Rosetta Stone Ushers in Rider University's 21st Century Transformation

Rider University

- www.rider.edu
- 6,000 students
- Four academic colleges
- Internationalization goals

About Rider University

Rider University is a private, coeducational university located in Princeton and Lawrenceville, New Jersey. With a community of nearly 6,000 students, Rider is comprised of four academic colleges – the College of Business Administration, the College of Liberal Arts, Education, and Sciences, the College of Continuing Studies and Westminster Choir College. Rider's programs provide more than 60 undergraduate areas of study and graduate degrees in 18 specialties. Rider seeks to provide personal and engaging experiences that are relevant to today and to the future. In 2008, Rider University turned to Rosetta Stone® Classroom to reach its goals as a student-centered institution prepared for an increasingly globalized world.

Challenge

As the economy tightened, Rider University found itself contending with higher costs, less government funding and increased competition for students and donations. In order to ensure its success, the University felt it was necessary to create innovative programs that could distinguish itself from the rest of the field and advance the university into the 21st century.

Solution

In a ground-breaking five year plan started in 2005, Rider University committed to creating a student-centered learning environment, one that strongly embraced a multicultural outlook and enhanced the power of their faculty and staff. In order to achieve this goal, Rider incorporated language-learning solutions from Rosetta Stone university-wide, providing an immersive and personalized world language learning experience available to all students, faculty and staff.

Results

Only months after the program was started, more than 30 percent of the Rider University community became engaged in the software. Rosetta Stone Classroom has been integrated into curricula throughout the entire university and all four academic colleges. Teachers and staff utilize the software to improve their teaching skills as well as their own personal career evolution. In the 2009 academic year, Rider University will seek to expand access to Rosetta Stone software to its alumni community.

RosettaStone®

Rosetta Stone: Key Component in Rider University's Image and Academic Transformation
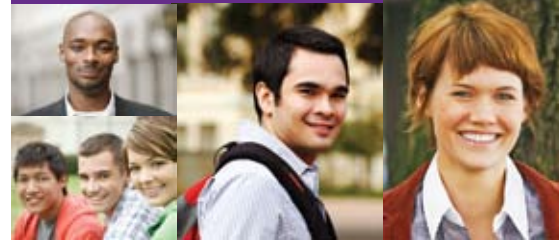
In 2003, Rider University welcomed new president Mordechai Rozanski who immediately commissioned a team of faculty, staff, alumni and students to create a strategic five year plan to prepare Rider for the number of opportunities and challenges it would encounter in the years ahead. Rider finalized the plan in 2005 and was armed with new forward-thinking objectives that stressed innovation, globalization and the student experience. As part of the implementation, the university decided to integrate Rosetta Stone® Classroom into their school infrastructure in April 2008 due to the comprehensive tools the software offered. "We were looking for a single language learning solution that would help us address all of our goals," said Chair of the Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Linda Materna, Ph.D. "Rosetta Stone Classroom offered a language-learning program that truly allowed students to immerse themselves in the experience and engage naturally with the software."

A Focus on Multiculturalism Leads to an Immersive Language Learning Program

With an international education background and a PhD in Chinese History and Chinese-American Relations from the University of Pennsylvania, Rozanski was aware of the power of globalization and the importance of language-learning. As the Board of Trustees stated in their strategic plan, "We live in a rapidly shrinking world. The forward rush of trade, technology, and communications is fast increasing global interdependence. Our students need to develop global and multicultural perspectives to better understand and manage the opportunities and challenges of an interdependent yet conflicted world." Providing their students, across all colleges and departments, with an international focus became a pivotal part of Rider University's plan for the future.

Foreign language instruction became the foundation of this new multicultural focus, led by the Chair of the Department of Foreign Language and Literature, Linda Materna, Ph.D.

"Today, it would truly be handicapping a student if you did not equip him or her with linguistic skills," Materna said, adding that knowledge of the world and engagement in other cultures has never been more important. For this reason, she and several Rider administrators lobbied for additional exchange program opportunities, increased study abroad funding, augmented foreign language lessons and university wide usage of Rosetta Stone Classroom.

"Rosetta Stone was our first choice because it provided the rare learning experience that was truly visually engaging and verbally interactive," Materna said. "The solution is very user-friendly, very forgiving, and there's no grade attached so there's no pressure."

Rider's Westminster Choir College uses the language-learning solution to prepare for their music exchange program in Brazil and music professors throughout the College require use of the solution in order to aid in student diction and translation. Michael Curran, Ph.D., a professor in Rider's School of Education, encourages his students to use the software so they can become better teachers.

