

Flipping the classroom

Ritsumeikan University introduces LinkedIn Learning as part of its undergraduate curriculum



Location: Shiga Prefecture,
Kyoto, Japan



Industry: Higher Education

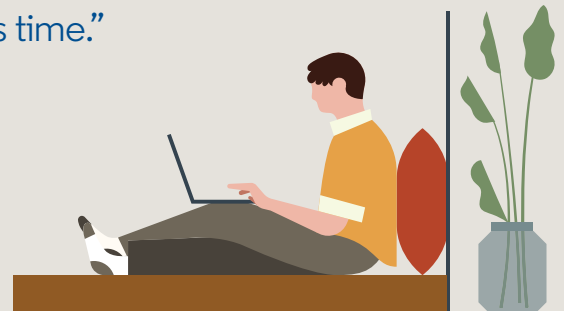


Enrolment: 32,243

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Professor Haruo Noma
College of Information Science and Engineering
Ritsumeikan University



The year 2020 marks the 120th anniversary of Ritsumeikan University but the private university traces its roots back to 1869 when it was founded by Prince Saionji Kinmochi, a former two-time Prime Minister of Japan, on the ideals of ‘freedom and innovation’.

Today, Ritsumeikan University shares these ideals with over 11,000 students at its Biwako-Kusatsu campus in Kyoto. With a vision to become a world-class campus for both humanities and sciences, the university’s College of Information Science and Engineering made an unconventional decision in 2019 to adopt LinkedIn Learning for 70 of its first-year Physical Computing Course students as part of a ‘flipped classroom’ pedagogy.

Why LinkedIn Learning?

1. Video-based learning content is more engaging and makes it easier for students to grasp topics
2. Courses are short, digestible and accessible via smartphones and on-the-go
3. LinkedIn Learning can be accessed via Ritsumeikan’s education management system, which makes it easy for students to view and teachers to check on their progress

Putting Flipped Learning into Practice

'Flipped learning' involves students studying new topics in advance at home, then using classroom time to go over problems with the lecturer to ensure that they fully understand, and are able to apply, the content. Instead of a traditional, memorisation-focused style of education, this approach places pupil-teacher interaction at the heart of learning.



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LinkedIn Learning was introduced specifically to support students learning Python because Ritsumeikan realised that, with programming languages in particular, students' individual strengths and weaknesses often determine how quickly they pick up the language. This means that there are real limits to what can be achieved through lectures delivered with the same materials and at the same pace.

"Before LinkedIn Learning, it was a challenge to address the variations in students' programming knowledge," says Noma.

Now, students are asked to watch the Python Essential Training lectures on LinkedIn Learning before class. This enables them to take as much or as little time as they need to understand the fundamentals. Classes then start with a mini test to assess how well the students have understood the content before they move on to tackle practice problems individually. At any time, they can reach out to the teaching staff to help them work through any questions they may have.

By getting the students to look over the basics before class, Ritsumeikan's professors are able to focus classroom time on the areas that students need additional support on.

"With videos, subjects feel accessible and easy to understand. I put the subtitles on and watch LinkedIn Learning on my computer. I also think it's good that the content gets quite advanced toward the end of a course, so you can start with the fundamentals and learn all the way through to practical problems."

Tomoya Yukami
Year 2 Student, College of Information
Science and Engineering,
Ritsumeikan University





“More Familiar than a Textbook”

More than two years after adopting LinkedIn Learning (and more than four years after adopting Lynda.com), Professor Noma is seeing the results. With students reviewing course material in advance on LinkedIn Learning and classroom time spent clarifying doubts, the whole class’s programming level has improved.

The level of student satisfaction has also increased. It’s clear that Ritsumeikan’s digitally-minded students have a greater affinity for online learning than they do for textbooks. Professor Noma says that when he surveyed his students, 70% of them supported online learning.

At present, many educational institutions have been forced to pivot to online learning due to COVID-19. As they make this shift and grapple with developing a hybrid digital+classroom teaching model that delivers high student satisfaction, Ritsumeikan University’s innovative approach may be a source of inspiration.



“I particularly liked the HTML, CSS and JavaScript courses on LinkedIn Learning. We don’t really learn about web systems at school, so I was glad to find content like that. I started studying them out of interest but, in the end, I gained skills that I now use in my part-time web application development work.”

Tomoya Yukami
Year 2 Student, College of Information
Science and Engineering,
Ritsumeikan University

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LinkedIn Learning is a leading online learning platform that helps professionals learn relevant skills and achieve their goals. It combines a library of 16,400+ up-to-date courses in 7 different languages with an engaging, intuitive, and personalised learner experience. LinkedIn Learning also includes real-time skills insights that help learning leaders identify skills gaps. For more information, visit <http://learning.linkedin.com>.