

How Anthology's Analytics for Learn (A4L) plugged the gap and accelerated the Vaal University of Technology's goals



Making digital data more manageable and actionable

The Vaal University of Technology (VUT), with a student population of around 22,000 students, has had a long-standing aim to lead online teaching and learning in South Africa. The institution was acutely aware that leveraging data and joining up isolated and independent systems to benefit students, staff, and leadership were key to pushing the institution to a higher level.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, VUT's ultimate focus was for full-scale adoption to ensure continuity in teaching and learning as well as to address the other challenges that COVID-19 brought with it. These included quality assurance in course design and assessment as well as accessibility.

INSTITUTION TYPE:
FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC

LOCATION:
VANDERBIJLPARK,
SOUTH AFRICA

ORGANIZATION SIZE:
22,000

ANTHOLOGY PRODUCT:
 Blackboard LEARN



Building on a long-standing partnership

The institution has been utilizing the Blackboard Learn learning management system (LMS) and associated solutions for several years. The reasons for Anthology being VUT's educational technology solution stack of choice is largely because the institution required a platform which helped provide a deep insight into their students, improve faculty development, perform high quality research with the data available, empower and set their students on the path for long-term success, and deliver an unmatched student experience.

The addition of Anthology's Analytics for Learn solution, within the existing LMS, has now further enabled VUT to tackle priorities head on and accelerate their educational technology plans and aspirations.

VUT's e-learning Manager, Tisetso Mohloai, shared their strategy for this: "Analytics for Learn was in our pipeline, with or without COVID-19. With an institution of our size, combined with the amount of students and data we have, we needed to implement and integrate a solution which informed all our practices using the actual data that takes place in our teaching classrooms."



How COVID-19 accelerated options

Pre-COVID-19, learning at VUT was predominantly face-to-face. However, the onset of the pandemic meant all teaching had to move online and so virtual adoption increased across all faculties. Anthology's support was central to shifting teaching and learning online during the height of the pandemic, plugging the resource gaps and providing students and staff with an invaluable two-way communication solution.

The dedicated local and global Anthology team guided the e-learning team both strategically and operationally to leverage LMS functionality, with VUT putting additional measures in place to enable full utilisation of the platform over time. Now, with the enhancement of Analytics for Learn, which has the ability to help slice, dice, and drill into a vast amount of longitudinal information about LMS use, Anthology will provide the backbone of the institution's operations to drive excellence, expansion, and efficiency.

Dr Muntuwenkosi Chili, Executive Director at Vaal University of Technology, commented, "Analytics for Learn will take the institution to the next level as the data will be aligned and integrated, and as such will inform our future teaching and learning strategies." Importantly, Dr Chili further added that, "The insights will enable us to identify any students at risk and take timely and corrective action to better support them in achieving their potential. It gives us a single source of truth."



Solving challenging problems

Mohloai added, “A challenge we face is equipping the academics with the skills and confidence to use our LMS and removing the isolation of some of our systems which were running independently. So, we implemented a carefully planned and structured training programme, which levelled academics according to their use of the platform. COVID-19, and the support [Anthology] provides, have accelerated our strategy and we’re already seeing the benefits, especially in how Analytics for Learn can best utilise the data in supporting our students, staff, and the institution as a whole. Thanks to [Anthology], blended learning has become a central part of teaching and learning.”

VUT also praised the local Anthology support it receives, which helps the institution avoid navigating time differences, has in-depth knowledge of how the South African institutions operate, and has built a seamless relationship with its e-learning and IT teams. Dr Chili added, “One of the institution’s objectives is to lead online learning in South Africa and developing our long-standing and trusted partnership with [Anthology] has laid strong foundations for this and will help us achieve our ultimate objectives.”

VUT is a sterling example of how important it is to have a trusted partner. This has been especially true in these recent times of crisis and uncertainty. When many institutions struggled with issues of scalability, support, and business continuity VUT, through its partnership with Anthology, managed to face the adversity head on and push forward with the institution’s plans and goals.

Product highlighted in this success story:

 **Blackboard** LEARN



Learn more at anthology.com

©2023 Anthology Inc. and its affiliates. All rights reserved.