



FGV increases the interactivity of its MBA, post-graduate and distance learning courses with D2L's Brightspace

Institution

The Getulio Vargas Foundation (Fundação Getulio Vargas, FGV) was founded in 1944 with the aim of furthering Brazil's national development by training qualified administrators. Over time, its scope expanded to encompass other subjects, including social sciences, law, economics, history and applied mathematics, and it has always been recognized for its quality and excellence in advancing and disseminating knowledge. FGV has a presence in more than 100 cities across Brazil, including Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Brasília.

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE

- Implement a single learning management system (LMS) with greater functionality and ease of use
- Expand the portfolio of online post-graduate courses by branching out into more advanced topics
- Harness new technologies to enhance student engagement

SOLUTION

- Implemented D2L's Brightspace platform to take advantage of "flipped classroom" tools
- Increased the use of videos as a key tool to attract a younger generation of learners
- Utilized discussion forums and online meeting tools to boost interaction between teachers and students

RESULTS

- Improves student engagement and motivation
- Enables a new flipped methodology for post-graduate learning
- Creates a more personalized student experience for online courses



“Seeing and hearing someone is a different experience from just communicating through text. It brings the student closer and personalizes the learning process.”

Rebecca Villagrán Seoane, Product Manager, FGV

The Challenge

As a pioneer in the field of online learning for 25 years, and a byword for excellence in higher education for more than 70, FGV continuously invests in integrating new online tools.

After a successful initiative to consolidate its different platforms to D2L's Brightspace LMS, FGV Online—which runs FGV's distance learning MBA, postgraduate and short- and medium-duration courses—faced a new challenge. The organization recognized a great deal of potential for personalized learning in the Brazilian market, with virtual classrooms that encourage interaction between teachers and students. FGV aimed to provide this same level of interactivity for its 25,000 students.

In online courses that are delivered entirely through textual content, students feel the distance between themselves and their teachers, because they lack the audiovisual contact with the person on the other side of the screen. FGV realized that its text-heavy distance learning methodology posed a threat to student satisfaction and engagement.

According to Rebecca Villagrán Seoane, Product Manager at FGV, this is a key challenge for the Brazilian market when it comes to distance education. “Seeing and hearing someone is a different experience from just communicating through text. It brings the student closer and personalizes the learning process. Brazilian people need the sensation of contact, even if it is mediated by technology.”

In short, to ensure students remain motivated by their studies, access to content must be made more personal, and day-to-day course-related communication has to provide more “eye-contact” between the institution and its learners. That's why FGV felt the need for an LMS that could help students interact more effectively not only with the course content itself, but also directly with their teachers.



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João Carlos da Silva Freitas, Head of Business and IT Architecture, FGV

The Solution

With the integration between FGV’s academic systems and the Brightspace LMS completed in 2018, the institution has found a solution for increasing the interactivity of the content used in its MBA, postgraduate and short- and medium-duration distance learning courses. Brightspace’s virtual classrooms provide video- and web-conferencing capabilities that expand the potential for interaction between students and instructors on every course.

The virtual classrooms make it possible to schedule meetings online and have real-time conversations, as well as discussions on specific topics for each course. Video sessions can be automatically recorded and easily uploaded directly into the course repository in Brightspace, together with other additional learning materials.

For the distance learning MBA course, which takes approximately 14 months, FGV students visit the teaching center every two months to take an exam. All the course content is managed and made available within the online learning platform, using a wide range of interactive tools including videos, activities, games, simulations, quizzes and assessments.

“Brightspace’s ability to integrate with other systems and content repositories helped us take a big leap forward in improving the quality of the tools and content we provide for our students,” says João Carlos da Silva Freitas, head of business and IT architecture at FGV.

Recently, the consolidation to a single platform has made it possible for FGV to develop a new type of postgraduate course, in which the instructors’ teaching methodology is almost entirely built around using web-conferences to create dynamic course content for each topic. In this flipped classroom model, the learner first studies the content in their own time, and then participates in a class discussion with their teacher, taking full advantage of the video features that Brightspace provides.

A key part of the strategy is to stimulate personalized interaction, so the instructors take direct responsibility for conducting and guiding each class, acting as dynamic mediators and using the D2L Video Note tool to record feedback, guidance or brief comments. In addition, sharing YouTube videos as an additional resource for discussions and online meetings is a popular tactic that students find useful.



The Results

By using the Brightspace platform in its online MBA and postgraduate courses, FGV has made a significant impact in terms of meeting the needs of a new market for personalized and interactive distance education. The Brightspace LMS enables better management of the content that FGV provides for its students. Discussion forums mediated by tutors enable students to broaden their learning experience and take a deeper dive into the topics they find most relevant or most challenging.

The role that students play in their own learning processes is one of the biggest differentiators for the environment that FGV Online has built with Brightspace. The platform has enabled the institution to develop a postgraduate course aligned with the global trend towards a flipped-classroom approach that is fundamentally built around video content, and that ensures that each student is truly involved in the learning experience.

Another benefit for FGV is that it now has an online “teachers’ room” — a personalized environment in Brightspace for holding meetings and class councils among the teaching professionals who design the structure of each course.

With the help of Brightspace, FGV Online has ushered in a new phase of academic innovation by addressing the major challenges of the market for distance postgraduate and MBA courses. By following this new methodology, the institution is already anticipating significant growth in its distance learning portfolio.

FGV has also successfully implemented Brightspace Capture, which is used to record and stream online lectures every month, which are available to all students on both distance learning and classroom-based courses.

The responsive design of the Brightspace Capture webcasting tool enables users to watch videos either live or at their convenience, using their computers, tablets or smartphones. It also provides a dynamic library in which they can search for videos using keywords.