David Brown demonstrating her feedback techniques

Developing a Remote Learning Community with TechSmith Relay

I n Tampa, Florida there is a community college that's making a huge splash in the American Sign Language learning community.

The great thing about a community college is its open door policy. Rich Senker explains, "Anyone who's interested in furthering their education or career can come here." As Director of Instructional Technology, Senker has to bridge a gap for the students who choose to attend the school from far away. At the same time, the technologies he provides have to be understandable to students of all skill levels and technological literacies.

For the American Sign Language (ASL) students at the college, having a large community makes all the difference in collaboration and making connections. Yet many of the students were remote and didn't attend classes in person. "The ASL group came to me asking for a solution," said Senker. Professors and students alike were missing an option that offered video recording and posting assignments to the web. Instructors were ready for a video capturing solution for online students that would allow them more flexibility so students attending remotely could still have an effective learning community to grow and achieve, just as well as they would in a classroom.

Changes in Communication

RICH SENKER
Director of Instructional Technology

After doing some research and learning about TechSmith Relay, Rich Senker decided to provide it to the ASL students and faculty. Rich Senker described TechSmith Relay as "Convenient, quick, and reliable." These factors are especially important in a remote learning environment for students who need to submit assignments on time and in a professional manner. Senker recalls student reactions to TechSmith Relay, "It was big to hear the excitement from students, and to know how the product is making their lives so much easier."

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At A Glance

- Hillsborough Community College is making huge strides in developing the ASL program by offering an online option.

- The ASL remote learning environment had expanded, creating more opportunies for students to collarborate and connect.

- Offering classes online has allowed HCC to reach students all over Florida and beyond.

Featured Product

TechSmith® Relay™

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ASL interpreting student, Tatiana Carrion uses TechSmith Relay to record herself doing assignments, and then uploads them for her teacher to review. By using video, she is able to get more specific feedback from peers. "We have to give feedback so that peers have another perspective," Tatiana explains. "They may make an error that they don't notice. It helps comparing ideas with people your own age and at the same skill level."

Learning is a Lifelong Journey

Betti Bonni demonstrating her feedback techniques

Instructors at Hillsborough are seeing a positive change in the way communicate with each other using the software. "I'm a strong believer in peers working together to help them develop a learning community," Betti Bonni, a professor at Hillsborough with the American Sign Language program, notes.

Using video in her classes has really benefited the online students, because she is able to be more thorough when reviewing assignments. "After the student films their work, I pull it up and look at it maybe two or three times through," Bonni elaborates. "I can take notes and get the information that I want, then I go back and film myself giving her comments throughout her video. The student can then watch my feedback while their video plays, so they can see the exact location of a mistake or inaccuracy."

Betti was unsure of her skill level when it came to education technology. Senker recalls Betti's apprehension at first, but quickly learned she was a natural with the software. "She felt very comfortable, and as I watched her go through I had a sense of reassurance that she is well on her way to doing amazing things now, as well as in the future."

Expanding a Learning Culture

Preparing students with the skills necessary to for careers is one of Hillsborough Community College's primary goals. Professor Bonni makes it her to mission to make students lifelong learners and critical thinkers. Using activities with video promotes these concepts by encouraging students to think critically and provide feedback. Hillsborough Community College's remote access courses are reaching students all over Florida and beyond; the ASL community keeps growing. With a growing community and culture, students are able to communicate with others more effectively and learn better than ever before.

"The skills they learn and develop will not stop here," said Bonni. "When they graduate and go out into the world, they will have each other to lean on."