Helping Teachers Go from Good to Great

Wodonga Middle Years College Enables Success for All with Brightspace

Modern technology means that teaching and learning don’t have to stop when a student leaves the classroom. Wodonga Middle Years College uses D2L’s Brightspace platform to extend and enrich students’ learning opportunities throughout the day—in the classroom, on the sports field, on the school bus and at home.
“Now we’re watching kids filming certain aspects of their skill development, uploading the videos into Brightspace, and reviewing and getting feedback from their teachers. It’s a really meaningful process that helps them improve their technique and build physical confidence.”

Steven Fouracre, Assistant Principal, Wodonga Middle Years College

**Challenge**

**Every Opportunity for Success**

The early teens are a critical stage in a young person’s life, marking the start of the transition from childhood to adult life. Wodonga Middle Years College focuses on helping its students navigate this key period of personal development—preparing them for their final years of schooling and laying a foundation for success at university and in the workplace.

Wodonga is a city of 35,000 people, sitting on the border of Victoria and New South Wales, and over 300 kilometers from Melbourne, the nearest major urban center. Despite its relatively remote position, the College is a relentless innovator, adopting the latest educational methods, tools and technologies to give its students every opportunity for continuous learning.

Steven Fouracre, Assistant Principal, comments: “We’re in an age now where the learning doesn’t need to finish when a student walks out of the classroom. Our kids can pick up their iPads at any time of the day and learn whenever and wherever they want. That gives us a huge opportunity, if we can make the learning experience engaging enough.”
Access for Every Student
Several years ago, Wodonga made the decision to use D2L’s Brightspace platform as a central learning management system—a hub for all the institution’s course content, assignments and assessment, that would be accessible for students on any device.

“The support that D2L provides has been outstanding from the beginning,” says Steven Fouracre. “We’ve recently extended our contract with D2L because their support and their platform are just so fundamental to what we do here.”

Adopting the Brightspace platform has enabled the College to become a leader in the region in terms of educational technology.

Steven Fouracre comments: “When we show other schools how our kids learn and how they engage with content, they ask, ‘Does every kid have access to this?’ And we say, ‘Yes they do. And they get this in all their learning areas.’ It’s really powerful.”

The use of technology extends across all aspects of the learning experience—not just traditional classroom-based academic subjects. Wodonga sees physical education (PE) as an important component of students’ all-round development, and the school is using the Brightspace platform’s video capabilities to transform the way teachers and students interact.

“In the past, the iPads were almost irrelevant in our PE classes,” says Steven Fouracre. “Now we’re watching kids filming certain aspects of their skill development, uploading the videos into Brightspace, and reviewing and getting feedback from their teachers. It’s a really meaningful process that helps them improve their technique and build physical confidence.”

From a teacher’s perspective, the Brightspace platform encourages a more collaborative approach, where teachers can work together on preparing content for their classes. This reduces the burden on each teacher and gives them more time to focus on the individual needs of their students.

Outside of school hours, parents play an important role in education too.

“A real advantage that Brightspace gives us is the interactivity between the students and the parents. Parents can see what their kids are learning and get much more involved in the process, which helps to reinforce what we do in the classroom.”

Steven Fouracre, Assistant Principal,
Wodonga Middle Years College
Achievement Across the Board

Reflecting on the results of adopting the Brightspace platform, Steven Fouracre comments: “Across the board, every kid now has access to learning—and we’re starting to see through our achievement data that it’s having a really positive impact. We’ve been able to celebrate some real success across grammar and punctuation, spelling, reading and writing.”

The College believes that these results are partly due to the more engaging learning experiences that the platform provides for students, but also partly due to the way the platform supports new teaching practices.

“We’re finding that teachers are more dynamic in their teaching practice because students can access content before they get into the classroom,” says Steven Fouracre. “That means we can use classroom time more effectively and focus on interacting with the kids, not just ploughing through the material.”

“I think Brightspace has given us a really good platform, especially in terms of managing content, assignments and assessments. The focus now is on how we teach and how we can improve, so we don’t just have pockets of greatness, we want every teacher to go from good to great.

Steven Fouracre, Assistant Principal, Wodonga Middle Years College

“Our school’s maxim is ‘every student, every opportunity, success for all’, and Brightspace plays a key role in helping us turn that vision into reality,” concludes Steven Fouracre.