

Success with Touchstone

Laureate International Universities is an international university network offering degree programs to more than 675,000 students worldwide. The Laureate English Program (LEP), based on Touchstone Blended Learning, was founded with the aim of providing students with a minimum level of English by the time they graduate from a Laureate institution.

Laureate International Universities has a stated objective through the (LEP) to provide all students with an opportunity to reach an intermediate level of English language proficiency while attending a Laureate institution. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) identifies this sufficient level as B1. The challenge for Laureate was to develop even beginner students' English language competency to an intermediate level with limited face-to-face study hours.

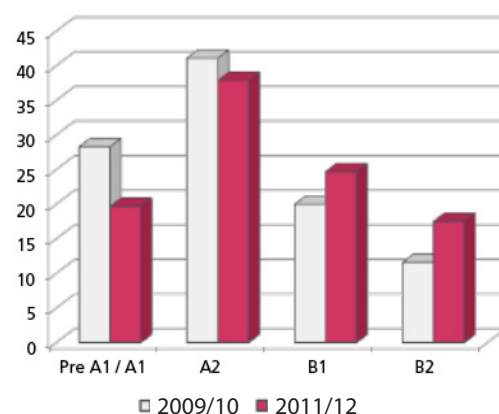
Results

The impact of using a Blended Learning Program like Touchstone is well proven. Research was carried out at a number of Laureate universities in Europe, Asia and South America to investigate the impact of implementing Touchstone. Classes were benchmarked in 2010 and 2012 after implementing Blended Learning in 2011. There was a marked progression with a shift up the CEFR scale to the intermediate (CEFR B1) and upper-intermediate (CEFR B2) levels, and fewer at beginner levels (CEFR A1/A2).

These results illustrate that by providing increased opportunities for use of English outside of the classroom and making more effective use of classroom time (i.e. focus on production skills), blended work can be more effective. includes hundreds of hours of highly interactive materials, including audio and video as well as communicative tools to encourage additional interaction. The ground breaking Touchstone Blended Learning Program is the first course of its kind, truly integrating both classroom and online content.



Touchstone benchmarking studies show student progress to higher CEFR levels



Universidad de Las Americas (UDLA) Ecuador

UDLA Ecuador was created in 1995 as an extension to the Chilean campus. It was in the same year that English language courses began. Ten years later, UDLA Ecuador became a Laureate International University. In order to strengthen its provision of English Language Teaching, the university joined the Laureate English Program (LEP) and started using the Touchstone Blended Learning Program.

Supporting International Standards

UDLA Ecuador's mission is to become a model for Ecuadorian education and to reach the best possible standards in every possible way. In the past, the university had experimented with many different EFL curricula. Previous English programs did not measure up for several different reasons, the foremost being publishers' lack of expertise and knowledge of modern EFL practices.

The ability to support international standards has revolutionised the teaching of English at UDLA Ecuador, aligning it with the LEP. The CEFR now underpins the regulations and grading policies of English Language Teaching at UDLA Ecuador.

Integrating Print and Digital

In 2012, UDLA Ecuador implemented a blended English curriculum, using a balance of print and digital Touchstone content. Benchmarked against a textbook-only curriculum used in 2010, the blended curriculum helped twice as many students achieve the target B1 level. In July 2010 just 38% of students reached an intermediate level; in 2012, the figure was 70%.

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Touchstone Online materials promoted a Blended Learning Program in which students are in charge of certain areas of their studies. It also brought organised sequence content and extra activities that have helped us to increase students' talking time.”

Veronica Nolivos (Teacher)

