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Message from the CEO

Welcome to this edition of FSB Focus where we highlight key advancements in education, research and innovation. FSB's expansion with the launch of Simpson House Campus in Croydon (p.6), our Leicester campus and our Sheffield campus (p.14) reinforces our commitment to academic excellence and community engagement.

We explore the transformative role of technology in education, from virtual reality in classrooms (p.20) to AI's impact on academia and business (p.25, p.28, p.70). Student success remains a priority, with discussions on academic support (p.10, p.18), engagement strategies (p.40), and well-being (p.48, p.57, p.61).

Diversity and inclusion remain central to our mission, with insights on building equitable learning environments (p.45, p.53, p.67). Meanwhile, faculty research (p.80) and academic development initiatives (p.83) continue to shape FSB's scholarly contributions.

These articles reflect our dedication to innovation and student success in an evolving academic landscape.

Warm regards,

Mohammed Zaidi
CEO of FSB

IN THIS EDITION

FSB Expands Educational Horizons with Launch of Simpson House Campus in Croydon

By Kunal Chan Mehta, FSB's Public Relations Manager

FSB is delighted to announce the official opening of its second campus in Croydon, housed within the distinguished Simpson House, a building revered for access and modernity owing to its convenient location directly outside East Croydon train, tram and bus stations. The expansion marks a significant chapter in FSB's ongoing commitment to providing exceptional educational undergraduate and postgraduate degree opportunities, particularly within business, health, criminology, and psychology.

Simpson House has undergone an extensive transformation, with meticulous attention given to creating a contemporary learning environment that is both inspiring and functional. The campus has cutting-edge teaching rooms and advanced IT suites, all intended to foster a rich academic experience. These facilities have been developed with a particular emphasis on enhancing employability and nurturing enterprise among FSB's students.

Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB, articulated the significance of this development: 'The inauguration of Simpson House is the culmination of several years of strategic planning and substantial investment. It is a landmark achievement that reflects our dedication to providing an environment that supports academic excellence and prepares our graduate and post-graduate students for the complexities of the professional world.'

'The new campus is poised to play a pivotal role in advancing undergraduate and postgraduate education in business, health, criminology, and psychology,' added Mr Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal. 'These disciplines are crucial to addressing some of the most pressing challenges in society today, and the facilities at Simpson House are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to excel in these fields.'

A majestic grand opening FSB cake. Photo: FSB.

Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB, offers an opening address commending the visible community and civic spirit in Croydon. Photo: FSB.

Ben Abudawood, Associate Dean of the Campus, shared his enthusiasm about the new educational opportunities at Simpson House Campus, stating: 'I am truly excited for the opening of our new campus. We are ready to welcome new students and foster an environment that encourages academic and personal growth. Simpson House is equipped to deliver an exemplary educational experience, and we look forward to seeing our students thrive.'

Jason Perry, Executive Mayor of Croydon, said: 'We welcome the opening of the new Simpson House Campus in Croydon. As students are set to receive their A-Level and other exam results, a new local campus that will offer more options for higher education is excellent news. We want to ensure our young people have opportunities in the borough to learn, develop and fulfil their potential, and for those who want to further their careers throughout all stages of their lives.'

Speaking at FSB's Simpson House, the Civic Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Kola Agboola, who officially opened the building, praised FSB's staff and students. He remarked: 'It is a true honour to witness firsthand the outstanding contribution FSB is making to Croydon and its community through its exceptional undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes.'

The new campus embodies FSB's mission to widen access to higher education, particularly in areas where students have previously found it difficult to obtain a university degree. Simpson House will serve as a vital platform for personal and professional growth, enabling our students to pursue their aspirations in business, health, criminology, and psychology.

The Civic Mayor of Croydon, Councillor Kola Agboola, addresses FSB staff about the importance of local higher education. Photo: FSB.

Dr John Pomeroy, FSB's Principal, praised the collaborative and supportive nature of the Civic Mayor of Croydon and the positive impact this has on FSB students. Photo: FSB.

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Ben Abudawood, Associate Dean of the Campus, outlines management plans and future growth for FSB Croydon campus sites. Photo: FSB.

(l-r) Dr John Pomeroy, FSB's Principal, Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB, Kunal Chan Mehta, PR Manager and Editor of FSB Focus sit with The Civic Mayor of Croydon.

The Civic Mayor of Croydon with FSB staff and Ravensbourne University partners at FSB's Simpson House Croydon campus. Photo: FSB.

Empowering Student Success: The Role of Academic Support Services at FSB

By Ana-Maria Buta, Academic Support Co-ordinator & PAT Lead at FSB Croydon, and Henry Qian, Academic Support Tutor at FSB Croydon

In today's dynamic educational landscape, particularly with the increasing popularity of student-centred pedagogical philosophy, academic support services have started to play a crucial role in enhancing student success and fostering a supportive learning environment (Bettinger et al., 2013; Mishra, 2020).

At FSB, comprehensive academic support is provided to students, equipping them with the tools and resources necessary to excel in their studies. This article explores the various ways in which our Academic Support Team supports students through academic skills development, engaging workshops, and structuring material, ultimately empowering them to achieve their academic goals.

Supporting Students with Academic Skills

One of the primary functions of our academic support services is to support students with their academic skills, particularly writing and researching, aiming at contributing to not only their current study at FSB but also long-term academic and professional endeavours.

Developed in the 1950s by educational psychologist Benjamin Bloom, Bloom's Taxonomy provides modern educators with a framework for categorising educational objectives, including 'remembering', 'understanding', 'applying', 'analysing', 'evaluating', and 'creating', in a hierarchical order from most basic to most advanced cognitive skills (Krathwohl, 2002; Flinders and Uhrmacher, 2011).

At FSB, we also believe that the ultimate purpose of higher education is not to teach students how to meet assignment objectives, but essentially how to apply what they have learnt from the process of completing assignments into a practical setting. Assignments should, as we may argue, serve as tools for promoting learning and evaluating progress rather than the goal of higher education.

Following Bloom's Taxonomy and belief at FSB, our academic support team has adopted the pedagogical approach that aims at not only equipping students with essential skills and knowledge to complete their assignments but also fundamentally promoting their cognitive abilities that can be applied to future endeavours in different settings (Valcke et al., 2009; Aheisibwe et al., 2021). Our approach can be generally categorised into six steps: 'scaffolding', 'modelling', 'feedback', 'peer collaboration', 'reflection', and 'metacognition'. From understanding basic concepts to creating original work, and further to self-assessing own strengths and weaknesses, we aim at cultivating long-term learning capabilities for student's future success.

Engaging Workshops

In addition to one-on-one support, a variety of workshops are offered to address specific academic needs and challenges. The topics cover a wide range of essential aspects, including time management, research techniques, critical thinking, CV writing, and academic referencing. These workshops provide practical strategies and tips to enhance academic performance and build essential skills for success. For instance, referencing is a critical aspect of academic writing: relevant workshops dedicated to practising referencing help students develop this essential academic skill and comprehend good academic practice. Led by experienced academic support tutors, students benefit from interactive learning experiences from the workshop (Jusslin and Widlund, 2021).

The design of our workshops is deeply influenced and built upon the basis of constructivism, particularly Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) by David Kolb and Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura. ELT emphasises the significance of exposing students to the real-world setting, conceptualising new ideas and applying learning outcomes to practical context, while SLT highlights the importance of social interactions and observational learning (Bandura, 1977; Sternberg and Zhang, 2001).

Arguably, both theories echo FSB's belief in practising knowledge as well as the Academic Support Team's student-centred pedagogical philosophy. In our workshops, we usually encourage students to work and discuss in small groups, where the idea exchange occurs, and knowledge is shared. We also focus on practical questions (e.g. what kind of transferrable skills can you highlight if you wish to work in the industry of health and social care?) and strategically prepare students for the real-world setting (e.g. we may ask students to role-play in a business interview scenario to be both interviewers and interviewees, so they can understand what skills may be desired and how they can highlight them from different perspectives).

Structuring Material

Many students struggle with organising and structuring academic material effectively. Our academic support services offer guidance on structuring learning material in a clear and logical manner. Assistance is provided in identifying key points, recognising and developing own critical arguments, and creating well-organised notes to ensure that learning material is comprehended in a helpful and constructive way.

As previously mentioned, this academic support service reflects our philosophy influenced by Bloom's Taxonomy. In contrast, we not only guide students to scaffold their learning material but also continuously provide modelling and feedback to students so they can understand better what a solid academic piece of work should look like (Krathwohl, 2002; Flinders and Uhrmacher, 2011; Fisher and Justwan, 2017).

Conclusion

At FSB, comprehensive academic support services influenced by various pedagogical philosophies are provided to empower students to succeed in their studies. Through support with academic skills, engaging workshops, and guidance on structuring material, students can be equipped with the skills and resources necessary for academic success. By fostering a supportive and student-centred learning environment, we are committed to continuously promoting student success and excellence in higher education.

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FSB staff and partners from Ravensbourne University at FSB's Sheffield campus. Photo: FSB.

FSB Celebrates Sheffield Campus Grand Opening with a Commitment to Strengthening Local Community Ties

By Kunal Chan Mehta, FSB's Public Relations Manager

FSB proudly announces the launch of its Sheffield campus, a significant addition to its campus fleet across London, Luton, Leicester and Birmingham. The grand opening (15th August) welcomed local dignitaries, partners, staff and students, marking a bold chapter in FSB's commitment to providing community-focused higher education in Sheffield's educational landscape.

'FSB is committed to developing innovative and sustainable local campuses where each has its own personality and purpose,' said Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB.

Dr John Pomeroy, FSB's Principal, added: 'Our Sheffield campus has launched with an initial focus on Business Management courses, set to begin in September 2024. Our business courses are designed to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in today's competitive business environment.'

Mr Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal, outlined: 'Reflecting on our dedication to our local communities, we have committed to recruiting all staff for FSB Sheffield locally. As the campus grows with each intake, it is expected to employ over 100 local staff members, contributing to Sheffield's economy and reinforcing our belief that Sheffield's strength lies in its people.'

FSB Sheffield's mission extends beyond higher education per se to actively empower Sheffield's thriving communities. The campus will be focused on initiatives that promote skills development and support local businesses through its graduates. By engaging with Sheffield's residents and businesses, FSB aims to fit its educational programmes to meet the specific needs of Sheffield, ensuring that its greatest asset —its people — is supported and strengthened.

(l-r) FSB Sheffield campus is officially opened by Dan Janowski, Head of Strategic Recruitment Partnerships, Ravensbourne University and Dr Zahra Fatima, Acting Assistant Dean, FSB Sheffield. Photo: FSB.

FSB's traditional cake-cutting ceremony with Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal and Dr Zahra Fatima, Acting Assistant Dean, FSB Sheffield. Photo: FSB.

FSB offers high-quality, industry-relevant qualifications designed for individuals looking to advance their professional and personal circumstances. Understanding that traditional education routes may not align with everyone's life commitments, FSB provides flexible learning options that cater to diverse needs.

FSB is a higher education institution with a focus on delivering accessible, community-oriented education across multiple campuses in England. FSB is committed to fostering community engagement and providing industry-relevant qualifications that empower students to achieve their goals.

(l-r), Dr Zahra Fatima, Acting Assistant Dean, FSB Sheffield, Kelly Scott, Partnerships Manager, Ravensbourne University, Dan Janowski, Head of Strategic Recruitment Partnerships, Ravensbourne University, Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal, Alina-Mihaela Iorga, Associate Dean, FSB Digbeth and Ben Abudawood, Associate Dean of FSB Croydon. Photo: FSB.

Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal, outlines the campus's strategic direction. Photo: FSB.

FSB Staff at FSB Sheffield. Photo: FSB

Giedrius Zilionis, FSB's Vice Principal, thanks FSB staff and partners at FSB Sheffield for their kind support during the busy day. Photo: FSB.

