is the professional organisation for specialist anaesthetists and anaesthetists in training. One of Australasia's largest specialist medical colleges, ANZCA is responsible for the training, examination and accreditation of anaesthetists and for the standards of clinical practice in Australia and New Zealand.

AT A GLANCE

Client: Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists

Employees: 150

Learners: Over 9,500 enrolled unique users in 2018

Industry: Healthcare

CHALLENGE

- Support multiple types of learners within a single platform
- Enable rapid, efficient updates to course content
- Empower more than 70 distinct stakeholder groups to collaborate

SOLUTION

- D2L's Brightspace platform
- Daylight user experience
- Intelligent agents
- Release conditions

RESULT

- 22 percent increase in active learners over previous year
- Delivers a relevant and collaborative experience tailored to each group of learners
- Automates key management tasks, freeing time for value-added activities



The Challenge

SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Anaesthesiology is a complex and highly regulated field. In Australia and New Zealand, all medical professionals practising in this area must complete specialist training and development programs to learn and maintain the skills they need to deliver high-quality care.

ANZCA is the largest professional body for anaesthetists in the Asia-Pacific region. With a membership that includes more than 7,000 fully certified anaesthetists and 3,000 trainee doctors, the organisation provides a diverse range of education and training services.

“In addition to our community of members, we host around 70 different committees and special interest groups, which meet regularly to discuss topics such as training, examinations and quality,” said Colin Lynas, Learning Technology Officer at ANZCA.

“For a number of years, we’ve used digital tools to help connect our members with the resources they need to build their skills and develop their careers. However, as time went on, we realised our existing learning management system [LMS] wasn’t offering the flexibility we needed to achieve our goals.”

In the past, making even minor changes to ANZCA’s LMS to support new use cases required a lengthy and time-consuming software development lifecycle. ANZCA often needed to deploy additional plug-ins and modules to extend the LMS beyond its basic capabilities—significantly increasing the cost and complexity of rolling out new capabilities for its stakeholders.

“Trying to deliver effective learning through our legacy LMS was becoming increasingly difficult because of the amount of customisation work required,” Mr. Lynas continued. “To solve the challenge, we looked for a more versatile platform.”

“Our selection process came down to a shortlist of Blackboard and D2L, and we felt that the D2L platform was the best fit for our needs. One aspect of the platform that particularly impressed us was its support for collaborative content management.”

Colin Lynas, Learning Technology Officer, ANZCA

The Solution

SELECTING THE OPTIMAL PLATFORM

After evaluating LMS solutions from a number of different vendors, ANZCA selected the D2L learning platform. Today, the organisation works with D2L to support all three of its stakeholder groups: ANZCA members, non-members who have paid for access to course materials, and ANZCA employees.

“Our selection process came down to a shortlist of Blackboard and D2L, and we felt that the D2L platform was the best fit for our needs,” recalled Mr. Lynas. “One aspect of the platform that particularly impressed us was its support for collaborative content management.”

ANZCA realised that the D2L platform’s collaboration features could help it address significant pain-points around content management. For example, ANZCA’s committees create a significant amount of content, which was hosted on the organisation’s website. With thousands of documents to manage, maintaining this content had become very cumbersome.

“By leveraging the collaboration capabilities of the D2L platform, we were able to create ‘networks’—communal spaces where our committees and special interest groups can share materials and drive discussions,”

said Mr. Lynas. “This unique use case really pushed D2L ahead of the competition; no other platform we looked at was flexible enough to deliver both learning management and advanced collaboration capabilities in a single package.”

SHAPING ENGAGING LEARNER JOURNEYS

To drive its training programs, ANZCA has created a range of active, competency-based digital learning experiences tailored to the specific needs of its member community. For trainees, the organisation offers a series of anaesthesia learning courses to help doctors prepare for their examinations. For fully certified anaesthetists, ANZCA offers professional development courses ranging from addressing bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace to intercultural competency and practical ethics.

“Because D2L supports SCORM [Shareable Content Object Reference Model] standards, it’s easy for us to build media-rich course materials that include videos hosted on Vimeo, quizzes and more,” Mr. Lynas continued. “As a result, we can shape learning journeys that strike a balance between passive and active learning, which helps make the experience more accessible and compelling.”



The Results

REACHING A WIDER AUDIENCE

ANZCA also now uses the D2L platform to offer a selection of courses to non-members for a fee via Course Merchant.

“Once someone qualifies as an anaesthetist, they can choose to specialise in pain medicine—and we have created courses to facilitate extended learning in this field,” Mr. Lynas explained. “By presenting scenarios that challenge participants to apply their knowledge and demonstrate their understanding, the D2L platform helps non-members build the skills they need to get their certification. Crucially, the tight integration between Course Merchant and D2L means we can enrol people automatically, which enables us to bring our materials to a large audience without driving up our operational costs.”

ATTRACTING NEW LEARNERS

Since it launched its new LMS, ANZCA has seen year-on-year growth in course uptake. Over the past year, there has been a 22 percent increase in unique active users.

“On average, around 1,000 users log in to our LMS every month, and we’re still seeing a steady upward trend,” said Mr. Lynas. “The fact that more and more people are enrolling for ANZCA’s courses is giving us great confidence that we’re delivering valuable and engaging learning experiences to anaesthetists across Australia and New Zealand.”

To make it even easier for learners to navigate courses and for instructors to update them, ANZCA has upgraded to D2L’s new user interface, Daylight.

“The majority of our members access D2L via their tablets, so we were keen to deliver a more responsive mobile experience,” explained Mr. Lynas. “The Daylight experience is much more intuitive, and it’s easier to find content than it was before. In addition to delivering more consistent layout and functionality, we jumped on the Daylight deployment as an opportunity to refresh the branding of our platform with a new logo and colour palette.”

“Our goal is to deliver the best learning outcomes for all our participants. Thanks to the D2L platform, we’re able to offer engaging, collaborative experiences that empower healthcare professionals throughout the region to enhance their skills.”

Colin Lynas, Learning Technology Officer, ANZCA

ENHANCING THE USER EXPERIENCE

By embracing the Daylight user experience, ANZCA has found new ways to personalise the content it offers to its learners.

“We’ve created three distinct versions of our LMS homepage based on whether the user is a member, non-member or ANZCA employee,” said Mr. Lynas. “Each user persona sees information and widgets customised to their specific requirements. For example, we’ve used custom widgets and release conditions to display all the courses that the user has enrolled for within their department. We’ve found that it’s easy to create great-looking custom widgets without needing much programming experience — whenever we come up with an idea, it’s usually straightforward to implement using the tools in the D2L platform.”

SAVING TIME AND ADDING VALUE

With intelligent automation built in, D2L enables ANZCA to spend less time on repetitive, manual tasks and more time developing value-added services for its community of learners.

“Intelligent agents in the D2L platform enable us to harness event-based triggers to automate important but repetitive processes, such as sending emails to

inform learners of updates to their courses,” Mr. Lynas added. “Even the most complicated workflows only take a matter of minutes to set up. The automation frees up hours of time for our team, which we can spend on service development.”

Mr. Lynas concluded: “Our goal is to deliver the best learning outcomes for all our participants. Thanks to the D2L platform, we’re able to offer engaging, collaborative experiences that empower healthcare professionals throughout the region to enhance their skills.”