"My students teach at local Fisher Middle School and Fischer's [English as a Second Language] programs have expanded to more than a dozen different languages. Using Rosetta Stone has made it possible for my students to communicate with their students, and it truly makes them better teachers. It's a great training tool for the future teachers I'm molding," said Curran.

Rider University quickly realized that Rosetta Stone could also help them accomplish the other goals set in their five year strategic plan. The Board of Trustees had insisted that Rider provide an academically challenging and supportive learning environment that would motivate students to be actively engaged in their own learning. Rosetta Stone was the perfect tool to help accomplish this goal since the software allows a student to create their own language course. Rosetta Stone is a personalized learning experience where the pace and direction of the language instruction is entirely based on the student's development and needs. Rider faculty felt that Rosetta Stone's "fun learning" encourages rather than pressures students to take on mastering another language.

Foreign Language Learning Moves Beyond the Classroom

Rosetta Stone also caught the eye of Carol Kondrach and Krystyna Rykowski of Rider's Office of Information Technology as a means to usher the school's technological infrastructure into the next century. Rykowski emphasized the software's ease of use and online interface as the main reason the program was perfect for Rider. "Our students can log-on to the program from anywhere and practice their second language. They can use Rosetta Stone in the library, at home, and on their laptops – wherever they feel most comfortable," Rykowski said. Since Rosetta Stone's launch, the solution has steadily gained new users every month, with a reported 2,300 users to date or more than 30 percent of the faculty, staff and students.

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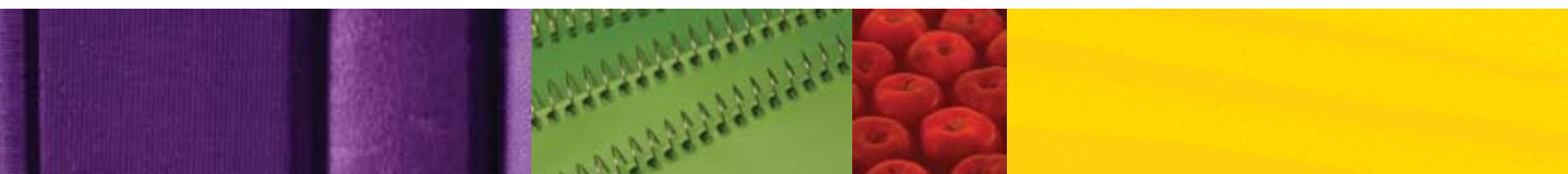
Linda Materna, Ph.D.
Chair, Department of Foreign
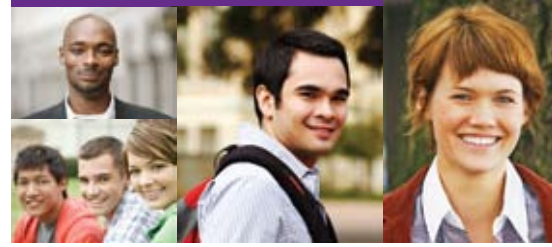   **Language and Literature**
Rider University

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Michael Curran, Ph.D.
Professor, School of Education
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To speak to a language learning consultant about the right solution for your school, please contact us.

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Student Success Leads to Faculty and Staff Adoption of Rosetta Stone Classroom

Rosetta Stone® has also enriched the lives of Rider staff and faculty hoping to improve their teaching skills, enhance their communication with students, and advance their career prospects. Dr. Curran used Rosetta Stone to prepare for conferences in Germany and in Mexico saying, "using the software was fun for me personally and knowing a bit of German and Spanish at the conferences allowed me to take more information from those meetings than I had before."

Since the program launched, staff members at Rider have led all other groups in usage of Rosetta Stone software. "The staff members have been overwhelmingly receptive because they understand how much knowing another language will foster their personal, intellectual and career growth," said Dr. Materna.

Next Steps

Rider is looking into expanding Rosetta Stone's availability to include access for Rider alumni as well. The university hopes that this expansion will not only foster a tighter connection between alumni and present students, but that it will also be a powerful tool the school can offer to its former students to ensure their success in today's world.

About Rosetta Stone Classroom

Rosetta Stone Classroom is a powerful learning tool that incorporates seamlessly into a teacher's overall language learning curriculum. Features such as speech analysis tools, grammar and spelling components and predefined course templates adeptly complement classroom teaching expertise. Rosetta Stone Classroom provides the support teachers need with Rosetta Stone Manager, a built in management tool that delivers real-time reporting capabilities, details on student progress and user-friendly administrative functionalities. The software offers flexible license solutions that are tailored to meet a school's specific needs, technology environments and requirements. Available in more than 30 different languages, Rosetta Stone Classroom affords teachers the opportunity to entrust critical language skill development to the software so that invaluable classroom time can focus on topic-based activities that bring language learning to life.

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