The significant importance of Student Support Services for Student development

By Greta Parvanova, Student Support Officer, FSB Luton Campus

Student Support Services (SSS) at FSB are indispensable in each student's academic and personal development. SSS significantly enhances academic performance and fosters personal growth by offering a wide array of resources. Despite misconceptions that student support isn't directly tied to academia, its impact on student success is profound. Here are some key aspects that highlight its importance:

Academic assistance

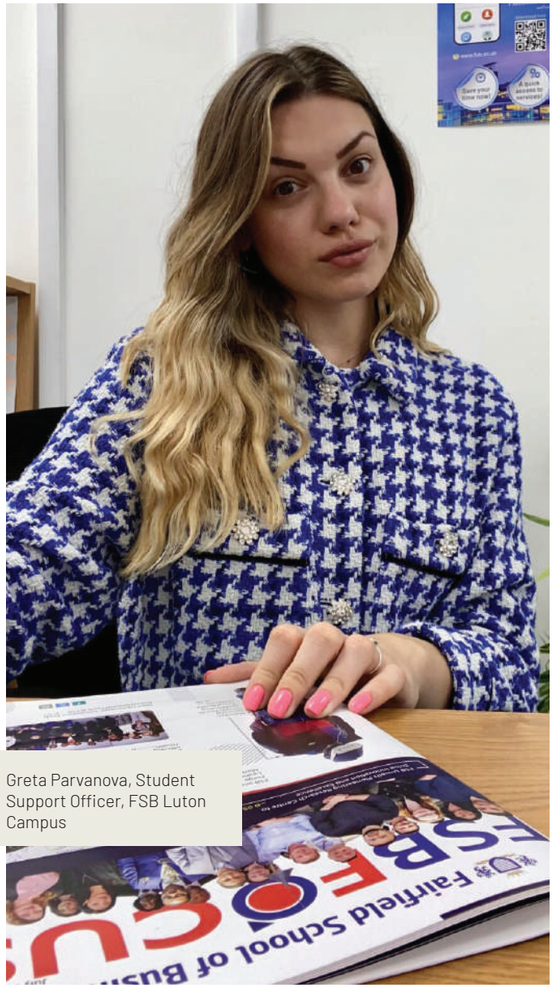
As mentioned, SSS does not provide direct assistance in terms of academic assignments, although it is still involved in a lot of the academic procedures. For instance, Student Support at FSB assists with applying for extensions and mitigation to students, who need more time to complete their assignments. At FSB, Student Support Officers not only assist with completing the relevant forms, but also listen to students and their current circumstances. SS officers try to provide life advice and assistance to each student, who is in need (see FSB, 2024a).

Student Finance applications

Another vital aspect of SSS is the support it provides to students in navigating the complexities of Student Finance applications. With many students relying on government assistance for tuition fees and maintenance loans, this guidance is crucial. The application process can be overwhelming, often leading to distractions and stress, which can negatively impact academic performance and attendance. At FSB, Student Support Officers ensure students not only complete their finance applications but also fully understand the process, empowering them to focus on their studies.

Other Student Support Services

Except the above two main aspect of SSS, there are many other duties, which Student Support Officers at FSB are liable for such as: pregnancy plans, disability interviews, all personal details or timetable and course or campus changes. Additionally, SS are often involved in organising student events such as Christmas, Halloween and Start or End of Term celebrations (see FSB, 2024b).



Greta Parvanova, Student Support Officer, FSB Luton Campus

Student Support Services have a pivotal importance in fostering an environment, where students can thrive not only academically, but personally, and professionally. By addressing the diverse needs of the student population, SSS helps ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential Smith, R. (2007).

In conclusion, according to the very minimum number of cases of student complaints as 0-1 per academic year, here at FSB Luton Campus, we know that SS is not only providing excellent service but also creating a sense of community for all students. FSB is strongly supporting diversity, acceptance, and equality, so all students can feel encouraged and welcomed at FSB family.

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Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

Transforming Classrooms: How Virtual Reality is Transforming Learning Experiences

By Sher Ali Imtiaz, Lecturer in Business, FSB Digbeth

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Have you ever wondered what it would be like to step into a virtual world where learning goes beyond the pages of a textbook and becomes an experience you can immerse yourself in?

Imagine a world where, instead of just studying business theories or healthcare practices from a textbook, you could immerse yourself in a simulated environment where every decision has real-world consequences. This is the future of higher education with Virtual Reality (VR), where learning is not just observed but experienced.

In the past few years, VR has truly stepped into the spotlight as a transformative tool in education, particularly at the higher education level. This cutting-edge technology offers immersive, hands-on experiences that traditional teaching methods can't replicate. As colleges and universities aim to provide the most enriching learning experiences possible, VR is fast becoming an indispensable resource for boosting student engagement, comprehension, and knowledge retention.

Educational institutions committed to staying at the forefront of technology are actively exploring how VR can be integrated into their curricula. For instance, At FSB, we have made strides with projects like the "Nobody's Listening" VR experience, which immerses students in the harrowing realities faced by the Yazidi community. By actively incorporating VR into our teaching methods, we are preparing our students to face real-world challenges with innovative solutions.

Increasing Engagement and Sparking Motivation

One of the standout advantages of VR in higher education is its remarkable ability to capture students' attention and drive their motivation. While traditional lectures and textbook learning have their merits, keeping students fully engaged all of the time can be a challenge in today's digital world. VR, on the other hand, creates dynamic learning environments that draw students in, making them active participants rather than passive listeners.

Our recent VR initiatives educate students about human rights but it also places them in the shoes of those who have experienced atrocities firsthand. Such immersive experiences are invaluable in fostering empathy and deep understanding among students.

Take a business management student, for example. Instead of just reading about corporate strategies, they can dive headfirst into a virtual business simulation. Here, they get to make decisions, manage teams, and see the direct impact of their choices, all in real time. This kind of hands-on experience is invaluable and brings the complexities of running a company to life. Similarly, a health and social care student might find themselves interacting with virtual patients in a simulated clinical setting. This offers a safe space to practice communication, diagnosis, and care planning without the risks that come with real-life scenarios (Radianti et al., 2020; Freina and Ott, 2015).

This immersive level of engagement is crucial in higher education, where a deep understanding of complex subjects is key. VR not only makes learning more engaging but also enhances

motivation and participation, leading to better academic outcomes. Research consistently shows that the interactive nature of VR significantly boosts student engagement, which naturally translates into improved learning results (Radianti et al., 2020). We are continually exploring further opportunities to incorporate VR across various disciplines, ensuring that our students benefit from the most advanced educational tools available.

Bringing Learning to Life: The Power of Experiential Education

Experiential learning — learning through direct experience — has always been a core component of higher education. VR takes this concept to the next level, offering simulations and virtual experiences that might otherwise be out of reach due to financial, geographical, or safety concerns.

Consider medical students, who can now use VR to practice surgeries in a completely risk-free environment. This type of simulation is priceless for developing the practical skills required in the medical field (Parong and Mayer, 2018). Engineering students, on the other hand, can create and test virtual prototypes of machinery or structures, experimenting with designs without the need to build costly physical models.

The magic of VR lies in its ability to create lifelike, immersive experiences that make learning far more tangible. By engaging with course material in a practical way, students can more effectively understand and apply theoretical concepts, enhancing both their knowledge base and critical thinking skills (Parong and Mayer, 2018).

Tailoring Education: Personalised and Inclusive Learning

One of the most exciting aspects of VR in higher education is its ability to offer personalised and inclusive learning experiences. Let's face it: not every student learns in the same way, and traditional teaching methods can often struggle to cater to these differences. VR, however, can be adapted to fit the individual needs of each student, offering tailored learning experiences that align with their unique learning styles and paces.

For instance, a student who finds traditional lectures challenging might benefit immensely from VR's visual and interactive content, which can make difficult concepts more digestible. On the flip side, a student who excels in a particular subject might use VR to explore advanced topics at their speed, free from the constraints of the standard curriculum (Liu et al., 2020).

Moreover, VR is a game-changer when it comes to inclusivity. It provides alternative ways for students with disabilities to engage with course material. For example, VR can offer visual and auditory enhancements to assist students with hearing or visual impairments, ensuring that they too can fully participate in their education (Sanchez et al., 2019). This flexibility makes VR an incredibly powerful tool for promoting inclusivity in higher education, ensuring that all students have access to top-quality learning experiences, no matter their abilities.

Overcoming Distance and Cost Barriers

Higher education often involves experiences that are restricted by geographical and financial limitations. Field trips, study abroad opportunities, and internships are invaluable but often out of reach for many students. VR offers a unique solution by providing virtual alternatives that are just as enriching.

For instance, a student studying marine biology might virtually explore coral reefs, even if they live miles from the nearest ocean. Similarly, students with an interest in international business can take part in virtual internships with companies across the globe, gaining valuable global experience without ever needing to travel (Radianti et al., 2020).

These virtual experiences are particularly beneficial in fields where real-world exposure is essential but difficult to obtain. By eliminating the barriers of location and cost, VR democratizes access to these opportunities, enabling more students to benefit from them.

Navigating the Challenges of VR in Education

While the advantages of VR in higher education are compelling, integrating this technology is not without its challenges. One of the primary hurdles is the cost of VR equipment and software, which can be steep for some institutions. However, as VR technology advances and becomes more widespread, these costs are likely to drop, making it more accessible to a broader range of universities and colleges (Hamilton et al., 2021).

Another significant challenge is ensuring that educators are properly trained to use VR effectively in their teaching. Without adequate training, the full potential of VR may not be realized, and the technology could be underused. Therefore, higher education institutions must invest in professional development programs that equip faculty members to integrate VR seamlessly into their curricula (Hamilton et al., 2021).

There are also concerns about the possible side effects of prolonged VR use, such as motion sickness. Educators need to be mindful of these risks and ensure that VR is used appropriately, with students' well-being as a priority.

The Future of VR in Higher Education

As VR technology continues to evolve, its role in higher education is only set to grow. Future advancements might include more sophisticated simulations, enhanced accessibility features, and even the integration of artificial intelligence to create highly personalised learning experiences.

The potential for VR to revolutionise higher education is enormous. By providing immersive, engaging, and practical learning experiences, VR can help students develop the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in an increasingly complex world. As universities and colleges continue to explore the possibilities of VR, it's clear that this technology will be a key player in the future of education.

While challenges remain, the benefits of VR in higher education are undeniable. By embracing this technology, institutions can offer students learning experiences that are not only more

engaging and effective but also more inclusive and accessible. Looking forward, VR has the potential to reshape the way we teach and learn, making higher education more dynamic, interactive, and impactful than ever before. By embracing VR, educational institutions can offer students learning experiences that are not only more engaging and effective but also more inclusive and accessible.

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Pilfering or Powerhouse? The Responsible Use of AI in Assessments

By Maryluz Carvajal,
Programme Manager

The ever-evolving landscape of markets and the intricate dynamics shaping various sectors have inevitably permeated the education sector, leaving it no choice but to adapt and transform. With the growing use of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), unlimited possibilities for development and improvement have opened. However, when it comes to completing university assignments (Tang, 2024), it is evident that AI can have two different perspectives: the first as a support tool for improving syntax, through a grammar review process and the second as the actual producer of written work. This poses a problem for academic development and knowledge creation (Ouyang et al., 2022).

Therefore, the implementation of AI in higher education presents significant challenges. It should be established as a tool that can improve the quality of contributions by acting as a guide for content quality (Khan, 2023), generating interaction with students and the content production process, but not as the content producer itself (Crompton & Burke, 2023).

This is precisely why UNESCO's report on "Artificial Intelligence and the Ethics of Teaching and Learning" emphasises the importance of increasing the academy's focus on improving students' ethical foundations as a way of reducing the ethical implications of AI in university assessments, especially as the continuous development of these technologies makes it increasingly difficult to verify the authorship content (Holmes & Miao, 2023).

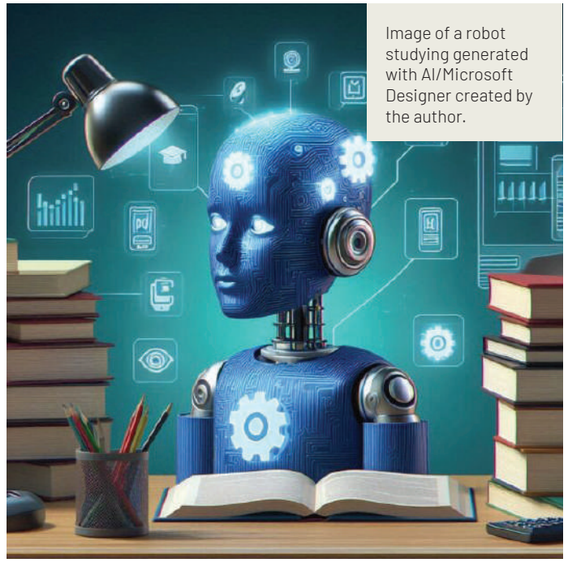

Image of a robot studying generated with AI/Microsoft Designer created by the author.

This directly impacts student assessment, particularly in terms of equity and content authenticity. AI-based tools are now capable of not only developing technologies, codes and more but also producing content that is directly cited as requested (Li, 2023).

This capability has been improving over time as this tool is constantly being trained, and new options are emerging that focus on mimicking human thought. This raises concerns about maintaining the academic integrity, as there is a great effort underway to distinguish between what is real or not (Borger et al., 2020).

In contrast, while the development of new technologies provides new tools to constantly maintain and improve the competitive capacity of people, there is an immediate need from academics to address the challenge that it possesses, in the face of a future where people become so dependent on AI that their production is reduced, and thus the human response to challenges in their professional development is slowed down (Dwivedi et al, 2021).

This highlights the need for a turning point where the development of academic activities that teach the good use of AI is combined with raising awareness among students about the importance of using AI well. This should create realistic expectations that do not alienate students from technological evolution but do not make them entirely dependent on it (Chen et al., 2020).

