



Empowering students with independent learning

How engaging learning experiences have helped a University of Huddersfield professor achieve 100 percent pass rates

Traditional approaches to university teaching can make it difficult for instructors to identify gaps in student understanding, which impacts pass rates and creates barriers to educational attainment. The University of Huddersfield is using the Brightspace platform to shape engaging blended learning experiences and reports that the pass rate for one professor's courses has been boosted to 100 percent.

AT A GLANCE

Client: University of Huddersfield
Industry: Higher Education
Learners: 20,000
Website: hud.ac.uk

Platform/Features:

- D2L's Brightspace platform
- Surveys

Interviewees:

- John Allport, Professor of Automotive Engineering

Results:

- Help students develop workplace-relevant skills through self-directed learning
- Pass rates for one engineering course increased by 25 percentage points
- Students gain a deeper understanding and longer-term retention of knowledge

Challenge

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

The University of Huddersfield is a public university in Huddersfield, England, with nearly 20,000 students.

Automotive and Motorsport Engineering is one of the University's most popular undergraduate courses and aims to equip students with the skills and experience they need to make the most of the exciting opportunities the industry has to offer.

In the past, the University's lecturers relied on traditional methods to teach the course, as John Allport, Professor of Automotive Engineering, explains.

"I came to the university after 30 years in industry, which gave me a different perspective. I realized that the chalk-and-talk, lecture-based approach to teaching was making it difficult for some students to engage with the content and build the skills they would need in the working world."

With the traditional course structure, the instructors dictated the tempo for the whole student cohort. As a result, there was a risk of moving too quickly through areas where students were struggling and leaving some students behind.

The pass rate on the course was around 75 percent—but faculty at the Department of Automotive Engineering knew there was scope for improvement if they could boost students' engagement with the material.



"Our **success** with the D2L Brightspace platform is clear from our end-of-year exam **results**. We've **boosted** our pass rate from 75 percent to 100 percent in just two years."

John Allport, Professor of Automotive Engineering
University of Huddersfield

Solution

SELECTING A BEST-OF-BREED SOLUTION

The Department of Automotive Engineering embraced D2L's Brightspace platform as a central hub for course content, assignments and assessment. By providing a first-class mobile experience, the platform enables students to interact with their teachers and peers and learn anywhere, on almost any connected device.

When the University launched its use of the Brightspace platform, it held training sessions to highlight how teachers could use it to enhance teaching and facilitate better learning experiences. This inspired the Department to explore and leverage the features within Brightspace to help its students succeed.

EMBRACING BLENDED LEARNING

Using the Brightspace platform, the Department adopted a flipped classroom approach—making course content available to students anytime, anywhere, and empowering them to become more self-directed in their learning.

“One of my first goals was to present the information on the course in a variety of forms and formats, which instantly makes the material more accessible and engaging,” says John Allport.



“Ahead of each teaching session, I also use online **surveys** in the Brightspace platform to capture the three areas that each student had most trouble **understanding** during their preparatory study. By analyzing the **results**, I can immediately identify the biggest problem areas and ensure that I concentrate on those subjects when we meet.”

John Allport, Professor of Automotive Engineering, University of Huddersfield



Result

EMPOWERING EVERY STUDENT TO THRIVE

Since embracing a blended approach to teaching, the Department is achieving its goals of boosting educational attainment—helping it prepare its undergraduates for the demands of the working world.

Students also appreciate the ability to participate actively in improving the course. They regularly suggest ideas for course materials that faculty members can add to the platform—helping to keep the course fresh, relevant and up to date.

The Brightspace platform is already having a powerful impact on student learning outcomes. John Allport explains: “By embracing the flipped classroom approach, we’re engaging all of our students with their learning and helping to ensure that no one gets left behind. Our success with the D2L Brightspace platform is clear from our end-of-year exam results. We’ve boosted our pass rate from 75 percent to 100 percent in just two years.”

“Most importantly, we’re not simply coaching our students to pass exams—we’re building a **deep** and genuine **understanding** of the core concepts. I can ask questions about what we did at the beginning of the year, and students will still know all the correct **answers**. That just wasn’t the case in the past.”

John Allport, Professor of Automotive Engineering
University of Huddersfield