On the path to success

Driving development beyond the university
For over 40 years, Unigranrio has invested in differentiated instruction in Brazil in order to meet their key objective – to promote personal and professional development. The university now has 10 units in the state of Rio de Janeiro and offers over 40 undergraduate and graduate courses. Due to the growing demand for its high-quality instruction, the institution has been investing in online education and decided to enrich their virtual learning environment.

Partnering with D2L to implement Brightspace has enabled Unigranrio to provide their students with all the competencies they need to ensure their professional success. With next-generation educational technology resources, Unigranrio offers an interactive and engaging learning experience to all their students, regardless of whether they study online or offline.

Following the widespread approval of Brightspace by Unigranrio’s faculty and around 30,000 students, the university now has ambitious goals to expand the use of the platform by 2018. By providing students with personal learning paths from the beginning of the course up to graduation, the university offers resources to help each individual reach their personal and professional goals.

Both D2L and Unigranrio believe that offline and online education have the potential to complement and enhance each other. By combining both modalities – which the university already plans to do, thanks to Brightspace – Unigranrio can produce an enriched learning experience and ensure a brighter future for education.

Overview

AT A GLANCE

<table>
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<th>Client</th>
<th>Unigranrio</th>
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<td>Students</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<td>Level</td>
<td>Undergraduate and Graduate</td>
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CHALLENGE:
- Offer high-quality education to the entire learning community
- Prepare learners for the job market through work-based learning
- Ensure online students feel included and engaged
- Leverage educational technologies for personal and professional development

SOLUTION:
- Partnering with D2L to implement an innovative learning platform
- Empowering learners through an interactive experience
- Providing educational resources that better prepare students for their professional lives
- Engaging and motivating students through next-generation tools

RESULTS:
- Successful implementation for around 30,000 students
- Practicality in preparing learners for the job market
- Widespread approval by faculty and students
- New goal of 70,000 Brightspace users by 2018
- Plans to leverage the platform across a variety of courses

1 Data provided by Unigranrio in February 2015.
A COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT

Unigranrio’s mission goes well beyond academic education – they are committed to promoting quality of life. The institution invests in offering a high-quality learning experience that enables their students to develop both personally and professionally and ensures their successful entry into the job market.

To ensure that all learners achieve their full potential, the university spares no effort to stay up to date and connected with the changes happening in Brazil and worldwide. Their concern with social responsibility, alongside other pioneering characteristics, represents a key difference for Unigranrio when compared with other institutions.

Aiming to provide all learners with the resources they need to advance in their careers, Unigranrio seeks to bring them closer to professional life. To deliver on this vision, they need tools that can promote an effective learning experience and incorporate key competencies for their professional activities.

BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CLASSROOM

In alignment with their goal of taking education beyond the classroom, in 2010 Unigranrio decided to expand their course offering. Their goal was to offer online courses in various areas of knowledge to several levels of education.

Recognizing the importance of including and engaging online students, the institution was seeking a technological tool capable of empowering its users – something they hadn’t been able to achieve with the classic learning management platforms they had previously used.

To ensure that any student, anywhere, could achieve professional success, they would need a more interactive solution that could offer users a truly meaningful educational experience. By providing a high-quality product that made sense to students, they could feel more actively engaged with learning.

TECHNOLOGY THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE

With the expansion and enrichment of their educational system, one of the challenges was to create new subjects and adapt existing face-to-face courses to an online environment. They needed not only to guarantee the quality of the material they produced, but also to ensure it would complement the institution’s higher goal – to promote personal and professional development.

Following their tradition of investing in differentiated learning, Unigranrio was determined to incorporate the latest in online education to offer higher-quality courses to all their students. To do so, the university required a technological solution that was aligned with their pedagogical objectives and could enrich the virtual learning experience.
PARTNERING FOR INTERACTIVE LEARNING

One of the greatest challenges in education is ensuring that learning objectives are carried out in a style that is relevant and meaningful to students. For Unigranrio, the solution to their educational and technological requirements lay in a collaboration. The institution partnered with D2L to implement Brightspace, the world’s first integrated learning platform.