According to Hota et al. (2023) implementing a structured process in which academia takes action to develop student's skills and competencies to effectively manage artificial intelligence, increase their productivity, and generate responses to labour market challenges in different disciplines, always from an ethical perspective, where the student is the producer of ideas and artificial intelligence is supported as a tool that can empower development and promote continuous improvement of processes and procedures in different fields.

Consequently, there is an urgent need to maintain a holistic approach to technologies, where the focus can shift from reducing plagiarism or misuse of AI to promoting curiosity developing creativity and its responsible use to improve academic processes (Kelly et al., 2023) this forms the basis for the development of new competencies and skills that prepare students to take on major challenges in the workplace with the knowledge to harness the power of new technologies without becoming entirely dependent on them (Kimondo et al, 2023).

In conclusion, while AI can be a great tool for improving university assignments, we should not place all responsibility for completing them on AI. It is important to use AI ethically and responsibly, especially as AI tools become more sophisticated and capable of generating human-like results. Therefore, it is crucial to raise awareness about the ethics of using AI properly, as it can be a powerful tool for improving students' academic abilities and enabling them to respond to the multidisciplinary challenges they face in the workplace. This highlights the need to promote AI as a tool for enhancing capabilities, not replacing them so that students can use it in their produced work without compromising their integrity. Thus, the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence in education promotes academic integrity and guides academic development towards deep and meaningful learning. By establishing itself as a powerful tool to benefit students in terms of the efficiency of their academic processes and equal access to knowledge, it is essential to maintain an up-to-date regulatory framework and a culture of academic honesty. This will allow us to access the advantages of artificial intelligence as a strategic tool for growth and personal and professional development.

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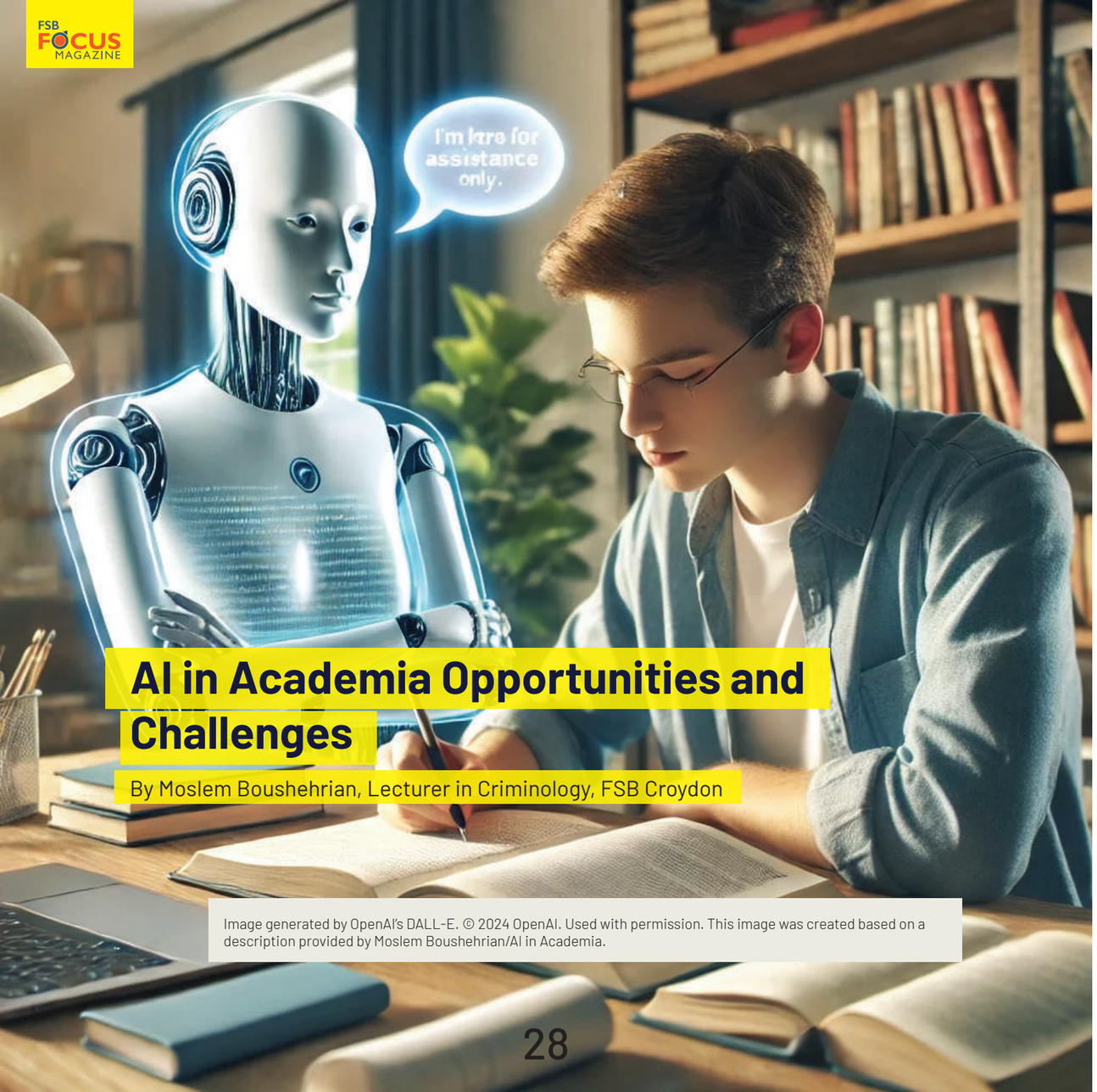

AI in Academia Opportunities and Challenges

By Moslem Boushehrian, Lecturer in Criminology, FSB Croydon

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly impacted various sectors, and academia is no exception. Integrating AI tools, especially generative models like OpenAI's ChatGPT, has transformed the academic landscape, bringing both opportunities and challenges. This essay explores the multifaceted role of AI in academia, emphasising the benefits, addressing the ethical concerns, and suggesting ways to harness AI for academic progress.

The rise of AI, especially in natural language processing (NLP), has not just changed but revolutionised academic research and education. Tools like ChatGPT have empowered text generation, language translation, literature review automation, and personalised education. These applications have streamlined numerous academic processes, making them more efficient and accessible. One of the most significant contributions of AI is its pivotal role in fostering interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research. AI tools can sift through vast data, select diverse topics, and transfer methods across fields, thereby expanding the scope and depth of academic research and opening up exciting new possibilities for collaboration and innovation (Seymour, 2024).

AI tools like ChatGPT have been instrumental in various research applications. ChatGPT's advanced natural language processing capabilities enable accurate translations, fostering international collaboration and communication in research. ChatGPT can condense extensive content into concise summaries in environments inundated with information, aiding researchers in extracting essential insights and interpreting complex datasets (Nepal, 2024). Additionally, ChatGPT facilitates data analysis by allowing researchers to interact with complex datasets through conversational queries, making data-driven insights more accessible. Its ability to automate literature reviews by synthesising information from extensive academic literature allows researchers to focus on critical analysis and hypothesis formulation (Aithal and Aithal, 2023).

ChatGPT also plays a pivotal role in collaborative writing, aiding in the drafting and improving research papers and ensuring a coherent contribution from all team members. Furthermore, ChatGPT assists in experiment design by analysing and responding to queries related to research methodology, variables, and procedures (Awan and Rahman, 2016). These applications serve as a testament to how AI can enhance various aspects of the research process, opening up new avenues for exploration and innovation for researchers.

ChatGPT's role in academic writing is equally multifaceted. It aids in creating initial drafts, providing a foundation for researchers to expand and refine their ideas. The tool offers significant recommendations for enhancing clarity, coherence, and overall quality of academic writing. ChatGPT provides nuanced feedback aligned with the specific requirements of academic writing, including academic tone and citation protocols. By automating parts of the writing process, ChatGPT allows researchers to focus more on synthesising complex ideas

and refining arguments (Nepal, 2024). The tool facilitates the iterative refinement of manuscripts, enabling authors to receive rapid feedback and continuously improve their work. This iterative process enhances the overall quality of academic publications.

Integrating AI into education has led to the development of intelligent tutoring systems that provide personalised learning experiences. ChatGPT's ability to understand and generate human-like text enables it to function as a virtual tutor, offering students personalised responses and adaptive learning paths. This personalised approach can significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension (Hemachandran et al., 2022). ChatGPT provides comprehensive support in language learning by offering practice opportunities, real-time feedback, contextualised language usage, and simulation of conversational interactions. This immersive approach improves language proficiency and creates dynamic and engaging learning environments.

AI also offers significant benefits for administrative tasks within academic institutions. Staff responsible for administrative work can leverage AI to expedite processes such as data entry, scheduling, and communication. This increased efficiency allows administrative staff to focus on more strategic tasks, improving the overall operation of academic institutions. Similarly, academics who juggle research and administrative responsibilities can utilise AI to streamline their workload, allowing them to dedicate more time to scholarly pursuits (Pinzolits, 2024).

However, using AI among students requires careful consideration (Mogavi et al., 2024). The primary purpose of academic assignments, such as essays, reports, and theses, is not merely completing tasks but demonstrating acquired skills (Allan and Clarke, 2007). These tasks ensure that students learn how to conduct research, perform literature reviews, develop critical thinking, consider ethical frameworks, and write academically (Miller and Konstantinou, 2022). These skills are essential for their professional lives. Allowing students to rely heavily on AI for these tasks can undermine the learning process and deprive them of the opportunity to practice and showcase their abilities (Rane et al., 2023). Hence, while AI can assist in learning, it should not replace the essential practice of these academic skills (Chatham, Duncan & Li, 2024).

Despite the numerous benefits, the use of AI in academia raises several ethical concerns. AI models like ChatGPT can inadvertently perpetuate biases present in their training data. Implementing bias-detection algorithms and diversifying training datasets is crucial to ensure fairness and equity in AI-generated outputs (Nepal, 2024). The ease of generating text using AI tools raises concerns about plagiarism and the authenticity of academic work. Institutions must develop clear guidelines for the ethical use of AI in academic writing to maintain academic integrity (Seymour, 2024). Furthermore, using AI in education involves handling sensitive data and raising privacy concerns. Ensuring data protection and transparent communication about AI's role in the learning process is essential (Nepal, 2024). While AI can significantly enhance academic processes, it should not replace human intuition and creativity. Educators and researchers must balance leveraging AI tools and maintaining human oversight and critical thinking.

The future of AI in academia lies in its responsible and ethical deployment (Castelló-Sirvent et al., 2023). Continuous refinement of AI models to improve contextual understanding, mitigate biases, and enhance interpretability is necessary. Collaboration between researchers, educators, and technologists is essential to develop AI tools that align with educational values and ethical standards. Establishing AI governance frameworks within academic institutions can help oversee the ethical use of AI, prevent misuse, and ensure that AI enhances rather than undermines academic integrity.

In conclusion, AI, particularly tools like ChatGPT, holds immense potential to transform academia by enhancing research processes, academic writing, and personalised education. However, this potential must be harnessed responsibly, carefully considering ethical implications and a commitment to maintaining academic integrity. The core tasks of developing academic skills through established learning cycles, learning from mistakes, taking feedback onboard, and taking steps to improve such skills should remain the students' main tasks in higher education. Such tasks can be facilitated but not undertaken by AI. By integrating AI thoughtfully and ethically, academia can embrace the new age of progress and unlock unprecedented opportunities for innovation and discovery.

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Leveraging Artificial Intelligence to Mitigate Climate Risks on Business Supply Chains and Labour Productivity

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Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

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Abstract

In recent years, Artificial intelligence (AI) has evolved as a powerful tool that can help create new solutions to climate change and solve this problem effectively. AI helps identify climate change risk regions, create adaptation plans for businesses and communities, predict floods and wildfires and pinpoint the location of earthquakes (Rutenberg et al., 2021: Jain. et al. 2023). Furthermore, AI-powered technologies lead to optimal energy utilisation and increase the efficiency of renewable energies with predictive analysis on tremendous data sets for matching demand and supply patterns (Masterson, 2024). In this article, we focus on the two important impacts of climate change on businesses and how AI can be used to mitigate these climate risks.

Introduction

Business is impacted by climate change throughout the world: Global warming impacted water-dependent industries, including agriculture and hydropower which are suffering from reduced efficiency and risk of energy shortages due to declining water levels in rivers. Floods, hurricanes, and droughts can hinder transportation, damage infrastructure, decrease in labour productivity and delay raw material availability which results in affecting the production and distribution process (World Economic Forum, 2020). Climate change directly affects other businesses such as the travel and tourism, hotel and restaurant, and aviation industries. The tourism industry that relies on the natural beauty and animals of the region is facing adverse consequences due to the damaging environment and reducing biodiversity. Industries such as insurance, real estate, and health care are all susceptible to climate risks. Insurance companies are required to make substantial payouts to policyholders. The healthcare industry is equally vulnerable to climate risks. With the exacerbation of water scarcity, remote populations who are already vulnerable to economic and social conflict, experience the greatest impact of restricted availability of clean water and sanitation facilities (Cruz et. al.2007). The UK's National Health Service (NHS) predicts that unless immediate action is taken, extreme temperatures, frequent storms and floods, could lead to outbreaks of infectious diseases such as encephalitis and vibriosis (NHS, n.d.). In addition, damage to infrastructure from extreme weather events puts a strain on public resources and hinders economic growth. In general, every economic sector is vulnerable to the risks of climate change.

