

greatlearning
Learning for Life

Great Learning

Scaling professional learning experiences with a flexible video platform



Looking over the already-crowded professional training market, the founders of Great Learning saw an opportunity: most continuing education programs hadn't yet figured out how to teach working professionals the challenging new technical skills that working professionals, from entry level to senior leaders, want to understand.

It wasn't that training programs in business analytics, machine learning, or cloud computing were in short supply. Rather, it was that none of the existing courses were designed to give working professionals all the tools they needed to master substantive technical subjects — while still allowing them to continue working.

Great Learning's founders knew the experience could be better. And they knew that in order for their idea to succeed, they couldn't compromise on anything.

The challenge:

Building A High-Touch, Technology-Enabled Learning Environment

To help busy professionals succeed at learning new, complex technical skills, the team at Great Learning recognized they'd need the right technology. In particular, they'd have to find a learning management system (LMS) and a video platform that, together, could support the flexible and active on-demand learning experiences the team had envisioned.

A Smarter LMS

For its LMS, Great Learning had concluded no existing solution would adequately meet the company's needs. So the team instead built its own smarter learning management system from the ground up. They called the system "Olympus."

About Great Learning

Great Learning provides impactful and transformative learning experiences in class and online to equip tomorrow's executives with today's most critical technical competencies including analytics, data science, machine learning, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, DevOps, full stack development, and more.

Over five years, Great Learning has delivered more than 5 million hours to 10,000+ professionals worldwide, including leaders at Microsoft, Amazon, Adobe, American Express, Deloitte, IBM, Accenture, and McKinsey.

Like most LMSs, Olympus enabled learners to access important course tools outside of the classroom, as well as to communicate with instructors. But what truly made Olympus different was its ability to track data along the entire student journey and alert Great Learning mentors to step in when participants showed signs of needing extra support or course correction to get back on the right learning path. For example, if a student did not attend class and did not log in to watch the recording of the lecture, Olympus could prompt Great Learning staff to follow up and, if needed, help the student catch up on the concepts they had missed.

By alerting instructors at the very moment a participant began to fall behind, Olympus was instrumental in enabling Great Learning to provide high-touch learning experiences and improving outcomes for students.

Video-Supported Learning

Alongside their LMS, Great Learning's founders believed that video played an essential part in optimizing courses for working professionals.

Arjun Nair, Co-founder and Director at Great Learning, explained, "Video made it possible for us to offer the blended learning experiences that in turn made it possible for participants to learn while they continued to work. We needed to guarantee video recordings of every class to provide a deeper and flexible learning experience for students."

While participants were encouraged not to miss the limited in-class time they had throughout a course, the Great Learning team recorded each lecture so it could be watched on-demand if someone couldn't attend.

Those lecture recordings would serve as valuable study aids that could be re-watched, searched, and even slowed down to enable a more personalized learning experience. Additionally, faculty could record supplemental instructional videos for students to watch between classes, making way for more time in the classroom for hands-on active learning exercises like working with data sets or running algorithms.

To deliver the right learning experience Great Learning had concluded it needed to build its own custom LMS. Finding the right video platform, however, proved much easier.

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“ We’ve been able to double or triple our enrollments each year, delivering high-quality, high-touch learning experiences to many people in a short amount of time. Panopto enables us to position ourselves as a provider of premium and transformative learning experiences.”

— **Arjun Nair**, Co-founder and Director, Great Learning

The solution:

Delivering An Optimized Learning Experience With Panopto

After researching a number of video learning solutions, Great Learning found Panopto. With Panopto's all-in-one video platform, Great Learning would be able to capture high-definition multi-camera video from anywhere, offer a high-end viewing experience to students, scale the management of its rapidly growing video library, and get detailed video analytics to improve teaching and learning over time.

Flexible Multi-Camera Video Capture

Great Learning wanted to offer students more than just PowerPoint slides with a voiceover. Panopto made it possible to easily record and share much more of the full classroom experience.

With Panopto, Great Learning's classrooms could easily record the instructor, their lecture slides, the material they were writing on a whiteboard, the contents of their laptop

screen, and more. Any information that made sense to share in the lesson could be easily captured and shared. Whether the instructor was presenting a lecture or working through a demonstration, Panopto captured the entire classroom experience for students to revisit later. “With Panopto, there is no information that is lost. I think that adds significant value to the learning experience,” said Arjun Nair.

