



Teaching and Learning for the Way We Live

*How USFQ partnered with Brightspace to drive collaboration
and spread best practices across faculty*

Overview

A leader in education, research, creativity, entrepreneurship and freedom of thinking in Ecuador and Latin America, Universidad San Francisco de Quito (USFQ) set the bar high by implementing the philosophy of the Liberal Arts, entrepreneurship and scientific, technological and cultural development throughout its 25 years of history.

USFQ's decision to step into eLearning brought about some challenges to balance quality, technology and methodology across its courses and careers. Online course creation was inefficient and time-consuming and the wide range of course methodologies used would make it hard to track, measure, evaluate and rate quality.

To address these challenges, USFQ adopted the Brightspace Online and Blended Learning solution to spark real engagement and allow all stakeholders to interact and collaborate across the organization.

Within the Brightspace Learning Environment, the faculty now has the opportunity to build their best teaching experiences into the Master Course templates based on best practices from cross-functional teams. With extensive options for roles, permissions and functionality, professors, instructional designers, students and the administrative staff all have access to the same platform, driving communication, collaboration and personalization at scale.

AT A GLANCE

Client	Universidad San Francisco de Quito
Students	7,000
Level	Undergraduate and Graduate
Solutions	Brightspace Online and Blended Learning solution

CHALLENGE

- Costly, time-consuming course creation
- Balance course quality while empowering educators to teach the way they want to teach
- Spread best practices and spark engagement

SOLUTION

- Develop Master Course Templates through collaboration between cross-functional teams
- Leverage standards-based features to provide faculty with the flexibility to teach in their own style

RESULT¹

- Daily use of the technology soared from 0 to around 60%
- Reduced costs with course creation
- Increased faculty collaboration and efficiency
- Higher-quality learning experiences
- Fewer technical support calls



Challenge

BOLD FIGURES, STRONG ACHIEVEMENTS

Ranking #1 among all universities in Ecuador,¹ USFQ's numbers and background speak for themselves: 2400 face-to-face courses, 250 fully online courses, the largest number of dedicated PhD professors, almost 7,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs, both face-to-face and distance education and the most advanced technology in both the Cumbaya and Galapagos campuses.

STRIVING TO ENGAGE AND BALANCE QUALITY

Universidad San Francisco de Quito has a diversified course offering and an academic community with several interests and various backgrounds. However, their vision was limited by operational factors, such as inefficient online course creation and an uneven level of faculty engagement and quality.

Every time an instructor had to teach an online course, it needed to be redesigned from scratch. On one hand, the content offered was outdated due to limited delivery possibilities and, on the other, it wasn't enough to meet each student's individual learning needs. Each educator would create their own material, and collaboration between faculty members happened at a very slow pace. This expensive and time-consuming process discouraged many instructors from teaching online, since they spent more time troubleshooting than actually teaching.

As a result, the lacking standardization among the various courses and professors worked as a drawback for the accreditation processes required by Ecuador's educational authorities. The gap between the academic content and

the methodologies offered by the faculty made it difficult to extract data from the learning environment that could be used to support the quality and educational processes.

MAKING AN ALLY OUT OF TECHNOLOGY

USFQ's former online learning environment delivered a limited offering of technology-mediated education. The virtual environments consisted of simple courses in which educators would provide digitally adapted material or coordinate video conferences with the participants. Even though the instructors had the technology at hand, the platform simply wasn't enough to create enhanced learning experiences, and ultimately limited teaching.

USFQ was willing to use technology to enable unique learning paths for every learner and provide the necessary scale to achieve the accreditation, while empowering faculty with the flexibility to teach the way they want to teach.

In a context that demanded innovation—and due to their commitment to excellence—USFQ decided to tackle the challenges posed by the educational demands of the 21st century. To do so, in 2011 the University began to offer every educator total freedom by implementing the Brightspace Online and Blended Learning solution for Higher Education.



EXPECT MORE: FLEXIBILITY

Before implementing the Brightspace technology, USFQ's virtual learning environment was available exclusively to their distance education courses. "With Brightspace, we could expand and offer an online environment for all our bachelor and graduate programs," said Myriam Rodriguez, Technical Co-Director at USFQ. The University chose the Brightspace Online and Blended Learning solution, which is designed to extend learning beyond the classroom and set students and teachers up for success through engaging and enriching learning experiences.

Today, every single course offered by USFQ has its own virtual learning environment, enabling educators and learners to directly access their content—anytime, anywhere. With all the teaching and learning resources integrated into one central location, the faculty can now create customized course designs using standards-based content. This gives instructors the freedom to dedicate their time to creating excellent learning experiences, streamlining the course creation process and balancing out quality across academic content. "With Brightspace, we create the course templates and share them with all the instructors that teach the same course", Rodriguez added. "Quality, distribution and update processes have been improved through the use of the platform."