Supply chain Disruption

Climate disruption to global supply chains could cost $25 trillion by mid-century as Sun et al. (2024) of King's College revealed. As the global economy has become increasingly integrated, disruptions in one area would have ripple effects on others, often in unexpected ways. Crop failures, layoffs or work stoppages due to heat waves in one region can cause disruptions in production and business in other distant areas. In February 2021, a historic winter engulfed the entire state of Texas, broke numerous records for the lowest temperature and became the first billion-dollar weather disaster

of the year. Scientists believed that the severe freeze was the result of climate change (Busby et al., 2021). The February 2021 Texas Freeze led to the most severe unplanned electricity blackout in the history of the United States (The Great Texas Freeze: February 11-20, 2021, 2024). As a result, three important semiconductor factories were forced to close, worsening the worldwide scarcity of semiconductors caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and impeding the production of automobiles that depend on microchips. The power failure resulted in the shutdown of the railroads, severely disrupting critical communications between Texas and the Pacific Northwest for three days (see Yale Environment 360, 2022).

According to the World Meteorological Organization (WWA), heavy rains in Dubai (UAE) and Oman in April 2024 were caused by climate change. The incidents brought Dubai to a standstill for weeks. These disruptions have a critical impact on local businesses and also have severe effects on international trade that can compromise reliability and efficiency and thus weaken the global supply chain (Herold and Łukasz Marzantowicz, 2023).

Labour Supply and Labour Productivity

Climate change is expected to reduce labour supply and productivity, especially in tropical regions. According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), climate change causes a global loss of up to 3.8% of total working hours worldwide over seven years. The figure represents a total of 136 million full-time jobs and $2.4 trillion in economic losses, as reported by the (World Economic Forum, 2023). Research has indicated that if the temperature exceeds a certain level, workers are required to increase the number of breaks during the workday, from 10 to 40 minutes more per hour of active work. The study conducted by Dasgupta et al. (2021) suggests that current climatic conditions have a detrimental impact on labour productivity, especially in tropical countries. Under 3.0°C warming, future climate change is expected to decrease world total labour in low-exposure sectors by 18 percentage points in low-income industries, and by 24.8 percentage points in high-income industries. The data from 2017 indicates that 153 billion working hours were lost due to heat exposure worldwide, a significant increase of 62 billion hours compared to the year 2000 (Watts, N. et al., 2018) Every year, for every trillion tonne of carbon emissions, the economy losses labour productivity equivalent to 2% of the total GDP. According to Chavaillaz et al. (2019), this leads to an extra annual economic loss of 4,400 Giga $ approximately. In addition to this, it is difficult to measure the number of disruptions in everyday life caused by climate change including loss of work and school days, as well as the negative impact on business, transportation, agriculture, energy production, and tourism. It has the potential to impede agricultural activities, disrupt air traffic, and prevent people from carrying out day-to-day activities. However, these disruptions have a significant impact on the overall decline in labour productivity.

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AI and Climate Risk

There are many strategies that businesses have adopted to mitigate climate risk, viz., transition to renewable energies, promoting green products, reducing carbon emission, energy efficiency, disaster risk management, adopting policies aligned with national and international climate change agencies etc. However, businesses have the opportunity to surpass conventional ways and leverage AI address climate risks. Some of the methods are highlighted below:

Early warning signs:

One of the advantages of AI is its ability to analyse large amounts of data which allows for early warning or predictions of impending disasters. This allows for a quick and efficient response Satellites, meteorological stations, and other sources can be used to detect changes in weather or ocean conditions that may indicate the onset of storms or floods (Jain, H. et al., 2023). By analysing geographic and demographic data, the system can identify cities and infrastructure in areas that are at risk of damage from floods or hurricanes. AI-powered machine learning models can predict hurricanes, heatwaves and floods to avert massive impacts on our communities and infrastructure by monitoring real-time patterns or anomalies in data for rapid warnings (Zennaro et al., 2021). These AI-enable insights are critical to developing responsive strategies that help build resilience against climate-related disturbances (Leal Filho et al., 2022). This allows strategists to focus on planning and reaction measures, such as the organised evacuation or upgrading of important infrastructure. Implementing this measure can effectively limit the number of deaths and reduce the extent of damage caused by natural calamities.

Collaboration in the supply chain:

Artificial intelligence (AI) can improve the exchange of information between businesses, governments, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to effectively coordinate efforts to address climate disruptions (Kim, 2020). This can lead to the development of more effective collaborative approaches to risk management and maintaining uninterrupted supply chain operations. By incorporating AI into their operations, businesses can improve their ability to identify and address climate risks, building more resilient and greener supply chains in an increasingly volatile and uncertain world. In addition, it is crucial to promote collaboration between governmental agencies, civil society and NGOs to develop common climate change adaptation strategies which can better address the specific constraints the world faces. Additionally, adequate financial support, development of skills and knowledge, and engaging the public in the battle against climate change are pertinent in mobilising resources.

Risk Assessment Analysis:

The ability to determine important information quickly and accurately makes AI a valuable tool for identifying areas most affected by the effects of climate change, such as floods, earthquakes or drought areas (Nost and Colven, 2022). Artificial Intelligence allows governments, agencies, communities and businesses to use data to

analyse weather patterns, satellite images and weather conditions. This allows them to develop strategic solutions that address the different situations in each region. AI can analyse historical disruptions, geographical hazards, and customer relationships to determine the most susceptible areas in a supply chain. This allows businesses to focus their risk mitigation efforts on the areas that need the most attention.

AI could be used to analyse satellite images and identify areas prone to flooding or erosion due to sea level rise. By applying machine learning algorithms to vast amounts of satellite images, AI models can discern patterns and trends that human analysts might miss (Jain et al., 2023) Therefore, these models can provide estimates of the potential impact of sea level rise on specific regions. By increasing the accuracy of predicting these results, businesses can adopt preventive measures to change their supply chains, redirect operations, or find alternate sources of raw materials. Businesses could also use AI-based demand forecasting mechanisms to manage inventory more effectively, reduce the need for surplus stock and guarantee the supply of critical products even in times of shortages. Artificial intelligence systems are capable of monitoring supply chain activities at all times and show effects as they occur. This leads to quick responses, such as engaging alternative suppliers or modifying the production schedule.

Labour productivity and AI

Artificial intelligence can effectively help businesses manage the risks related to climate change, such as tackling the issues of reduced labour productivity and labour availability (Vinuesa et al., 2020). AI can analyse vast weather data and forecast potential difficulties in the availability of labour in the future, considering anticipated climate patterns. Companies can use this information to propose solutions for possible labour scarcities, such as by allocating resources to automation or creating a more flexible and dynamic workforce. In businesses such as Agriculture or a water-bound industry where human labour is greatly impacted by high temperatures or cold weather, AI can help in automating monotonous or physically exhaustive work. However, it should be kept in mind, that when automation increases, employees may find it difficult to cope with it and they should be trained to effectively use and control such systems (Sjödin et al., 2021). This ensures that workers are comfortable and efficient when exposed to the elements. By using the power of AI, organisations can solve problems related to reducing production staff and equipment. Furthermore, they can turn these challenges into opportunities to drive innovation, increase sustainability and achieve growth.

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AI may be employed in several other areas to address the risks associated with climate change, as provided in the table below:

Purpose	Input	Output	AI Tool
vulnerability assessment- predicting future climate patterns and images	Historical Climate Data	Trend and pattern of climate change with minimum standard error	Machine learning
Identification of Land Use and vegetation –	Satellite imagery, land data	Identification of change in land quality and vegetation using simulation analysis	Deep Learning
Natural Disaster Prediction	Meteorological data, geological data	Early warnings and risk assessment for potential natural disasters	Neural Networks
Agricultural Yield Prediction	Historical crop data, soil data, weather data	Predictive models for future crop yields	Machine Learning
Water Resource Management	Hydrological data, climate data	Optimised management and allocation of water resources	Machine Learning -Decision Trees
Disease Outbreak Prediction	Health records, climate data, population density	Early detection and prediction of disease outbreaks	Machine Learning -Bayesian Networks
Air Quality Monitoring and Prediction	Atmospheric data, pollutant levels	Real-time air quality index and future predictions	Machine Learning -Regression Models
Safeguarding infrastructure and communities	climate models, satellite imagery, and weather patterns	to develop plans for protecting infrastructure and communities from the effects of climate change	Machine Learning -Simulation models

However, despite these advantages, there are limitations to consider while using AI-powered models. A key limitation is the need for high-quality data. For these systems to be effective, they require access to accurate and current data from a variety of sources. In addition, there are concerns about the possible biases in the data or algorithms that these systems utilise, which could result in inaccurate or unfair predictions (Zhang et al., 2023).

Another issue is the possibility of generating false alerts. AI systems are not perfect and can create false positive alarms leading to unnecessary notifications or disruptions (Chen et al., 2023). Another drawback of using AI models is that rare and critical minerals – like cobalt, lithium and tantalum – are needed for AI technologies which are obtained through dangerous extractive methods that can be very costly and can have a severe impact on the communities as well as the environment (Taddeo. Furthermore, developing effective adaptation strategies that can reduce the risks and impact of climate change is a difficult task. To create effective response plans, governments and communities must have accurate and relevant information regarding the specific risks each region faces. Despite these challenges, the potential of artificial intelligence-powered early warning systems for natural disasters and mitigating climate risk is significant.

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How To Improve Student Engagement In Higher Education

By Ms Nseobong Udokang, Business Lecturer, FSB Luton

Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

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To improve student engagement, institutions must foster a dynamic and supportive learning environment where both students and educators actively invest time, effort, and resources. Student engagement is defined as "the interaction between the time, effort, and other relevant resources invested by both students and their institutions, aimed at optimising the student experience, enhancing learning outcomes, and fostering the overall development of students, while also contributing to the institution's performance and reputation" (Xiaoming et al., 2023). This interaction is key to promoting an enriching educational experience.

According to Advance HE (2020), student engagement reflects students' motivation, curiosity, and passion for their course of study, their learning community, and the broader context of higher education. Visible signs of engagement include behaviours such as attending lessons, active listening, asking questions, and applying knowledge to real-world situations. Active participation in class discussions, collaborating with peers, and engaging in extracurricular activities also demonstrate a high level of engagement.

Dimensions of Student Engagement

Research suggests that engagement occurs in three dimensions: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive.

- **Behavioural Engagement** is demonstrated through participation in class activities, such as attending lessons, listening attentively, and contributing to discussions (Bond et al., 2020).
- **Emotional Engagement** involves students' feelings towards their learning environment, including their relationships with peers and teachers. Involvement in extracurricular activities can foster a sense of belonging and strengthen these relationships (Bowden et al., 2021).
- **Cognitive Engagement** reflects students' intellectual effort, such as their willingness to apply different learning strategies, solve problems, and develop deeper cognitive skills as outlined in Bloom's taxonomy (Heilporn et al., 2022).

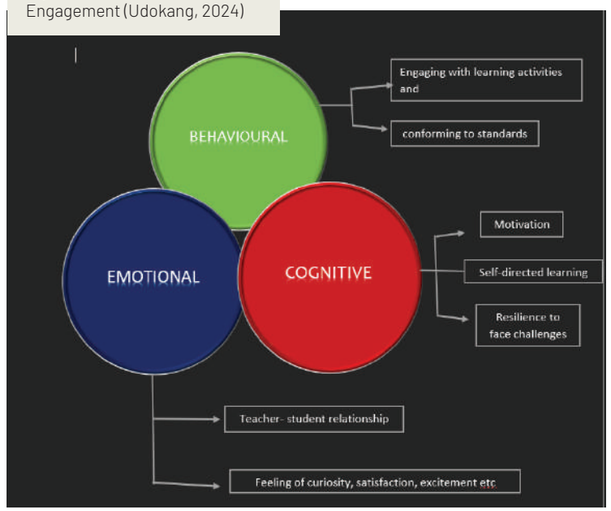
Benefits of Student Engagement

Student engagement is a crucial indicator of success in higher education, leading to numerous academic and professional benefits. Engaged students are more likely to retain knowledge, remain motivated, and produce high-quality work. Engagement also encourages effective communication, fosters collaborative learning, and enhances resilience in the face of challenges. By creating strong connections with peers and educators, students build a foundation for lifelong learning and professional development.

