

Case Study



MARICOPA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

The Maricopa County Community College District is one of the largest higher education systems in the world and the largest provider of health care workers and job training in Arizona. Ten colleges make up the district, and although they have not agreed on any single Learning Management System they did unanimously select SoftChalk's LessonBuilder as the preferred tool for building instructional content and for developing Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs).

Like many learning institutions, the colleges in the Maricopa District have been expanding beyond traditional classroom borders, offering an increasing number of web-based courses and curriculum enhancements. LessonBuilder's user-friendly interface makes it easy for faculty to build rich course content, as well as timely tutorials and other learning activities that allow students to practice what they are learning. At GateWay Community College, Lisa Young, Water Resources Faculty, states that LessonBuilder found its biggest success with the sectional anatomy class. A team of three faculty collaborated to create all of the hybrid course materials using LessonBuilder. This included interesting drill and practice opportunities using activities (especially labeling) and quiz features. They even used textpopovers to link images to anatomy terms embedded in content. The result has been rich, interactive lessons that students enjoy.

According to Roger Yohe, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning at Estrella Mountain Community College, LessonBuilder is used to design course templates that are essentially "ready-to-go." This allows the college to quickly add high demand course sections based on enrollment trends. While it is important to faculty at Estrella to present students with consistencies in course syllabi, they objected to the "one-size-fits-all" nature of the templates that had previously been designed in a word processing application. The implementation of LessonBuilder solved the problem and enabled both a standard and a diversity by using a combination of software features, particularly cascading stylesheets.

An English Department faculty member at Glendale Community College, Mary Jane Onnen, utilizes the LessonBuilder software in another unique manner. She has been using LessonBuilder in her developmental reading class for the last several years. Previously she had used the SoftChalk software to reformat "text-dense" reading selections, adding subtitles and developing comprehension questions for students. This past semester she had her students do basically the same thing, and found it to be a great way to assess how carefully the students read material. Students turned in their assignments developed with LessonBuilder and then the instructor annotated the page to provide them feedback (see sample annotated lesson below). Students were intrigued by the process and the SoftChalk product, which resulted in the purchase of an institutional Student License package for the college.

About Maricopa Community Colleges...

The Maricopa Community Colleges comprises ten colleges, two skill centers and numerous education centers, each individually accredited, yet part of a larger system — the Maricopa County Community College District. The District is one of the largest higher education systems in the world, and the largest provider of health care workers and job training in Arizona.

Flexible course delivery includes online, televised, traditional classroom, hybrid, mail, accelerated, evening, weekend and open-entry/open-exit choices. The Maricopa District offers approximately 1000 occupational programs (degrees and certificates) and 37 academic associate degrees.

The Center for Workforce Development forges business and industry partnerships with District schools. Providing both on-site and campus-based training designed to improve the skills and efficiency of employees, the Center helps to create improved job efficiency and a more stable workforce for businesses in Maricopa County.

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SoftChalk LLC is a leading provider of e-learning software for educational institutions worldwide. Specializing in the development of tools that are intuitive and easy-to-use, SoftChalk products allow instructors to create powerful, sophisticated and professional-looking content for e-learning classrooms in K-12, higher education, and corporate training markets.

The increasing development of a wide range of teaching tools amongst faculty in the district led to the development of the Maricopa Learning Exchange (MLX), a repository for reusable learning objects (RLOs). [See www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/mlx]. The MLX provides an easy way to upload learning objects into a database that can be searched by all faculty in the ten colleges that make up the district. SCORM compliance is an important requirement, both for creating content that is easily transported and used in other technologies, and for tagging RLOs for searching purposes. With its built-in SCORM compliance, LessonBuilder easily fulfills these requirements and integrates seamlessly with the repository.

“Our E-Learning options provide timely support for faculty by giving them ‘just in time’ teaching tools designed with LessonBuilder. These collaboratively designed course templates are ‘ready to go’ and are consistent with EMCC teaching and learning practices. This allows our college to open up more high demand course sections based on enrollment trends.”

Roger Yohe, Director
Center for Teaching and Learning
Estrella Mountain Community College

The screenshot shows a lesson page titled "The Strike for Three Loaves" with the subtitle "Immigrant Labor Rights in the 1900s". It includes a table of contents, an introduction, and a section on "Working Conditions in the Mills". A quiz question is visible at the bottom: "What is the important point in the first paragraph? Please create other questions which do more than ask a reader to find a fact."

Lessons incorporate 'dense text' made more accessible and understandable using LessonBuilder tools.

The screenshot shows the Maricopa Learning Exchange search interface. It features a search bar with the query "anatomy", a dropdown menu for "Description", and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are four icons: "about", "search", "tour", and "loading dock". A list of search results is displayed, including "1. Dental Assisting Internship", "2. 2006 ACSM Conference and Body Worlds 2 Exhibit", "3. Interpreting Techniques for the Deaf-Blind Population Seminar", and "4. Anatomy Labeling Exercises".

RE-usable Learning Object repository search engine increasingly populated by LessonBuilder objects

As the Maricopa District continues to expand the repository, they are also busy with a faculty development program that informs instructors about RLOs; how to search for and utilize them, as well as how to develop them using the LessonBuilder software. The decision to integrate SoftChalk's LessonBuilder software across the board, at all ten of the colleges in their district, has been a good one. As online education continues to grow and expand, the Maricopa County Community College District is poised at the forefront, ready to offer its students the very best in this new and exciting technology.

The circular inset shows a quiz question: "What is the important point in the first paragraph? Please create other questions which do more than ask a reader to find a fact." Below the question are four multiple-choice options: a. chicken pox, b. diphtheria, c. brain tumor, and d. heart disease. A "Check Answer" button is visible at the bottom.

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