

An institutional approach to enhancing student support at Teesside University

Overview

- Universities like Teesside University faced challenges supporting students during the shift to online learning during the pandemic.
- Engagement analytics helped identify and support students at risk of disengagement.
- The stream platform was used to enhance student support during the pandemic.

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.

> **"We realized that we needed a consistent approach to how we manage and record all our data in order to understand the complexity of the picture at Teesside and learning analytics was identified as our solution."**
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> **Jonathan Eaton, Academic Registrar, Teeside University**

A powerful engagement tool

Kortext stream 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.



“We’ve connected all of our student support functions through the referral function in stream, making our processes far more streamlined than they ever were previously.”

Jonathan Eaton, Academic Registrar, Teeside University

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.

“A key factor in the positive response we’ve had to stream is the introduction of our Learning Analytics Code of Practice. Students like the transparency and that we are clear about how their data will be used.”

Jonathan Eaton, Academic Registrar, Teeside University

Critical in 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."**
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> **Jonathan Eaton, Academic Registrar, Teeside University**

For more information, visit: kortext.com/stream