Strategies to Improve Student Engagement

Enhancing student engagement requires a multifaceted approach. The following strategies

Fig 1 – Dimensions of Student Engagement (Udokang, 2024)



have proven effective in boosting student involvement and outcomes:

- **Connecting with the Real World:** Emphasising the practical application of classroom concepts to real-life situations helps students relate to the material and stay engaged.
- **Fostering Student-Teacher Interaction:** Personalising the learning experience through regular one-on-one sessions (such as Personal Academic Tutor, or PAT, sessions) allows educators to understand students' needs and provide tailored support, encouraging a stronger connection to their studies.
- **Providing Opportunities for Practice:** Offering experiential learning activities like presentations, simulations, and group projects helps students apply knowledge in practical settings. These experiences improve teamwork and presentation skills, which are vital for future success.
- **Facilitating Two-Way Feedback:** Timely and constructive feedback on assignments helps students recognise their progress and areas for improvement. Engaging students in formative feedback sessions provides further guidance and fosters ongoing development.
- **Empathy and Flexibility:** Flexible deadlines and comprehensive support systems—such as wellbeing teams and academic support services—ensure that students with different needs and challenges can access the help they require, reducing disengagement due to stress or personal difficulties.
- **Investing in an Active Workforce:** Institutions should seek out experienced educators who can deliver high-quality instruction and provide students with robust academic support.
- **Utilising Technology:** Learning management systems (LMS) allow students to access lecture materials and recorded sessions at their convenience, supporting self-directed learning and enabling students to catch up if they miss classes.

Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

- **Assessing Learning Regularly:** Frequent assessments such as quizzes, tests, and exams keep students engaged by ensuring they actively participate and track their progress towards learning outcomes.

Key Recommendations for Educators

To further promote engagement, educators should:

- Cultivate an inclusive, welcoming environment where students feel comfortable participating.

- Strengthen student-teacher relationships by monitoring emotional and social well-being.
- Encourage creativity and inquiry by posing thought-provoking questions.
- Integrate technology into the classroom to enhance interactivity.
- Provide clear objectives and structured guidance to help students navigate their learning journey.
- Offer support to students who struggle with deadlines or face learning difficulties, ensuring everyone can participate fully in their education.

In conclusion, improving student engagement is essential for optimising learning outcomes and creating a positive higher education experience. By implementing these strategies, educators can cultivate a learning environment that fosters curiosity, participation, and long-term success for students.

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Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity in Higher Education

By Minas Morkous, Lecturer in Business & Health, FSB Digbeth

Inclusivity and diversity are essential to creating a higher education environment where every student has equal opportunities to succeed regardless of their background. As universities increasingly welcome students from diverse racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds, promoting inclusivity has become a central mission for institutions worldwide. Beyond ensuring fairness, fostering diversity enriches the learning experience, enhances social mobility, and prepares students to thrive in an interconnected world.

This article examines the importance of inclusivity and diversity in higher education, the challenges institutions face in promoting these values, and the strategies that can create more inclusive learning environments.

A diverse and inclusive educational setting encourages the exchange of multiple perspectives, enhancing intellectual development for all students. Research shows that exposure to a variety of viewpoints helps students develop stronger critical thinking skills and a broader understanding of the world. Classrooms that reflect a wide range of backgrounds and experiences enable students to challenge their preconceptions, engage in meaningful dialogue and cultivate empathy (HE Advance, 2023).

Higher education has long been a catalyst for social mobility. However, to fully realise this potential, access to education must be equitable. Inclusivity ensures that students from historically marginalised groups – such as those from low-income, first-generation, or minority backgrounds – receive the support they need to succeed. When institutions address barriers to access and achievement, they help break the cycle of inequality and create opportunities for all students to thrive (The Sutton trust, 2021).

Challenges to Inclusivity and Diversity in Higher Education

Despite progress, many universities continue to grapple with systemic inequalities. These can be seen in the underrepresentation of minority students and staff, as well as disparities in graduation rates between different demographic groups. Access to higher education is often influenced by factors like race, socioeconomic status, and geographic location, limiting opportunities for certain students.

A significant barrier to inclusivity in higher education is the rising cost of tuition and associated expenses. Students from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately affected by financial constraints, which can hinder their ability to enroll, persist, and complete their studies. While financial aid programmes are essential, they are often insufficient to cover the true costs of education, including accommodation, transport, and learning materials.

Even in diverse educational settings, implicit biases and discriminatory practices can undermine inclusivity. Students from underrepresented groups may encounter microaggressions, unequal treatment, or a lack of cultural awareness from peers, instructors, or institutional policies. These experiences can lead to feelings of isolation, diminishing students' sense of belonging and negatively impacting their academic performance.

Strategies for Promoting Inclusivity and Diversity

To promote inclusivity, institutions should adopt admissions practices that evaluate students beyond traditional academic metrics like standardised test scores. By considering life experiences, extracurricular involvement, leadership potential, and resilience, universities can create a more equitable admissions process that acknowledges the diverse routes students take to higher education.

Diversifying faculty and leadership is another key to promoting inclusivity. Universities should actively recruit and hire staff from underrepresented groups and provide opportunities for minority faculty to advance their careers. Mentorship programmes and leadership development initiatives can ensure that diverse candidates are supported in their professional growth (see FSB's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2024).

Inclusivity must be a core value embedded across campus life, from student organisations to institutional policies. Universities should foster open dialogue on diversity and inclusion by hosting workshops, conferences, and cultural events that celebrate the richness of diversity within their communities. Creating a campus culture that embraces differences and promotes mutual respect will help students feel a greater sense of belonging.

Promoting inclusivity and diversity in higher education is not only about addressing inequalities but also about creating a richer, more dynamic learning environment. By implementing strategies that ensure equal access, foster diverse perspectives, and create supportive campus cultures, higher education institutions can help all students succeed and prepare them to thrive in an increasingly diverse world.

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Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

Optimising Workplace Well-Being: The Role of Hydration and Nutrition in Enhancing Energy Levels Among Higher Education Employees

By Uzma Gilani, Lecturer in Health and Social Care Management, FSB Digbeth

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As part of my Master of Public Health (MPH) degree, I conducted a research study that delves into an essential, yet often overlooked aspect of workplace well-being: the impact of hydration and nutrition on daily performance and energy levels. Given FSB's presence in the higher education sector, sharing these findings on hydration and nutrition habits can offer valuable insights for everyone. The research reveals how proper hydration and balanced nutrition can directly impact energy levels, cognitive function, and overall productivity. By understanding these connections, FSB staff can adopt healthier routines, ultimately enhancing their performance and well-being in the workplace.

In modern higher education settings, many academic and administrative staff face significant mental and physical demands, making workplace well-being a critical issue. However, the extent of these challenges can vary depending on individual roles and responsibilities. One of the most understated aspects of well-being in these environments is the role of hydration and nutrition in maintaining energy levels (Maughan and Shirreffs, 2010). My research aimed to explore how hydration and nutrition habits impact overall energy levels among employees in higher education office environments, offering critical insights for improving workplace productivity and health.

The Importance of Hydration and Nutrition

Adequate hydration and balanced nutrition are essential for supporting cognitive function, physical performance, and overall well-being (Brecko & Grum, 2022). Chronic dehydration is associated with kidney stones, urinary tract infections (UTI), and hypertension (Nerbass et al., 2021). It can also lead to several health problems, including cognitive impairments and diminished workplace productivity (Kai et al., 2015). Similarly, poor nutrition contributes to nutrient deficiencies and chronic diseases such as obesity and cardiovascular issues (Godswill et al., 2020). While hydration and nutrition have been studied individually, their combined effects on energy levels in a workplace setting have received less attention, especially in higher education environments.

Research Approach

For my study I used a quantitative research method to examine the hydration and nutrition habits of staff in higher education offices, focusing on how these habits impact daily energy levels. Using structured survey questionnaires distributed to employees aged 18 to 65, the study assessed water intake, meal regularity, and perceived energy levels. The data were analysed through statistical methods, including chi-square analysis, to identify patterns and relationships between variables.

The study was grounded in the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and a custom Hydration and Nutrition Behavioural Model (HNMBM), which explored the interaction of personal, behavioural, and environmental factors in shaping hydration and nutrition habits. By integrating these theoretical frameworks, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how hydration and nutrition affect employee well-being and performance.

Key Findings

One of the most significant findings of my MPH research was there were no notable gender differences in the impact of dehydration on workplace performance. This aligns with previous studies, such as Stachenfeld (2008) and Maughan and Shirreffs (2010), which found that both men and women experience similar physical responses to dehydration. However, the absence of gender variation in meal habits contradicts earlier research, such as Guenther et al. (2013), which indicated that women generally had healthier eating patterns than men.

The study also discovered a shift in beverage consumption patterns among participants. While earlier research, like Vartanian et al. (2007), noted an increase in sugary drink consumption, this study found that most participants (92%) primarily consumed water, with smaller percentages opting for soda (21%) and milk (18%). This suggests a possible demographic shift or trend towards healthier hydration choices in higher education settings.

Despite widespread awareness of hydration guidelines—70% of participants knew the recommended daily water intake—there were inconsistencies in actual hydration behaviour. This discrepancy between knowledge and practice highlights the importance of self-efficacy and motivation, core principles of SCT, in driving behaviour change (Brecko et al., 2022). Many participants reported significant impacts of dehydration on their daily performance, underscoring the need for targeted workplace interventions to support hydration.

Nutrition and Energy Levels

The study also assessed the nutritional habits of participants, particularly meal frequency during working hours. The findings revealed that many employees (38%) consumed only two meals per day, with breakfast being the most commonly skipped meal (50%). This aligns with Rampersaud et al. (2005), who found that skipping breakfast is common among adults and is associated with decreased cognitive and physical performance (Defeyter & Russo, 2013).

Importantly, there was a positive correlation between consistent meal intake and higher energy levels. Employees who consumed regular meals reported better energy levels, reaffirming the critical role of proper nutrition in maintaining workplace productivity (Smith et al., 2010). The consistency of meal patterns, particularly breakfast consumption, emerged as a crucial factor in supporting cognitive function and daily energy levels.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This research has several practical implications for workplace policy and employee well-being programmes. First, there is a clear need for employers in higher education to implement strategies that encourage consistent hydration and nutrition habits. These could include providing easy access to water stations, offering healthy snack options, and promoting regular breaks during the workday.

Moreover, workplaces should consider introducing wellness programmes that address both hydration and nutrition, offering personalised guidance to staff on maintaining healthy habits, workshops, seminars, and incentives like discounts on healthy cafeteria options can be powerful tools in promoting these behaviours. Given the high levels of awareness but low levels of adherence to hydration and nutrition recommendations, practical interventions are necessary to bridge this gap.

Uzma Gilani, Lecturer in Health and Social Care Management at FSB Digbeth advocates the importance of hydration awareness. Photo: FSB.

FSB's Commitment to Employee Well-being

There are clear implications for policy and practice in improving workplace hydration and nutrition in higher education settings. However, I would like to acknowledge that FSB already supports employee well-being through several initiatives. Water dispensers are available throughout FSB, ensuring easy access to hydration for staff. Additionally, FSB offers the Vitality Programme, which provides comprehensive health benefits, including support for maintaining healthy habits.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study offers valuable insights, it also highlights areas that require further exploration. Future research should investigate individual variability in hydration needs and the factors that influence these differences. Additionally, longitudinal studies could assess the long-term effects of consistent hydration and nutrition on overall performance and health.

Another potential area for exploration is the combined impact of meal frequency and hydration on both physical and cognitive performance. By understanding how these factors interact,

researchers can develop more personalised and effective guidelines for workplace well-being.

Practical Steps for Enhancing Hydration and Nutrition at FSB

As part of fostering a healthier workplace environment, FSB could reinforce the importance of hydration by creating awareness initiatives, such as posters reminding staff to drink at least 6-8 glasses of water daily. Additionally, FSB could enhance the visibility of its Vitality programme and other health-related resources. By promoting these practices, FSB can continue to support staff well-being and encourage habits that improve both health and productivity.

Conclusion

My MPH study reinforces the critical role that hydration and nutrition play in maintaining energy levels and cognitive function in higher education office settings. Despite widespread awareness of hydration guidelines, inconsistent practices persist, highlighting the need for targeted interventions that promote practical behaviour change. By integrating these findings into workplace policies and public health strategies, employers can improve the well-being and productivity of their staff. Further research will continue to enhance our understanding of optimal hydration and nutrition practices, ultimately contributing to healthier, more productive workplaces.

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CULTURAL INCLUSIVITY: EXPLORING DIVERSITY AS A CATALYST FOR ORGANISATIONAL GROWTH

By Mercy Oladimeji, Lecturer in Business Management, FSB Digbeth Campus

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The vision behind cultural inclusivity is one where employees, regardless of their background, feel valued, included and empowered to contribute their quotas to the development of an organisation. This article attempts to analyse the relationship between cultural inclusivity and organisational growth, exploring the benefits and opportunities associated with creating an environment of inclusivity in the context of employment.