What’s more, Panopto could be easily added to instructors’ laptops, enabling them to produce their own supplemental videos outside of the classroom. This meant faculty could use the same system to provide students with additional learning materials to view between classes.

Interactive Viewing For Optimized Learning

Great Learning wanted to use video to provide its students with an on-demand learning experience that was as close to the real classroom experience as possible. But that didn’t mean they wanted participants leaning back and watching passively.

With Panopto’s interactive video players, Great Learning could make the learning experience both more active and more personal. Students could stream high-definition course videos from the device of their choice, toggle between views, speed up or slow down playback, turn on captions when available, take notes inside the video player, add bookmarks, and even search the words spoken or shown on screen.

“Panopto’s ability to search all the words spoken and shown during an hour-long course video, then instantly fast forward to the exact moment an instructor got to a topic has proven to be a feature our students can’t live without,” said Arjun Nair.

Scalable Video Management and LMS Integration

As Great Learning began to expand, the team needed a means to securely host and manage its growing library of course videos. Panopto includes a video content management system (video CMS) that easily integrates with most LMSs. Panopto could even integrate with Great Learning’s custom LMS, Olympus, enabling Great Learning to keep their videos secure while still making them easy for learners to access.

Each video uploaded to Panopto is automatically compressed and transcoded for optimal streaming on any device or network. At the same time, Panopto also automatically

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indexes each video’s content for search and uploads them to a secure library for easy sharing. After integrating Panopto with Olympus, Great Learning’s students could view and search their lecture recordings from right from inside the LMS.

And with Panopto, lecture recordings could be made available to students almost immediately following a class. “When we have multiple sessions of a class in a day,” Arjun Nair explained, “some students will watch the video of an earlier session before their class to get a jump on the material they’ll be learning later that day.”

Detailed Video Analytics

The intelligent educational experiences Great Learning sought to deliver relied on data. With Panopto, faculty and staff could see who viewed what videos, how long they viewed, what was watched the most, which in turn would enable instructors to respond to student behavior in ways that improved outcomes for everyone.

That meant that, in addition to sending important user-level viewing data to Olympus that would alert staff to struggling students, Panopto would also become an important tool for faculty to use to improve their own courses. When an instructor received feedback from student surveys at the end of a course, he or she could seek out similar courses where the instructor earned higher ratings, then watch that instructor’s lecture videos to look for opportunities for improvement. Instructors could also use video data to understand where students were engaged and where they stopped viewing. “Everyone gets into a competitive mode to really do a good job teaching, and with Panopto, they can find the insights they need to make smart adjustments,” said Arjun Nair.

The results:

Scaling To Meet Growing Demand

Armed with Panopto's industry-leading video platform and their custom-built "smart" learning management system, Olympus, Great Learning began offering premium, transformative learning experiences taught by top-rated faculty to professionals eager to learn skills that would advance their careers.

Right away, Great Learning received significant demand for its courses. In just five years, Great Learning has delivered more than 5 million hours of learning to more than 10,000 professionals worldwide.

Over that time, Great Learning has expanded from offering one flagship training program in three cities to providing more than ten intensive training programs in six cities, as well as remote learning programs for international students in partnership with the University of Texas at Austin, McCombs School of Business.

Panopto has played a part in that expansion, enabling Great Learning to move into new cities without having to build entirely new learning centers. Because Panopto can record from any laptop, Great Learning had the flexibility to record multi-camera presentations in temporary locations like hotel conference rooms. "We could set up recording infrastructure very quickly with Panopto, a laptop, and a few video cameras," said Nair. "Even in a hotel, we could easily capture the faculty, their projected slides, and the whiteboard they wrote on."

Great Learning's leaders attribute much of their success to the technologies that enabled them to bring their vision to life, optimizing in-depth learning experiences for busy professionals. And without these same technologies, rapid growth would not have been possible.

Reflecting on Panopto's impact on their success over the past several years, Arjun Nair explained, "We've been able to scale our enrollments significantly each year, delivering high-quality, high-touch learning experiences to many people in a short amount of time. Panopto enables us to position ourselves as a provider of premium and transformative learning experiences."

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