FAESA creates engaging learning experiences for students and teachers with D2L

Institution

With 47 years of history, 32 on-campus courses, 22 distance learning courses and 12 postgraduate programs, FAESA has earned the title of Brazil’s best University Center thanks to its innovative academic practices, which are based on a unique methodology for teaching and learning known as FAESA Classroom. Personalization, technology and experimental approach are the pillars of this methodology, which treats the LMS as a vital tool for the creation of a unique model that focuses on student success.

AT A GLANCE

CHALLENGE

• Create a comprehensive and user-friendly learning management system (LMS) for students and teachers
• Provide a single platform to support the “FAESA Classroom” teaching methodology
• Increase student and teacher engagement with the LMS
• Standardize the course content templates in the LMS

SOLUTION

• Implemented D2L’s Brightspace platform and introduced new course content templates
• Encouraged the use of tools such as video, online forums and assignment upload in day-to-day teaching
• Trained teachers to use the platform to support distance education methodologies

RESULTS

• Improves the organization of teaching materials by providing a single LMS
• Enables agile communication about events and activities, with the LMS acting as a communications hub
• Makes online assignments more convenient for teachers and students
• Increases classroom attendance and reduces failure and dropout rates
• Provides a standardized educational journey for all students
“In distance learning courses, I can be there for my students as they work through the subject and assess their learning objectives, whether through formal evaluations or other means. I often create mini quizzes at the end of each topic so that students can check whether they have understood and focus on any points that they have missed.”

*Henrique Hamerski, Professor, FAESA*
The Solution

FAESA is a leader in digital learning in both distance learning and on-campus course formats. To raise the quality of its online courses even further, increase the engagement of students and teachers, and optimize the management of course content, FAESA selected D2L's platform, Brightspace.

The ability to study online transforms day-to-day teaching and learning, as Cristina Soares, a student on FAESA's teacher training course, confirms: “The LMS is a tool that helps to guide learners, since it is possible to check if the contents are those listed by teachers in Planning. During exams, the number of accesses to the platform increases because we want to revise the content that teachers have shared. In addition, for some of the in-person courses, teachers make all the content available before we even come to class.”

Brightspace not only helps FAESA improve content management; it also guides students consistently and effectively on their learning journeys due to the platform’s standardized approach.

According to Juliana Santos, a teacher of linguistics studies and manager of distance learning at the university center, the academic team wanted a single process to enable all faculties to manage course content online. “We have created a course template that includes video presentations of the subject and the learning objectives, presentations by the teacher, and a set of milestones that the students need to reach in each subject, which we call the learning journey.”

To enable the process of standardization, FAESA embarked on a project to train its teachers in both the conceptual and technical aspects of using the Brightspace platform. The training courses were created within the LMS itself, with tutorials on each of the available tools to make it simpler and more user-friendly for teachers to create courses and content.

Juliana Santos explains: “We are very focused on providing continuous training for our teachers. We set up regular meetings with teaching staff to reinforce the importance of hybrid teaching methods, of student and teacher engagement, and of teaching methodologies and assessment processes.”
Moreover, FAESA worked closely with teachers to boost their technical training on the platform, exploring features such as using forums, designing quizzes and recording videos, as well as other capabilities of the LMS that teachers and students in every discipline can use to their full potential.

After the successful implementation of the LMS, one of the biggest highlights was the assignment upload feature, which has handled as many as 48,000 uploads in a single day. This supports the university administration’s sustainability policy, which puts a significant focus on protecting the environment by reducing the use of paper.

In the opinion of Professor Henrique Hamerski, Brightspace enables countless new methods of teaching, whether the course is 100 percent online or classroom-based. “In distance learning courses, I can be there for my students as they work through the subject and assess their learning objectives, whether through formal evaluations or other means. I often create mini quizzes at the end of each topic so that students can check whether they have understood and focus on any points that they have missed.

“I also use the same tools in classroom teaching, where the students can ask questions and I can bring in additional material to clarify any topics that aren’t clear to them. I can also use the online tests and other activities, because it’s not just an extension of the classroom, it’s a whole platform designed to support my students’ learning. Its capabilities make it possible for the teacher to customize the way they teach to focus on the learning of each student.”
“We have created a course template that includes video presentations of the subject and the learning objectives, presentations by the teacher, and a set of milestones that the students need to reach in each subject, which we call the learning journey.”

Juliana Santos, Undergraduate Teacher & Manager of Distance Learning, FAESA

The Results

Through the rich functionality of the Brightspace platform, FAESA has gained better organization of its teaching materials with a single system, the possibility of more practical online assessments, agile communication about events and activities, as well as better attendance and fewer students failing its in-person classes.

“As a student, I really feel the benefits of the LMS,” says Bruna Castelan, a student of psychology at FAESA. “It’s a platform that brings convenience to students. At the beginning of each semester, the teachers and coordinators share with the students the timetables, class projects and content that will be used throughout the course. When there’s a change or some other important news, the teachers and coordinators immediately post it on the LMS, and the students can also receive notifications on their smartphones. The system provides students with a very agile way of communicating. It’s a tool that is available 24 hours a day, and we use it all the time.”

By creating standard templates in the LMS, FAESA successfully integrated Brightspace into its distance and campus-based courses, improving the results of thousands of students and the adoption of the tool by faculties.

Juliana Santos comments: “Students need to log into the platform to understand their learning journey by watching the video that sets out the goals they need to achieve during the course. That gives them a path to follow with the materials they need to read, the quizzes they need to take and the work they need to submit. They also receive a timetable of their activities for the entire semester. The look-and-feel of the platform is the same for all the courses, it’s only the content that changes with each teacher—so the students always have a sense of the right path to take.”

With the new platform in place, FAESA’s administrators are using Intelligent Agents in the LMS, which automate the execution of scheduled actions.
For example, Intelligent Agents can send messages automatically based on detecting and analyzing how often students log into the platform, monitoring forum activity, and using schedules to remind teachers about posting course materials and grades at the right time, which makes it easier for students to understand their progress.

Students who don’t log into their online course for seven days, for example, receive a motivational warning about their absence. Meanwhile, course coordinators receive a report about students’ online attendance, and can send the data to the teacher responsible for the course, who can then raise the issue with the student either online or in person.

Data proves that the LMS at FAESA is a success. The economics faculty, for example, saw a reduction in the failure rate from 57 percent to just 27 percent after introducing monitoring capabilities for its teachers.

In addition to patterning and facilitating content curation, the Brightspace learning management system has helped FAESA increase faculty adoption of the platform and provide productivity tools that teachers and coordinators can use both online and in the classroom.

According to Professor Vitor Nunes Rosa, the D2L platform provides an expanded classroom in the full sense of the word—facilitating interactions between teachers and students, and among the students themselves, and optimizing the teaching and learning process. “The LMS tools make it possible for teachers to act as mediators, guiding the learning process according to the pillars of FAESA Classroom. It enables the necessary articulation between personalization, experimentation and technology. By providing the right tools for study and research, we empower students to play the leading role in their own education.”

With the success of this project, FAESA is continuing its journey on the path to excellence in academic knowledge. “Now, our main focus is the methodology for hybrid education,” concludes Juliana Santos. “By 2022, we want all the faculties of the institution to use the same model, the same template, and have their own page in the FAESA LMS.” D2L’s Brightspace platform is ready to help with this challenge.