Organisations have seized this strategy for its immense benefits. Garrick et al. (2024) point out that cultural inclusivity is not just a moral obligation; instead, it is a strategic necessity in today's globalised world that continually witnesses the rise in immigration, technological innovation, flattened corporate hierarchies and increased minority groups' participation which have compelled organisations to rethink their values, management practices and priorities. Igboanugo et al. (2022) warn that organisations that fail to consider this risk losing optimum performance and competitiveness.

Management or organisational leaders can create an all-encompassing work environment where employees feel valued and are given equal opportunities to thrive. FSB has recognised this imperative of inclusivity through its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) policy (FSB, 2024). However, implementing an inclusive environment is not without challenges – and examining them is key.

The Business Case for Cultural Inclusivity

It must be pointed out that a culturally inclusive workplace goes beyond merely acknowledging diversity; it actively leverages it to enhance creativity, innovation, and overall business performance. Take the case of FSB for instance, through our EDI policy, the school ensures accessibility to all employees regardless of background or ideology (Ahl & Marlow, 2021). The policy includes practical and conscious measures in recruitment, payment, training and development, inclusive leadership training, and creating employee resource groups that cater to diverse, underrepresented groups (FSB, 2024).

But here is the catch: the success of these initiatives hinges on genuine commitment. That is, it is one thing to have policies in place; it is another to truly embrace inclusivity. D'Urso et al. (2023) warn that if underlying prejudices are not addressed, the inspiration to work together declines, and this has deleterious consequences on organisational output. For instance, cultural stereotypes like the assumptions that 'Americans' are confident, 'Africans' are hardworking, or 'Asians' are intelligent may pose a divisive mechanism in the place of work (see Daclan, 2022).

If your genuine intention to perform a serious job is misinterpreted as being "unnecessarily hardworking," it can negatively affect team dynamics and overall output. This shows how perceptions of work ethic, when misunderstood, can reduce productivity and morale. The key takeaway is that true inclusivity when embraced, doesn't just boost motivation, it transforms the organisation into one that is adaptable, efficient,

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and capable of higher productivity by ensuring that everyone's efforts are respected. Thus, inclusivity creates a culture where diverse work styles thrive.

Diversity as a Catalyst for Innovation

The question here is: How does diversity impact innovation? Cultural Inclusivity in an organisation offers a wealth of perspectives and innovation, as individuals from different backgrounds bring unique insights and approaches to problem-solving (Eddington et al., 2020). However, there is a flip side. Adamson et al. (2021) write that trying to absorb everyone's perspectives in an organisation poses a danger of watered-down ideas or decision-making paralysis. They express further that this can slow the innovation process as the need to reach an agreement may overshadow the pursuit of bold, disruptive ideas. The challenge here, then, is to strike a balance. What to do? An inclusive organisation must put in place strong leadership and a clear line of communication that will ensure that cultural Inclusivity leads to innovative outcomes.

Unlocking the Power of Diversity

To truly unlock the power of diversity, organisations need to create an inclusive culture that values and leverages diverse perspectives (Ely and Thomas, 2022). This requires actively seeking out and addressing biases, providing training and development opportunities to enhance efficiency and cultural competence, and establishing a sense of belonging among all employees (Hewlett, et al., 2020). Initiatives such as diversity training programmess, mentorship schemes, and employee resource groups are ways to create an inclusive culture (Catalyst, 2020).

Fairfield School of Business, in alignment with its inclusivity goal, ensures that equal consideration is given to qualified applicants during the recruitment process and does not discriminate unlawfully. The criterion for selection relates only to the requirements of the job, relevant qualifications, and relevant experience. FSB has promoted best practice in recruitment and selection process. It has continuously developed its recruitment and selection practices to allow innovative ideas and approaches to be incorporated.

Measuring and Evaluating Inclusivity

How do we know if cultural inclusivity is working? From time to time, appraisals must be taken to ascertain the efficiency of cultural inclusivity practices in an organisation, notably to identify areas where improvement is required. FSB, for instance, uses numerous metrics to assess its EDI success, including employee engagement surveys, diversity representation in leadership roles, and the turnover rate among minority groups. However, numbers do not always tell the whole story. Instead, interviews and focus groups are qualitative measures that may provide a deeper understanding of employees' experience and perception of inclusivity in an organisation. Better yet, quantitative data should be mixed with qualitative data to actualise the level of inclusive culture in an organisation and how it can improve. Montenegro et al. (2022) affirm that high levels of diversity might just be a quota-driven approach,

which may not necessarily translate to a genuinely inclusive culture.

Conclusion

The prospects, potentials and possibilities that come with cultural inclusivity are limitless. By creating a culture of inclusivity, as seen with FSB, organisations can expand their creative horizons, leading to definite exponential growth in innovative concepts and creativity. On the other hand, organisations that fail to prioritise inclusivity risk falling behind, not only in terms of innovation and competitiveness but also in their ability to attract and retain top talent. Moreover, in today's socially conscious business climate, failure to demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity and inclusion may attract legal repercussions that threaten the reputations of organisations. Thus, cultural inclusivity has gone beyond moral imperative to a business necessity that demands continuous effort and attention.

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The Hybrid working model: Investigating the impact of work-life balance on staff wellbeing.

By Ayah Tarek Moneeb, Lecturer in Business Management and Module Lead, FSB Digbeth

Image: The impact of hybrid working on work-life balance- developed by author using Open AI (Open AI, 2024)

The human resources department within any organisation is responsible for managing all the functions related to the business human resources. It involves numerous employee's management aspects such as talent management, recruitment and selection, performance management, employee relationship management, compensation and benefits, and training and development (Widarni and Bawono, 2020). On the other hand, the modern human resources management function is more concerned with the strategic aspect, which considers the long-term impact of HR policies and practices on staff development (Dessler, 2013). Human resources management is undoubtedly crucial for business sustainable performance, this should be implemented fairly to promote the organisation's values and culture (Sims and Bias, 2021). Therefore, managing the employees is not only a day-to-day operational activity. However, it is a continuous staff management and development process, aligning staff individual goals with the whole entity's strategic mission and achievements. This is supported by the soft HRM theory developed by Michael Beer in 1984, where staff motivation, development, and engagement are prioritised, encouraging long-term commitment and aligning employees own goals with organisational objectives (Storey, 1987). A recent report published by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has shown that the human resources profession has flourished dramatically, with almost a fifty percent increase in the HR workforce during the last ten years (Jackson, 2022).

Staff benefits can be defined as the non-monetary compensation offered to employees rather than their wages, salaries, or bonuses. It mainly aims to increase staff satisfaction, promote their well-being, and accordingly enhance their retention rates (Armstrong and Taylor, 2020). Benefits can be categorised into statutory and discretionary. In the UK, paid annual leaves, pensions, and sick pay (SSP –Statutory Sick Pay) are among the benefits granted to employees by law (GOV.UK, 2024). However, the voluntary benefits might entail other procedures, such as private health insurance, flexible work schedules, or profit shares (Dessler, 2013; Taylor, 2022; Armstrong and Taylor, 2020).

According to the CIPD (2023), the hybrid working patterns have been widely implemented by most of the organisations in the UK after the pandemic, where employees can fulfil their working hours either on-prem or at home. Work-from-home, as a flexible working arrangement has demonstrated a significant impact on staff retention, this was supported by a study conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), where flexible working schemes including remote work, significantly improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover rates. Accordingly, employees who have access to such benefits are more likely to feel valued and supported by their managers, fostering loyalty and long-term commitment to the organisation itself (CIPD, 2023). Another report by McKinsey & Company (2022) found that more than half of employees surveyed globally would consider leaving their jobs if remote work options were eliminated, underscoring its importance in retaining modern, diverse workforces. In the UK, the work-from-home phenomenal is particularly relevant due to the growing demand for flexible and hybrid work environments after the widespread of COVID-19 virus. Therefore, the impact of work-from-home on the strategic human resources management is becoming debatable among scholars and researchers.

Work-from-home (WFH) patterns have a crucial impact on staff well-being, supported by theoretical frameworks like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and empirical evidence. According to Maslow (1943), meeting psychological and safety needs is vital for overall human well-being. WFH facilitates these by allowing employees to work in a safe, familiar environment while reducing stressors like long travels, which often compromise work-life balance. Statistical evidence corroborates these theoretical insights. A report by Deloitte (2023) highlights that 77% of employees working remotely report improved mental health due to better control over their work environment and schedules. Similarly, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) found that remote workers experience a 36% reduction in work-related stress compared to those in traditional office settings (ONS, 2022). Furthermore, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model posits that reducing workplace demands, such as rigid schedules and interpersonal conflicts, while increasing resources like autonomy and flexibility, positively impacts employee engagement and reduces burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). WFH aligns with this by offering autonomy, a critical resource that fosters job satisfaction. Nonetheless, challenges remain. The ONS (2022) also noted that remote workers might face social isolation, emphasizing the need for strategies that maintain connectedness. Balancing the benefits of WFH with potential drawbacks is key to optimizing its impact on well-being. However, engaging staff while they are working from home addresses several challenges. One significant issue is maintaining effective communication and collaboration, as remote teams may struggle with reduced face-to-face interaction and misunderstandings (Schiemann, 2021). Additionally, managing employee performance can be more difficult without direct supervision, which may lead to concerns about productivity and accountability (Kniffin et al., 2020). Furthermore, maintaining team cohesion and morale remotely requires extra effort from managers to foster a sense of connection and engagement, particularly in large or dispersed teams (Gartner, 2022). These complexities require strategic planning and adaptive leadership. Moreover, using digital tools like MS Teams, One Drive, or Google meets can help the organisations managing their teams virtually.

In conclusion, the integration of work-from-home (WFH) benefit into Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) is a crucial step in enhancing both employee well-being and organizational success. By offering flexibility, autonomy, and a better work-life balance, WFH contributes significantly to employee satisfaction, mental health, and overall job engagement. SHRM practices that focus on the well-being of employees through remote work initiatives not only improve staff retention but also foster a more productive and loyal workforce. However, it is essential for organizations to address potential challenges, such as social isolation, by creating supportive virtual environments and maintaining

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effective communication. Furthermore, the proper leadership style that make the best use of the current technological developments would add a value for virtual teams' management. Ultimately, when executed strategically, WFH policies can drive long-term organisational growth while ensuring employees feel valued and supported in their work environments.

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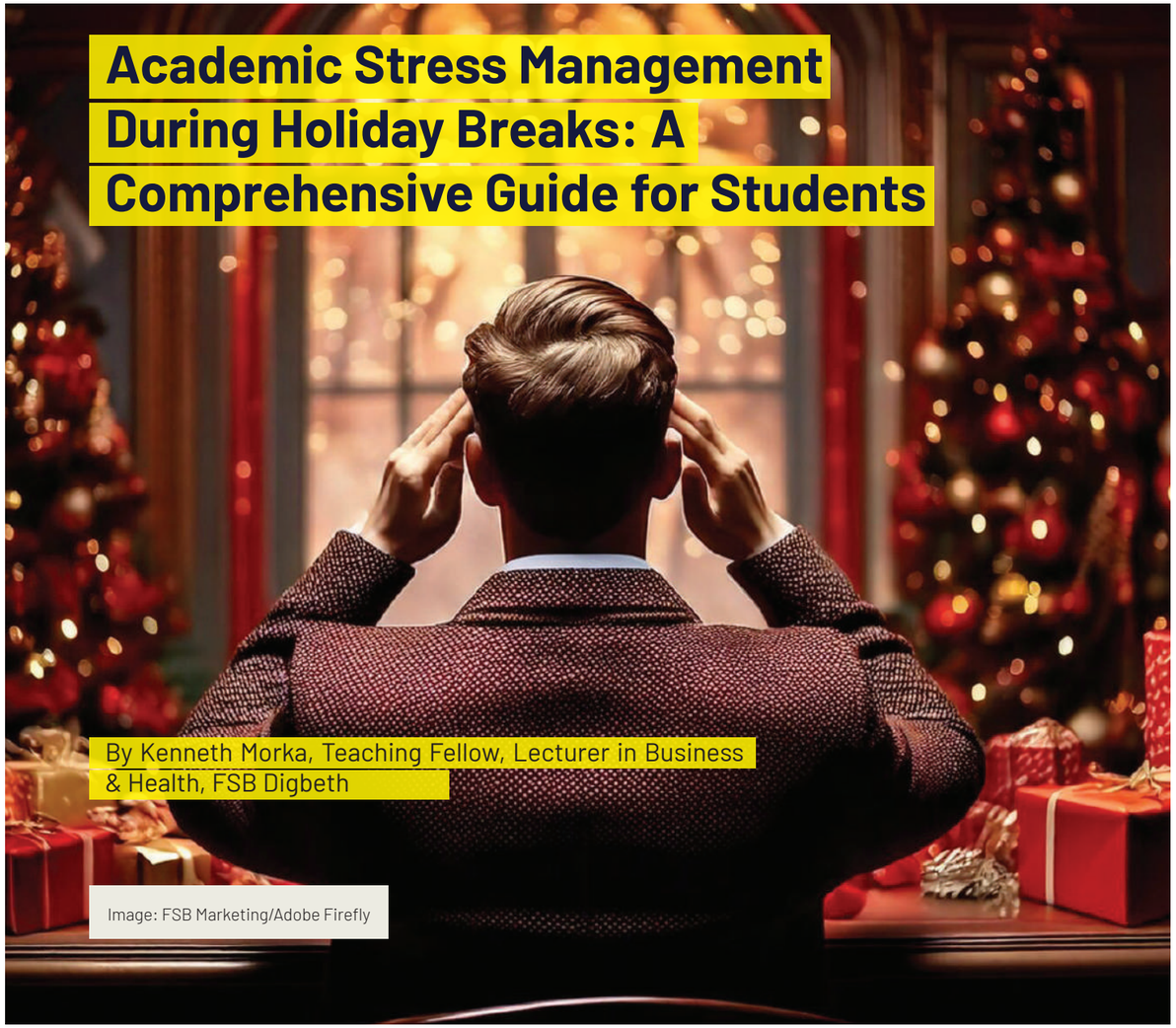

