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February 04, 2008

ESI Launches Virtual Classroom

By Susan J. Campbell
TMCnet Contributing Editor

ESI International has announced the global launch of its Virtual Classroom, a new experience that allows students to train together with an instructor in real-time through an online environment.

With the use of microphones and instant messaging, students are able to hear the instructor's explanations, ask questions, speak with one another, divide into virtual breakout rooms, and benefit from instant instructor polling from anywhere in the world.



This new Virtual Classroom from ESI enables consistent team learning across diverse geographic locations, without incurring travel costs. Students and employers especially benefit from the option to schedule courses for just part of the day to allow students to remain in the office while

working to achieve professional development goals.

"ESI's new Virtual Classroom has been designed to meet the evolving needs of our clients and students," said Stephen Stilwell, Product Director Online Services, ESI, in a Monday statement.

"Now, our clients can easily bring geographically dispersed groups together, to learn as a team, while ensuring they have time to focus on their day-to-day work activities, all without any travel."

In order to provide students with the ability to listen to modules and review information, every Virtual Classroom course is recorded. Students can also download course reference materials and tools as well as access pre- and post-course surveys and assessments.

ESI's most popular course, Managing Projects, is the first Virtual Classroom offering. This course is currently available for ESI's on-site clients and public course offerings are scheduled to begin in April.

The scope and content of Virtual Classroom courses are consistent with ESI's classroom and asynchronous e-learning courses in order to allow students to blend virtual classroom courses with other delivery methods for a consistent, integrated learning experience.

Students can also earn Professional Development Units (PDUs) and Continuing Education Units (CEUs). ESI's Virtual Classroom courses can also be applied toward several certificates available from EDI and The George Washington University, Washington.

By offering the Virtual Classroom, ESI is actually meeting several needs in the enterprise today. For one, companies throughout the world are exploring teleconferencing options that allow for group training that does not require travel. Such an arrangement allows for more frequent training and a significant cost savings in travel expenses. The Virtual Classroom helps to meet this need.

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The Virtual Classroom also helps to contribute to an organization's quest to go "Green". By eliminating some of the travel that its employees must complete, the organization reduces its carbon footprint – something consumers are paying closer attention to when deciding whether or not to do business with a company.

Susan J. Campbell is a contributing editor for TMC ([News - Alert](#)) and has also written for [eastbiz.com](#). To see more of her articles, please visit [Susan J. Campbell's columnist page](#).

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