Extending education beyond the classroom

How Brightspace engaged and empowered 20,000 students at Universidade Tiradentes
Overview

An innovator in education for over fifty years and a pioneer in online learning courses, Universidade Tiradentes (Unit) has believed in the power technology has to transform learning for a long time. Having identified how an online solution clearly benefits everyone involved in the educational process, Unit invested to implement the Brightspace platform to expand technology-assisted learning possibilities.

By migrating from an internally developed learning management system (LMS) to the Brightspace platform, Unit saw a marked increase in technology adoption and user satisfaction, as well as greater faculty and student engagement with course content.

Today, 20,000 of the university’s 30,000 students use Brightspace. Unit plans to further integrate the Brightspace platform for all course offerings, providing digital innovation in teaching, research, and continuing education for online, offline, and blended courses.

AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Universidade Tiradentes (Unit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Undergraduate and Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solutions</td>
<td>Brightspace Learning Environment, Brightspace Learning Repository, Brightspace Insights™</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHALLENGE:

• Promote excellence in teaching, research, and continuing education using digital learning environments
• Optimize faculty workflow, enabling educators to focus on teaching
• Empower educators to teach in the style most comfortable and relevant to them
• Engage students and teachers with learning and course content

SOLUTION:

• Enable seamless, intuitive creation of natively digital content
• Personalize learning paths with Intelligent Agents
• Provide freedom to develop courses with a unique pedagogical approach
• Foster partnership and commitment between Unit staff and the D2L team
• Customize a global solution to meet specific regional needs

RESULTS1:

• 70% of Brightspace users were satisfied with the platform
• Improved cooperation and collaboration for balanced faculty qualifications
• Optimization of faculty workflow
• Internationalized institutional relations
• Unit plans to leverage the platform for entire course offering

1 Statistics and data provided by Universidade Tiradentes based on a satisfaction survey conducted in December 2014 with 1011 respondents from Unit.
Universidade Tiradentes prides itself on its mission: “To transform and develop society through service excellence in education, providing comprehensive and continuous training for the population.” To achieve its goal, Unit is constantly investing in innovating student and teacher experiences while continually offering the latest in education.

Ten years ago, Unit became one of the pioneering institutions in online subject offerings for offline courses by developing a proprietary system for online learning and digitization of content produced by its educators.

With part of its content digitally available, Unit had successfully extended education beyond the classroom. However, they faced a new challenge in improving the engagement of students and teachers. The platform’s rigid structure actually prevented the technology from optimizing faculty workflow and ultimately restricted course possibilities and teaching approaches.

Integrating technology ultimately became a roadblock and Unit was torn between a desire for innovation in education and the need for a more flexible system to suit faculty workflow—as well as different learning paces and styles.

The more that students, instructors, and administrators tried adapting to the previous platform, the more they drifted away from what mattered most: teaching and learning. Unit needed to implement a solution that enabled each and every user to achieve their full potential. This meant adapting technology to individual learning paces and automating certain faculty tasks, allowing educators to create truly meaningful content. A solution that took care of all the mechanical work would provide teachers with the freedom to unleash their creativity.

Challenge

A PIONEER IN LEARNING

Technology in the Way of Innovation

Converting content to a digital format posed a challenge. “We worked under a very limited policy and teachers didn’t have the technical knowledge to add their own content to the platform,” explains Rodrigo Sangiovanni Lima, Educational Technology Center, Universidade Tiradentes. Without an automation component, educators were unable to optimize their administrative tasks.
Solution

FREEDOM TO TEACH AND LEARN
After Unit implemented the Brightspace platform, educators at the university started creating their courses directly within it: they produced natively digital content instead of digitally adapted content. Brightspace also allowed users to leverage a centralized repository of curricular content, which facilitated sharing of material across different courses, units, and faculty members.

This led the Brightspace solution to achieve a prominent place within the organization’s operations. “Educators begin to have full control over the look and feel of their course content and can then focus on teaching. Students are ultimately more satisfied since they feel that teachers play a more active role in their education. This fosters a sense of belonging among everyone involved in the learning process,” notes Lucas Cerqueira do Vale, IT Coordinator – Brightspace Implementation – Universidade Tiradentes.

PERSONALIZING LEARNING PATHS
Unit educators could now create custom paths for every learner by configuring Release Conditions within the Brightspace platform. By setting individual conditions, new content is released based on personal outcomes and achievements as students work through the course.

With teachers playing a more active role in education and able to develop content that suits the online learning environment of choice, students feel closer to knowledge. Brightspace tools enable online and offline access to tasks, activity, and content, ensuring that every individual has the freedom to learn whenever and wherever it’s convenient for them.

Cerqueira do Vale also explains that after evaluating several online learning solutions, Unit chose the Brightspace platform because it was best aligned with the university’s vision of promoting service excellence in education and its commitment to delivering a comprehensive learning experience for students.

DELIVERING ON CUSTOM NEEDS
In order to meet a specific need within the Brazilian market, Unit partnered with D2L to develop a custom module to help students contact course coordinators. The Coordination Room, developed through Brightspace Valence—in partnership with the D2L team using open APIs—creates a direct line of communication between students and coordinators.

By combining D2L’s experience with the flexibility to deploy custom solutions that would meet Brazil’s requirements, Unit was able to expand its international relations. The institution has partnered with the University of Massachusetts in America to establish a student, teacher, and information exchange program. Cerqueira do Vale believes this achievement would not have been possible without D2L’s partnership and commitment.
“The D2L team played a key role in our successful implementation of the platform. We could see that sparkle in the eyes of every D2L team member that visited our university. The team believes in education and shares our vision of delivering excellence and innovation.”

Lucas Cerqueira do Vale, IT Coordinator – Brightspace Learning Suite Implementation at Universidade Tiradentes
A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS
By partnering with D2L to implement Brightspace, Universidade Tiradentes was able to optimize faculty workflow and promote a comprehensive learning experience for students.

Implementing technology that adapts to faculty workflow and individual learning styles facilitates ideal conditions for all involved to achieve their full potential. Unit has seen an increasing level of student and teacher satisfaction and engagement.¹

After only six months, 70% of users reported that they were satisfied with the solution—a significant improvement from the previous system’s 50% satisfaction rate. The university also reported a significant increase in student performance rates, with more students achieving passing grades.²

The Brightspace platform also qualitatively benefits educators by promoting cooperation and collaboration. Uniting teachers with different levels of experience in the development of courses and materials balances faculty qualifications and creates an ideal path for combining experience and innovation.

A BRIGHT FUTURE
Universidade Tiradentes sees D2L as a reliable partner for addressing key challenges facing education today. They plan to deploy the Brightspace platform to all 30,000 students beginning in 2016.

¹ Statistics and data provided by Universidade Tiradentes based on a satisfaction survey conducted in December 2014 with 1011 respondents from Unit.

² Statistics and data provided by Universidade Tiradentes based on a satisfaction survey conducted in December 2014 with 1011 respondents from Unit.
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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