Academic Stress Management During Holiday Breaks: A Comprehensive Guide for Students

By Kenneth Morka, Teaching Fellow, Lecturer in Business & Health, FSB Digbeth

Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

Introduction

Understanding Holiday Academic Stress

The Dual Pressure Phenomenon

The holiday season, while festive and joyful, can be a particularly challenging time for students. The intersection of academic responsibilities and seasonal celebrations often creates a unique psychological landscape filled with both opportunities and potential stressors (Moen et al., 2016; Buchanan, 2018). The melding of academic pursuits and parental responsibilities poses unique obstacles for adult learners, especially during holiday seasons. This article explores evidence-based strategies for managing academic stress while maintaining familial obligations and personal well-being (Rodriguez & Lee, 2017). This comprehensive guide aims to provide students with practical strategies for managing academic stress, maintaining mental health, and effectively preparing for the upcoming academic term during holiday breaks.

Stress Management Perspectives

Research indicates that parent-students experience significantly higher stress levels compared to traditional students. Buchanan (2018) identified three primary stress domains:

1. Academic performance pressure
2. Childcare responsibilities
3. Time management challenges

Common Stress Triggers for Students: A Comprehensive Analysis

The landscape of academic stress for students is particularly complex, characterised by multifaceted psychological and practical challenges. Incomplete academic tasks represent a persistent source of anxiety, as unfinished projects and pending assignments create a constant underlying tension. These lingering academic responsibilities cast a metaphorical shadow over holiday breaks, preventing full relaxation and generating persistent cognitive load. The anticipation of upcoming examinations further intensifies this stress, with students experiencing heightened performance anxiety as the prospect of challenging tests looms on the horizon. This examination-related stress is compounded by the dual pressures of maintaining academic excellence while managing familial

Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

responsibilities. Performance anxiety emerges as a critical psychological mechanism, where students grapple with internal expectations and external academic standards, often questioning their capability to balance multiple life domains effectively.

The subtle dance of family expectations adds another dimension of complication, as students navigate the delicate balance between personal academic goals and familial interactions. Parents-students must negotiate their educational goals within the context of family dynamics, managing potential conflicts between study time and family commitments. This negotiation process can generate significant emotional and psychological strain, as students strive to meet academic requirements while simultaneously fulfilling parental and familial roles. The intersectionality of these stress triggers creates a unique psychological landscape where academic achievement, personal growth, and family responsibilities converge, demanding exceptional adaptive strategies and emotional resilience from parent-students (Edwards & Goodwin, 2017; Darling & Turkki, 2020).

Understanding Stress Management for Student-Parents

Student-parents face unique challenges in balancing their education and family responsibilities. Gonzalez and Martinez (2019) developed a helpful approach to make this journey easier by focusing on three key areas: flexible learning environments, social support systems, and adaptive coping mechanisms (Chen & Wagner, 2018; Feinstein & Mettetal, 2018).

The first area is creating flexible learning environments. Flexible learning environments represent a transformative approach to education that acknowledges the complex lives of modern students, particularly those balancing academic pursuits with family responsibilities. This flexibility manifests in multiple ways. Imagine online classes that you can attend at night after the kids are asleep, or courses that let you submit assignments with more flexible deadlines. The transformation usually begins in the classroom itself. Educators are encouraged to implement innovative pedagogical strategies that create dynamic, engaging learning environments. By fostering excitement and genuine interest in course content, lecturers can inspire students to continue their learning beyond formal class hours, seamlessly integrating academic exploration into their personal time and home spaces.

Drawing from Dr. Qiao's, an English Academic Purposes (EAP) Tutor at FSB Leicester, research on Willingness to Communicate (WTC), we can extend the concept of flexible learning environments to address the unique challenges of student-parents. As Dr. Qiao eloquently states, "When students understand their unwillingness to communicate, they are better equipped to engage actively. This is not just a linguistic issue! It is about cultivating confidence and a sense of belonging in the classroom. Universities and Colleges are increasingly using technology to help students learn in ways that fit their complicated schedules. This aligns perfectly with Dr. Qiao's philosophy that education should create environments "where students feel safe to speak – rather than just be capable to speak (Mehta, 2024).

Social support systems form the second crucial component. This is not just about academic help – it is about creating a network that understands and supports student-parents. Universities are developing special counseling services, mentorship programs, and support groups specifically for parents pursuing their education. These support systems help students connect with others facing similar challenges, share experiences, and find practical solutions to balancing family and studies.

Adaptive coping mechanisms are the third key area. This is all about developing personal strategies to manage stress and stay motivated. It includes learning stress management techniques, practicing mindfulness, and developing skills to prioritize tasks effectively. The goal is to help student-parents build emotional resilience and develop practical tools to handle the pressures of studying while raising a family.

The most important thing to understand is that there's no perfect, one-size-fits-all solution. Every student-parent's situation is unique. The model suggests creating a personalized approach that adapts to individual needs, family situations, and academic goals.

Research shows that when student-parents use these strategies, they experience significant benefits. Many reports feeling less stressed, performing better academically, and finding a more comfortable balance between their studies and family life.

The ultimate message is simple: With the right support, strategies, and mindset, student-parents can successfully pursue their educational goals without sacrificing their family responsibilities or personal well-being.

Practical Implementation Plan for Parent-Students

The practical implementation plan emphasizes personalized strategies that adapt to individual needs, family situations, and academic goals (Lundberg, 2019). Research shows that when student-parents use these strategies, they experience significant benefits, including reduced stress and improved academic performance (Marcus & Reisel, 2020).

Preparation Phase

- Develop comprehensive family calendar
- Identify potential study windows
- Communicate academic goals with family; Discuss study requirements with family

Study Integration

- Create child-friendly study spaces
- Establish consistent routines
- Implement flexible learning strategies; Distribute learning across multiple shorter sessions
- **Learn to Say No:** Politely decline overwhelming social commitments

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Self-Care Commitment

- Regular mental health check-ins
- Physical activity integration
- Stress management techniques

Conclusion

The academic journey of student-parents represents a remarkable intersection of personal ambition, family commitment, and educational excellence. Our comprehensive analysis reveals that success is not about achieving perfection, but about developing adaptive strategies, cultivating resilience, and creating supportive ecosystems that recognize the unique challenges these individuals face (Goldrick-Rab, 2016).

Research consistently demonstrates that student-parents possess extraordinary capabilities. They bring rich life experiences, exceptional time management skills, and profound motivation to their academic pursuits. However, these strengths are often accompanied by complex stress dynamics that require nuanced, holistic support approaches (Carter and Williams, 2021).

The strategies explored – from flexible learning environments to robust social support systems and adaptive coping mechanisms – are not merely theoretical constructs. They represent practical pathways for institutional transformation and individual empowerment. Colleges like Fairfield School of Business, policymakers, and educational institutions must continue evolving to create more inclusive, flexible academic environments that honor the multifaceted lives of student-parents (Kasworm, 2018).

Key takeaways include:

- Stress is not an insurmountable barrier but a manageable challenge
- Technology and adaptive learning can significantly reduce academic pressure
- Social support is crucial for academic and personal success
- Individual resilience can be systematically developed and strengthened

As our understanding of non-traditional students continues to evolve, we must remain committed to recognising and addressing their unique needs. The student-parent journey is not just an academic pursuit but a profound testament to human potential, demonstrating how determination, support, and strategic planning can transform educational experiences.

The future of higher education lies in embracing diversity, flexibility, and personalized learning approaches. By continuing to research, understand, and support student-parents, we contribute to a more inclusive, dynamic educational landscape that values every individual's potential.

Final Reflection: Every student-parent's journey is a powerful narrative of courage, adaptability, and transformative learning.

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Human Rights A Universal Standard, NOT a Selective Privilege

By Moslem Boushehrian, Lecturer in Criminology * Fairfield School of Business, Croydon Campus

In a world where geopolitical tensions dominate headlines, the importance of Human Rights as a universal and uncompromising principle must remain central to our collective conscience. Yet, reality paints a different picture, one where Human Rights are applied selectively, shaped by power, politics, and the ability to control the narrative.

The prosecution of a former Syrian prison officer for delivering torture to Syrian prisoners, as highlighted in a BBC report (BBC News, 2024), stands as a rare instance of accountability. It is significant not because justice was served but because it underscores the glaring contrast in how responsibility is assigned. The United States, during its War on Terror, engaged in the systematic torture of detainees in facilities such as Guantánamo Bay and CIA black sites. Practices like waterboarding, stress positions, and prolonged isolation were rebranded as "enhanced interrogation methods" to evade accountability (Senate Intelligence Committee, 2014). However, changing the name did not change the reality: these actions were, and remain, violations of international law (UN Human Rights Council, 2020; International Criminal Court, 2015).

The tragedy is not confined to acts of torture but extends to the lives of those fleeing its

consequences. Conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan forced millions to seek refuge in safer lands. Yet, their arrival in Europe was met with suspicion, exclusion, and rhetoric that stemmed from a deeper prejudice. For example, refugees from the Middle East were described by some European leaders as "not looking like us" (Bayoumi, 2022) or as culturally incompatible, dismissing their suffering as irrelevant or undeserving (Amnesty International, 2016). Policies were tightened, borders hardened, and inflammatory rhetoric further excluded those fleeing wars in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Empathy was reserved for those seen as "familiar," deepening divisions and reinforcing narratives of cultural incompatibility.

Contrast this with the response to Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war in 2022. Doors were flung open, visas expedited, and humanitarian efforts celebrated as a moral obligation. While the compassion shown to Ukrainians is commendable, the disparity reveals a deeply uncomfortable truth: human worth is too often viewed through the lens of race, geography, and identity (UNHCR, 2022). The suffering of Syrians, Iraqis, and Afghans is no less valid, yet their humanity was undermined by a narrative that framed them as other.

The same selective application of Human Rights manifests in responses to global conflicts. The Russian invasion of Ukraine was met with swift and decisive condemnation from Western governments. Sanctions were imposed, military aid was provided, and Russia's actions were denounced as war crimes (United Nations, 2022). Yet, in the case of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, a different logic prevails. Despite overwhelming evidence of civilian suffering, including the destruction of entire families, hospitals, and vital infrastructure, the response has been muted. Arms sales continue, calls for a ceasefire are delayed, and the devastation is framed as an exercise of Israel's "right to self-defence" (Amnesty International, 2024).

A recent 2024 Amnesty International report rejects this framing outright, stating that Israel's actions amount to genocide under international law (Amnesty International, 2024). The report highlights the deliberate and disproportionate targeting of civilians, collective punishment, and violations that strip people of their right to exist with dignity. And yet, Western leaders continue to echo the narrative of self-defence, undermining their own professed commitment to Human Rights. The mantra "Never Again," used to honour the victims of the Holocaust, rings hollow when genocide unfolds before our eyes, and those who raise their voices are dismissed and labelled as terrorist sympathisers, extremists, or antisemitic, and unqualified to judge.

This selective accountability diminishes the very foundation of Human Rights. The danger lies not just in taking sides but in allowing the humanity of one group to be erased in order to justify war, violence, or exclusion. Human Rights are not, and must never be, about "us vs. them," the West vs. the East, or the powerful vs. the powerless. They are about ensuring that every individual, regardless of nationality, religion, or race, is recognised as inherently deserving of dignity, protection, and justice.

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To lose sight of this truth is to lose our shared humanity. We cannot allow Human Rights to be dictated by convenience, power, or geopolitical alliances. If we uphold them only when it suits our interests, then we have already failed. The responsibility lies with all of us, as academics, as citizens, and as global communities, to challenge hypocrisy, resist selective narratives, and demand accountability wherever injustice occurs.