EXPECT MORE: ENGAGEMENT

The experience of the Introduction to Mathematics team provides a clear example of how Brightspace empowered educators with the freedom to teach the way they want to teach, while maintaining the consistency with the curriculum. Before implementing the platform, each instructor would create their own material and teach their courses with

different levels of knowledge and varying demands.

With Brightspace, the faculty began to meet with course coordinators and other stakeholders to create a template course using the Course Builder™ tool. Upon its creation, every faculty member had the permissions to edit the template. Once the template had been approved, the level of permissions was changed to enable instructors to include their own content within the previously defined format. Depending on the settings defined by each user, the content created by an educator would then become readily available to fellow instructors.

In addition to fostering faculty collaboration, this new practice enabled USFQ to maintain a balanced quality level across all Introduction to Mathematics courses, allowing the university to meet the accreditation requirements set by Ecuador's educational authorities. "The faculty was very enthusiastic, they took the opportunity to build their best experiences into the Master Courses templates," says Paul Hardt, Director of Online Education at USFQ.

TAKING EDUCATION TO THE NEXT LEVEL

USFQ has implemented and uses all the tools in the Brightspace Learning Environment on a daily basis. Tools such as email and text messaging are being used to establish a direct communication channel between educators and learners and promote social learning. With the inline Grade Book tool, teachers can monitor the performance and individual learning progress of each student—and learners can also see how they're doing.

"We had to provide the teachers not only with the technological tool, but also with the pedagogical components", said María Dolores Idrovo, Instructional



Solution continued

Design Coordinator at USFQ. Using Brightspace Capture, the platform's native solutions were customized and integrated with third-party tools such as Turnitin®—for plagiarism control—and a full video conferencing suite. Today, the D2L Professional Services team is working with the University to implement single sign-on (SSO) authentication and integrate tools such as Office 365, USFQ's own system, and Banner®.

By optimizing their course creation process, leveraging material across the faculty and spending less time with technical support, USFQ was able to dedicate more time and resources into further enriching the academic quality they deliver. Paul Hardt is proud to say: “This approach saves time, money, improves collaboration and provides high-quality instructional design.”



“100% of the Medicine students at USFQ have been approved in Ecuador’s national course examination, scoring 16 mean percentage points higher than the national average.”

Myriam Rodriguez, Technical Co-Director, USFQ



LEARNING FOR THE WAY WE LIVE

To ensure it achieves excellence, an academic offering should be supported by technology that engages the entire learning community. In a constantly evolving world, Brightspace pioneers in developing technology that can drive innovation into traditional teaching approaches, enabling everyone involved to focus their attention on what matters most: teaching and learning.

The benefits of implementing technology that extends education beyond the classroom are clear in the report generated by USFQ using the Brightspace Analytics Essentials tool. Since the platform's deployment in 2011, the adoption rate soared from 0 to 60%. The faculty now uses the Brightspace technology on a daily basis.¹

In addition, students now have access to a solution that suits their unique pace and individual learning preferences. With pervasive resources available when they're needed most, students feel closer to their peers and professors and ultimately share more experiences, increasing engagement and boosting academic achievements.

DEEPER INSIGHTS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

Faculty tasks have been optimized by creating content using the logic of collaborative economy, which multiplies the reach of the resources produced. This speeds up the content creation process since courses don't need to be renewed every semester. In addition, educators can now rely on analytics and predictive tools that enable them to track each student's performance and customize the content delivered according to their individual progress.

By interacting through a centralized platform, teachers, students, coordinators and administrators can share their views on education. This creates an environment of ongoing enrichment and ensures that best practices are extended to all departments, reaching every learner in the institution.

IMPROVED LEARNING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

With simple, intuitive capabilities and an increasing number of visual and self-directed resources, the Brightspace platform helped USFQ drastically reduce their costs with technical support calls. A partnership between the University and the D2L team helped integrate personalized resources to meet the specific needs of the faculty at USFQ.

Brightspace's standards-based technology and personalization at scale has created much more meaningful learning experiences. Without having to worry about troubleshooting, educators are empowered with the flexibility to shape their content to reflect their most fundamental views on education.

About D2L

A global leader in EdTech, D2L is the creator of Brightspace, the world's first integrated learning platform. The company partners with thought-leading organizations to improve learning through data-driven technology that helps deliver a personalized experience to every learner, regardless of geography or ability. D2L's open and extensible platform is used by more than 1,100 clients and 15 million individual learners in higher education, K-12, healthcare, government, and the enterprise sector—including Fortune 1000 companies. The company has operations in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia, Brazil, and Singapore. www.brightspace.com | www.D2L.com

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