

No-Cost Blackboard Mobile Learn and Cleveland State University

Located in Cleveland, Ohio, Cleveland State University has made its mission to provide students with an exceptional education, firmly believing in their motto 'Engaged Learning.' With nearly 90% of CSU students working full or part time, the faculty and administration work to engage their students. In 2010, CSU began looking into using mobile technology to increase student engagement and provide tools to support student success in the classroom. CSU saw the partnership between Blackboard Mobile and Sprint® as a great first step in taking their campus mobile.

Why Mobile?

CSU knew that mobile is increasingly where people – particularly students – live. The average user now spends 9% more time using mobile apps than accessing the Internet itself. In fact, Android and iOS users now spend over 81 minutes on mobile applications each day.* And by 2013, mobile phones will overtake PCs as the most common web access device worldwide.**

CSU leadership saw clearly that the most efficient way to improve accessibility for students was to connect them through the devices they already know and use, every day.

Connecting with Students On-The-Go

Cleveland State University enabled No-Cost Blackboard Mobile Learn on their campus in the fall of 2010. This gave faculty and students the ability to access course content via native mobile application on their Sprint Android, BlackBerry and Palm devices as well as iOS devices via WiFi. After seeing the capabilities of Blackboard Mobile Learn, the CSU faculty wanted to see how using mobile

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Creating courses in Blackboard Learn easily lends itself to being displayed on a mobile device,

Sam Diomede,
Senior Instructional Designer

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technology would affect student engagement and success in a specific course. The team began looking for the leading tablet and a service provider to support this pilot considering cost, service, and functionality of the device. CSU found the Samsung Galaxy tab powered by Sprint 3G services to be the strongest option.

Similar to many institutions across the country, there is a segment of incoming CSU students that need more focus on fundamental courses before continuing their higher education studies. With this in mind, the mobile learning pilot was launched in a Developmental Math course, MTH87, where CSU felt mobile learning could have the greatest impact.

At the time, only 40% of students successfully completed MTH87. This was the benchmark for measuring success at the end of the semester. CSU was also looking to measure what effect mobile learning actually had? Is mobile learning just about convenience? Or can it make a demonstrable difference in how and to what degree students engage with their class, their instructors, and their fellow students? And, most importantly, can mobile learning lead to better academic performance?

In the spring of 2011, students from two sections of MTH87 were given Sprint 3G Samsung Galaxy Tablets with Blackboard Mobile Learn and GroupBoard already installed. The students were able to access their course content including assignments, lecture notes, and discussion boards using Blackboard Mobile Learn and use GroupBoard to facilitate virtual tutoring sessions, all from their Samsung Galaxy tablets. With the tablets being powered by Sprint's 3G network, the students could work from virtually anywhere, at home, while in transit or at work.

The recorded lectures and sample test reviews were extremely helpful. Having these resources available and accessible from anywhere to review as many times as I needed was very beneficial to me. The technology allowed me to review problems and concepts that I didn't understand.

Student enrolled in MTH87

THE PILOT ENABLED STUDENTS TO:

- Review lectures anywhere, any time.
- Work together using GroupBoard.
- Access instructors and tutors on GroupBoard.
- Access Blackboard courses through Blackboard Mobile Learn.

3G Samsung Galaxy tablets with Blackboard Mobile Learn, compared to other sections. Students involved in the pilot were also more engaged in the course. Only 10% of the students in the pilot sections dropped the class, as opposed to 13.3% of other sections. Furthermore, faculty noted increased student satisfaction. 53% of students said they felt Blackboard Mobile Learn made instruction more accessible, and that using Sprint 3G Samsung Galaxy Tablets made getting help easier.

Moving Forward with Mobile

Mohsen Manouchehri, head of the Developmental Math program at CSU, is thrilled with the results and looking forward to further embracing mobile learning. Importantly, he's confident the new technology enhances learning, rather than serving as a distraction.

Pete Rottier, Director of the Center for eLearning, believes mobile learning can help develop the community dynamic that CSU's "commuter campus" strives for. "If we can get students to access eBooks, tutoring, their professors, and other students, and to form communities...that's what I see as the most powerful feature of mobile learning," explains Rottier. "It can create a community that other residential communities have even though they are not all physically there. Doing that, they can work together to solve problems and successfully graduate."

The addition of mobile learning capabilities is helping students feel connected. Cleveland State University is rolling out a bigger project in the Fall, with 350 Samsung Galaxy Tablets with Sprint data plans and No-Cost Blackboard Mobile Learn for students in MTH87.

Mobile and Student Success, by numbers

At the end of the semester, both the students and faculty involved in the pilot were quite pleased. 16% more students passed the course in the sections of the course using Sprint

* Flurry - <http://blog.flurry.com/bid/63907/Mobile-Apps-Put-the-Web-in-Their-Rear-view-Mirror>

**Mobile Trends, 2010 Influencers Series <http://www.slideshare.net/TrendsSpotting/2010-mobile-influencers-trend-predictions-in-140-characters-by-trendspotting>