The Brightspace tools enable interactive learning and allow all students to be engaged with education whenever and wherever it’s convenient. With resources that make it possible to record and send customized audio and video messages or engage in real-time conversations with other users, educators can also easily track learner progress.

By transforming education into an enjoyable and interactive experience, students are empowered with the freedom to learn in the style most relevant to them. This helps them develop their competencies and skills more efficiently and contributes to the personal and professional growth of each learner.

EDUCATION BEYOND THE INSTITUTION

One of the pillars of Unigranrio is to help their students thrive in the professional world. “Our graduate courses are based on a methodology that enables students to develop a final project at the end of each subject. At the end of the course, they can combine all these projects and create a work portfolio,” explains Viviana Carvalho, Academic Production Coordinator, Unigranrio.

The Brightspace ePortfolio is fine-tuned to these educational goals. The solution registers the student’s learning process and automatically assembles their projects, producing material they can assess, share on social networks or showcase in a professional setting.

The Brightspace tools enhance visibility of student learning achievements and of their development throughout the course. This enables them to graduate from the institution with a competitive advantage that can help them quickly enter the job market.

AN ALL-AROUND SOLUTION

Traditional learning management platforms offer very few possibilities for interaction, which are usually limited to sharing materials and participating in forums. With its innovative capabilities, Brightspace goes well beyond simply hosting courses to create a stimulating and engaging virtual classroom.

By integrating multimedia resources and collaborative tools into the virtual environment, it is possible to increase the impact of learning. These functionalities enable students to learn at the pace and style most comfortable and relevant to them. Coupled with the ability to access content anytime, anywhere, they have access to a more pervasive, perceptive and personal educational experience.
We identified that Brightspace was aligned with the mission of our institution. The platform was able to provide learners with a truly meaningful academic experience, capable of enhancing and adding value to their personal and professional development through its tools and resources.

Professor Vanessa Olmo Pombo, Director, Online Education Center, Unigranrio
FROM APPROVAL TO EXPANSION
Following a successful implementation phase, the Brightspace platform is now available to around 30,000 students at Unigranrio – and that’s just the start. Knowing that they can rely on support from the D2L team, the institution’s next goal is to make the platform available to around 70,000 learners by 2018.1

At Unigranrio, online education has already been seamlessly integrated into the human sciences and technology courses. However, the university sees enormous potential to apply it to further fields of knowledge, such as the health sciences. With the right tools, any course can fit the molds of online learning.

Having witnessed the efficiency of the platform, Unigranrio now plans to expand the use of Brightspace beyond the undergraduate and graduate levels. The goal is to also offer the integrated learning solution in professional learning, corporate education and professional development courses, among other modalities.

EMPOWERING EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS
The best proof of a learning solution’s success lies in user adoption. At Unigranrio, Brightspace has been seamlessly and naturally incorporated into the everyday life of thousands of students. They quickly realized how technology can drive academic and professional development.

The same students who used to ask how often they should access the academic system are now leveraging Brightspace’s innovative resources to enrich their education. The answers to self-assessments and satisfaction surveys leave no room for doubt – Brightspace is being widely approved by the students at Unigranrio.

A similar response was also seen in faculty members, who play a fundamental role in the educational process and who quickly adopted the platform. Empowered with the flexibility and agility to manage information and track student progress, instructors can easily overcome the distance barrier and ensure a humanized teaching and learning experience.

THE TOOLS FOR DEVELOPMENT
With Brightspace’s countless educational resources at hand, Unigranrio is able to enhance the personal and professional development of their students. For example, tools that track learner progress and offer content when they need it most help create a personalized learning path for each individual.

In addition, the ePortfolio has been making the professional preparation process all the more practical for Brightspace users. The solution has been employed at both undergraduate and graduate levels and makes it easy to view learner progress throughout the entire course, ensuring that they graduate with a competitive advantage.

Supported by Brightspace’s technological intelligence, Unigranrio is ensuring that their students continue developing beyond the university. Equipped with the appropriate resources and support, every learner is capable of achieving their full academic, personal and professional potential.

1 Data provided by Unigranrio in February 2015.
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