



Advance HE uses D2L's Brightspace to expand into South-East Asia and China

Introduction

Advance HE (formerly The Higher Education Academy) is passionate about improving the quality of teaching worldwide. However, in order to do this effectively it needed to look beyond a purely face to face approach of engagement and ensure it utilised a wide range of online technology to allow it to adapt its approach to a wide number of countries across the globe, meeting the needs of HE practitioners in a variety of different cultural settings.

By using D2L's Brightspace Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), including the ePortfolio and virtual classrooms, Advance HE was able to modify how it delivered teaching enhancement services to better serve its members and meet the requirements of HE practitioners in different areas across South East Asia.

Organisation

Advance HE's purpose is to advance the professional practice of higher education to improve outcomes for the benefit of students, staff and society. As part of this mission, Advance HE champions teaching excellence and works with governments, ministries, universities and individual academics in the UK and around the globe, providing value to the higher education sector by focusing on the contribution of teaching as part of the wider student learning experience.

ORGANISATION

Client: Advance HE

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/>

Industry: Education

KEY IMPACTS

- Ease of use and optimisation of the online learning environment with easier catered access to learning for teachers and student
- Increased flexibility and adaptability of teacher development into different regions
- Greater online engagement from HE colleagues wanting to further develop their skills

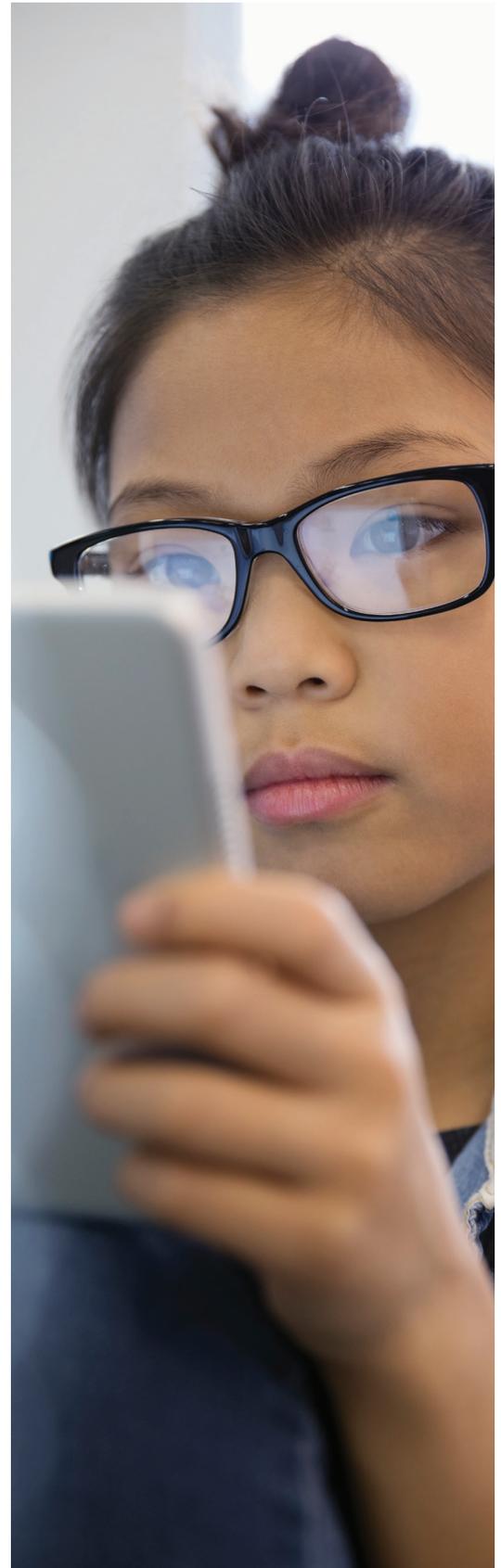
The Challenge

Advance HE's vision is to be globally recognised for inspiring teaching excellence as an essential driver of student success. In order to ensure that students across the globe receive world class education, it wanted to expand its work including the training offering in South East Asia.

To do this successfully, and to maximise learning in each region, Advance HE needed technology that would accommodate different country's social and educational culture. Techniques that work well in the UK, for example, would not necessarily translate well in Asian regions.

When attempting to expand into China, Hong Kong, Myanmar, and Thailand, Advance HE was faced with unique challenges associated with levels of connectivity and cultural difference in their adoption and usage of the internet. Learners make heavy use of social media, and although individuals in China and Thailand do sometimes use email to communicate, in Myanmar this is much less common.

Advance HE needed technology that would enable its staff to engage with the HE practitioners through a variety of different means. It needed a programme that was flexible enough to be altered for each community, but still had the structure needed to have a cohesive online learning experience.



“Compared to other VLE’s, Brightspace is attractive and easy to navigate, and you can easily teach the skills needed and trust that the HE staff will continue using the tools available to them. They love the fact that you can use Brightspace on multiple devices, as it fits well with their social culture.”

Kathy Wright, Associate Head of Academic and Professional Development at Advance HE

The Solution

In order to expand effectively and efficiently, Advance HE utilised the known local social media platforms (Line or WeChat) to lead people onto D2L’s flexible and highly adaptable Brightspace platform to deliver engaging online learning experiences that would cater to each markets’ needs. Brightspace also provides Advance HE with real-time engagement data, enabling it to see which areas of the platform were most useful to each region and gain better insight into their educational cultures. Using this data, Advance HE is able to personalise the learning journey dependant on region, delivering content with much greater flexibility so each individual has the tailored experience they need to succeed in their own career and region. The ePortfolio offered by D2L also allows Advance HE to work with HE practitioners between visits, asking them to reflect on their learning and how this has impacted on their teaching and practice.

“Brightspace allows us to use a hybrid model and be flexible when choosing how to best serve teachers and students in countries such as Myanmar that do not have the same infrastructure or culture as the UK,”

said Kathy Wright, Associate Head of Academic and Professional Development (International Programmes).

“The great thing about Brightspace is that features including e-portfolios provide our members with a shared social space that creates a much more collaborative learning environment.” Kathy continued, and ePortfolio– in particular its mobile app – has been key to Advance HE’s course design and success. Learners “can take a photo of their classroom using their phone and upload it immediately via the app, sharing with their colleagues and, in turn, learning from others,” explained Kathy, but more importantly, this collaborative environment “helps them connect with other regions and academic communities from their cohort – allowing them to overcome social or geographical barriers”.



The Results

By using Brightspace, Advance HE has been able to find aspects of the platform that suit each region, so it is not imposing a system that becomes redundant once it leaves and will actually benefit the HE colleagues in that area beyond their face to face sessions.

“You cannot assume that other countries have the same learning and online practices as you, so we need to be resourceful and find other avenues to help facilitate online learning - Brightspace has made this an easier mission. For example, some of the HE practitioners in China really respond to the structured side of the platform and the ability to replicate successful modules. However, in Thailand, the fact that they can pick and choose different apps and use the e-portfolios has been incredibly well received and beneficial.”

“Compared to other online learning platforms, Brightspace is attractive and easy to navigate, and enables us to provide global HE staff with access to the required tools needed to teach in their region. By having the ability to use it on multiple devices, Brightspace fits well with the regions' social culture,” concluded Kathy.