StrEAM by Kortext

An institutional approach to enhancing student support at Teesside University

Case Study
2021

Overview

Institution: Teesside University
Based in the Tees Valley, North East England

Student Population: 18,000

StrEAM was introduced as a pilot in September 2019 and rolled out institution wide in January 2020

Executive summary

Teesside University has been on a major digital transformation journey in recent years, assessing how they utilise cutting-edge technical solutions to improve the student experience. As part of this initiative, they aimed to improve retention, progression, and attainment by finding a way for personal tutors to better support students, faster and with better outcomes.

A change in approach

Looking into how data could be used to design and implement targeted interventions to offer enhanced support forced them to revise their approach, with far-reaching impact.

A significant proportion of students at Teesside are commuter students, meaning that students are home-based and often complete their studies alongside other personal commitments. The university were conscious that their student profile is distinctive and that first they would need to find a way to understand what good engagement looks like at an individual and cohort level.

This raised several challenges in relation to how student data was being collected, shared, and utilised. With no central visibility of digital engagement and a need to streamline the referral of students to support services online it became apparent that they would also need to move away from localised practice and towards an institutional approach using learning analytics.

A powerful engagement tool

There is more to StREAM than learning analytics

StREAM by Kortext offered a learning analytics platform with a difference. Not only could it surface data to visualise and measure student engagement via a simple user dashboard but, as a platform solution it also provides a way to centralise, share and record notes and initiate interactions with both students and staff from across the organisation. This would give personal tutors insight into specific individuals whilst providing the institutional view they were looking for.

Improving the student experience

Feedback from students has been very positive, particularly in relation to the transparency of data. Many students see real value in being able to view their own engagement data. It helps them to recognise their individual learning patterns and compare to others in their cohort. This approach provides a sense of what is expected in terms of participation and coaches' them to achieve their potential.

The aspect of transparency was noted as a key reason why the University selected StREAM over any other learning analytic tool on the market.
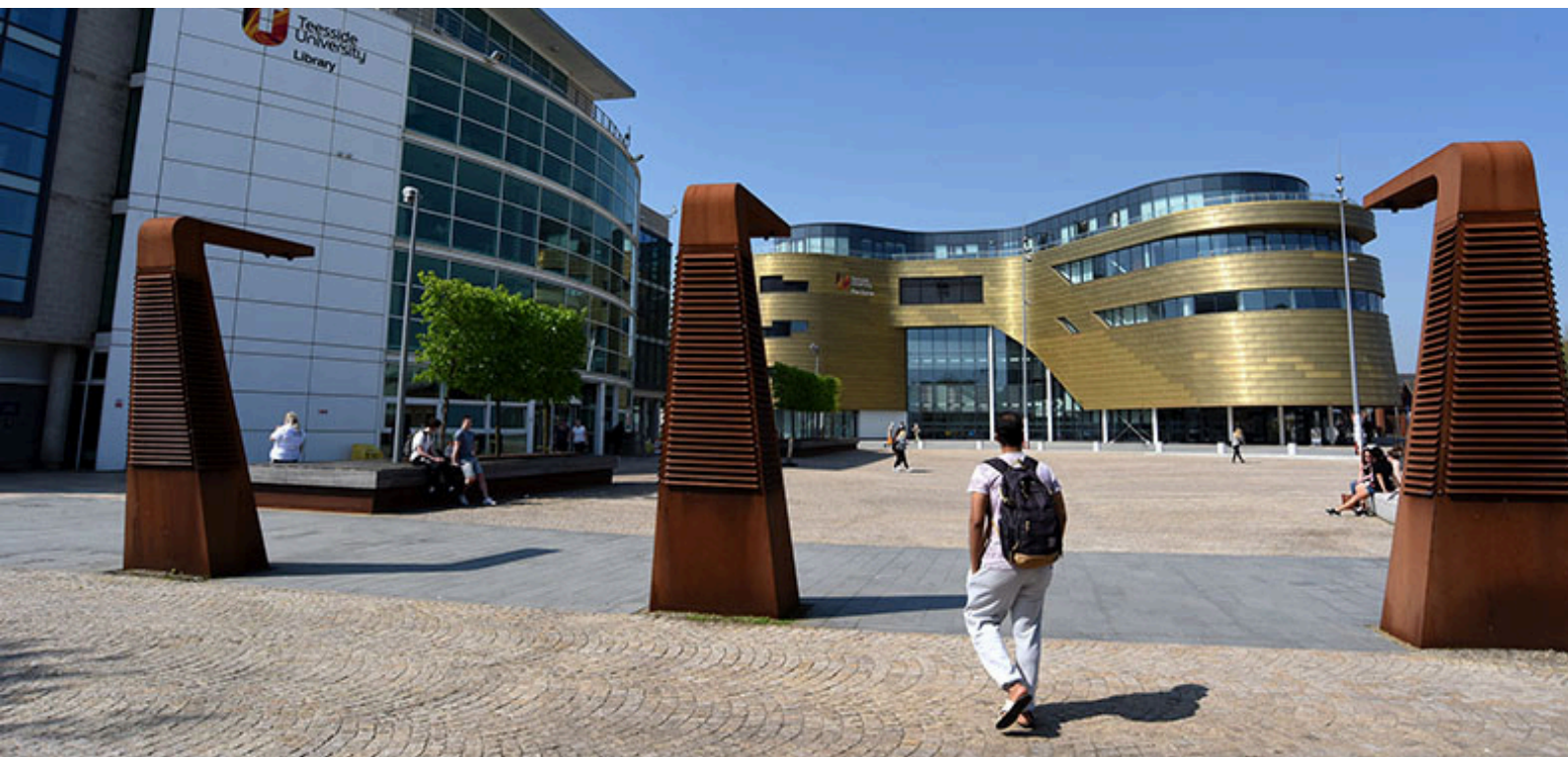
StREAM was critical in Teesside's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

During the first lockdown, changes were made to the engagement algorithm as they moved off campus to focus on engagement and activity within the VLE. This rapid response meant they were in the position to maintain high levels of engagement remotely and track the impact of COVID including students who deferred their assessments and recording those who went into self-isolation.

A year into the use of StREAM and things of course look very different to when they first began. Whatever the future may bring, Teesside University now have a holistic approach to measuring student engagement, that is able to respond to future changes and mobilises staff to deliver enhanced student support and maintain a quality student experience no matter what the situation.

> *"We are now, more than ever, relying on understanding how our students are engaging remotely and being able to put timely support in place for those who are beginning to struggle. It would have been impossible for us to do this as effectively without StREAM and their flexible and supportive team, it really has come into its own during the pandemic."*
>
> **Jonathan Eaton,**
> Academic Registrar
> Teesside University

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