If we lose sight of Human Rights, we lose everything, not just for the oppressed but for humanity itself.

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Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

The Role of AI and Robotics in Revolutionising Marketing: A Business Perspective

By Maida Qutub, Business Lecturer, FSB Digbeth

In recent years, people have witnessed the swift development of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, which have changed industries and business basics. The marketing department, specifically the Digital Marketing Section, is the most affected field, as advanced technologies such as AI and robotics are revolutionising how companies approach customers, individualise experiences and manage logistical processes (Sharma et al., 2023). As a business lecturer, I understand that these technologically disruptive innovations must be fully comprehended to equip future business professionals with an awareness of the shifting landscape. In this article, I discuss the importance of AI and robots in marketing and their potential impact on companies, customers, and marketing tactics.

Marketing AI and Robotics Ecosystem: State of the Art

AI and robotics are still leading topics in science fiction; however, their utilisation in marketing brings results that are visible now. In machine learning, data analysis, and pattern recognition, AI is used extensively in everything from managing customer relations to advertising and generating content (see Grewal et al., 2020). Robotics, on the other hand, deals with using machines that can operate independently without the help of any human intervention. Whereas AI integration in marketing is defined mainly through data and data-driven machine learning algorithms regarding consumer behaviour; robotics applies to tangible interactions with customers, product and service delivery, and shopping (Singh et al., 2024). Collectively, many of these technologies are revolutionising the way marketers and their audiences communicate and how customer interaction is handled in commerce.

Advertising and Content Marketing

Predictive analysis allows for creating a unique campaign for each consumer, depending on their activity. For instance, Google Ads and Facebook Ads employ AI to monitor user behaviour and display ads corresponding to user preferences (Vlačić et al., 2021). The difference between mass advertising and targeted advertising adds value to the customer experience and makes ROI significantly better for the companies. Natural language processing (NLP) is used by AI for writing blogs, product descriptions, and social media content using a set of instructions (Prasanth et al., 2023). This leads to a significantly scalable approach to content maintenance but still requires supervision to prevent churn and encourage proper creativity.

Customer Experience and Chatbots

With the advancement of AI, companies have incorporated intelligent and automated chatbots on their business websites for direct interaction with clients. These chatbots are not only designed to answer typical questions but are also learning with each conversation and getting better with time. AI in customer service has the benefits of making companies available throughout and helping to cut costs (Abrokwah-Larbi and Awuku-Larbi, 2024). For instance, Alibaba, the world's leading e-commerce company, employs AI in customer care through chatbots. These bots can easily manage complex customer interactions by identifying previous queries and integrating

customer data. This level of AI integration ensures that customers feel their opinions and values are essential, even when dealing with an automated system.

Analytical Techniques for Consumer Behaviour Predictions

Another of the most valuable strengths of AI in marketing is the ability to forecast consumer behaviour. Predictive analytics entails using data to anticipate future behaviours of their customers, which would be very helpful in determining future demand for their products, packaging of marketing campaigns, and even inventory control. Online retailers like Netflix and Amazon are among the businesses that utilise the intelligence of predictive analytics to predict and recommend items of user interest (Singh et al., 2024). Thus, the sites improve users' attentiveness and satisfaction, increasing sales and customer loyalty.

Automation in Retail

The application of robotics is helping retail settings improve use value and productivity for their shoppers and clients. Stores using soft robotics, such as Pepper from SoftBank Robotics, are beginning to place robots to help customers with questions, suggest products to purchase, and even lead the customers around the store. Such robots can communicate with customers in different languages and offer them an alternative, individualised, environment-oriented approach to shopping (Vlačić et al., 2021). It cuts down on human employees' workload by responding to such questions and directing them to robots that can handle such tasks.

Delivery Drones and Autonomous Vehicles

In logistics, robotics has been embraced and is now revolutionising product delivery. Some companies using this technology include Amazon, UPS, and many others to transform their delivery services by making them deliver products to customers through drones. This will reduce the time spent providing the products (Prasanth et al., 2023). Self-driving cars are also being trialled for the potential to improve supply chain efficiency through the current evidence of error minimisation and labour saving.

Looking Ahead: The Implications of AI and Robotics in Future Marketing

AI and robotics in the marketing context are not just trends for the future but present changes that are unfolding and steadily shifting the paradigms of business models. To corporations, adopting these technologies provides an opportunity to enhance operational productivity, better understand the customers' needs, and personalise the consumers' experience. However, the future of the use of AI and robotics in the marketing of products shall depend on how companies and other business entities will approach challenges such as ethical dilemmas, sensitive data breaches and the digital divide.

Therefore, as a business lecturer, I need to equip future marketers with the proper knowledge and understanding of prospects and issues related to AI and robotics. These issues will be crucial to adapting to the challenging and dynamic business environment and realising the full potential of the various technologies as enablers of success while considering the needs of future marketers.

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The Psychology of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: A Brief Reflection on Challenges and Opportunities

By Gloria Cavicchioli, Academic Support Coordinator & Trainee Lecturer in Health at FSB Croydon, and Henry Qian, Trainee Lecturer in Business at FSB Croydon.

"The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles but to irrigate deserts" (Lewis, 2008).

When we think about education, it is easy to focus more on 'content' – what we teach and what students learn. Yet beneath the surface lies something far more influential, that is, the psychology of teaching and learning. Teachers and students alike can benefit from the growing recognition of educational psychology, as it provides a transformative framework to comprehend the complicated nature of education. Through understanding psychological principles, teachers can enhance their teaching and pedagogical approaches, while students are more likely to improve their learning strategies, leading to better outcomes for both. But how well are these principles being applied in our classrooms and are we doing enough to bridge the gap between theory and practice? This article will introduce three major concepts in educational psychology and will discuss and reflect on the current situations, desired outcomes, and how to reduce the gap for institutions, teachers, and students at FSB.

Cognitive Loads: The Limits of the Mind

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) emphasises the constraints of human working memory in information processing (see Kirschner, 2002). According to CLT, when learners encounter excessive knowledge simultaneously — commonly termed 'overloading' — they find it challenging to retain and comprehend it. This has substantial implications for teaching and learning in higher education, where intricate subjects are typically addressed in a dense, information-laden environment.

For teachers, the challenge is clear: how do we balance the need to deliver comprehensive content knowledge while ensuring students are not overwhelmed? Ideally, breaking down material into smaller, more digestible chunks is one solution. Yet, in practice, higher education often demands a rapid pace, pushing through vast amounts of information in limited time.

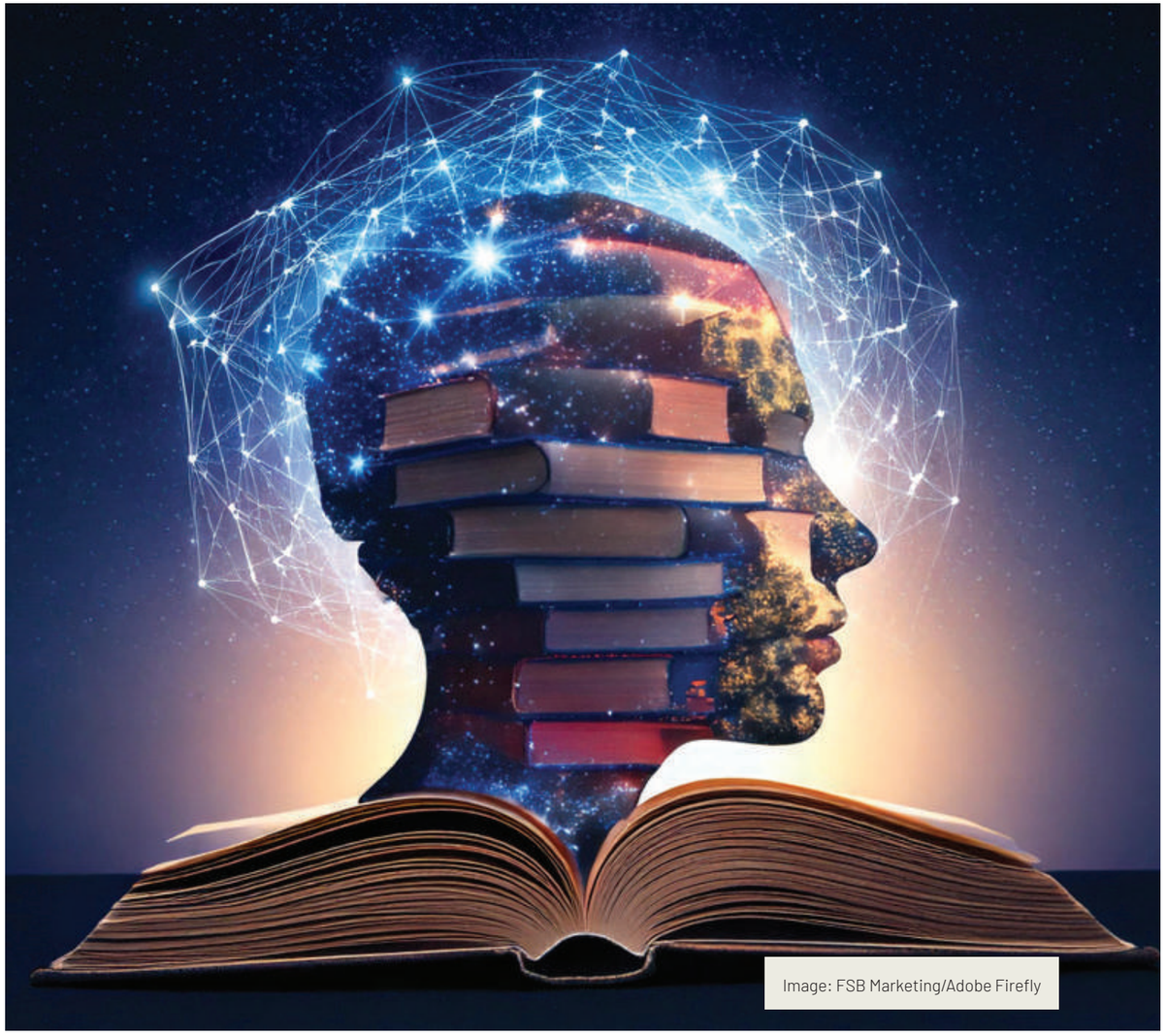

Image: FSB Marketing/Adobe Firefly

Moreover, the traditional lecture format of teaching and learning, widely accepted in numerous universities, may not be the most efficient method for managing cognitive load Andrews et al. (2011), for instance, argue that higher education students, particularly undergraduate students, could face numerous challenges in learning as the result of the passive learning pattern of traditional lectures. Active learning methodologies, including problem-solving exercises and discussions, assist in reducing cognitive overload by prompting students to apply and synthesise knowledge (Chi and Wylie, 2014). Despite evidence supporting such practices, they have not yet become mainstream for many higher education institutions. Should universities allocate greater resources towards training educators in pedagogical methods that correspond with cognitive load theory, or are they excessively dependent on conventional models that emphasise information dissemination rather than active participation?

For this question, it would be interesting to mention another example of IOE, University College London (UCL). For the institution's Master's level programme in education, majority of the lectures had been transformed into online pre-recorded sessions, while the teaching sessions were taken place in the format of seminars. It can be argued that seminars, as live interactive sessions, offer opportunities to reduce cognitive overload by enabling students to clarify, apply, and solidify their learning. The seminar style provides an environment for active learning, enabling students to participate in discussions, cooperate on problem-solving activities, and pose enquiries. This connection can markedly improve memory and comprehension by enabling students to engage with information more profoundly.

It should be acknowledged, however, that students who attend the seminars without thoroughly examining the pre-recorded content may encounter cognitive overload, hindering their ability to engage effectively in discussions or problem-solving activities. For this hybrid model to function well, a careful balance must be established between the volume of content provided online and the duration designated for active participation in seminars. Imposing excessive pre-recorded material on students while anticipating complete engagement in lectures may result in exhaustion and superficial comprehension. Institutions must evaluate if the distinction between asynchronous (pre-recorded) and synchronous (seminar) sessions fosters significant cognitive engagement or simply shifts the cognitive strain from one format to another.

Motivation: The Engine of Learning

Motivation is central to how and why students engage with their learning. Niemiec and Ryan (2009) argue that "people are innately curious, interested creatures who possess a natural love of learning and who desire to internalize the knowledge, customs, and values that surround them" (p.133). Nevertheless, under many circumstances, instructors or teachers tend to introduce external controls (e.g. supervision, monitoring, evaluation followed by reward and punishment), which usually lead to external pressure that could easily replace the positive emotions of learning (Niemiec and Ryan, 2009; Reeve, 2009). This typically results in the self-fulfilling prophecy that students lose interest in the material being taught and teachers are compelled to exert external control over students in order to facilitate learning.

It is therefore indeed important to introduce Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which divides motivation into two categories: 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' (Moran et al., 2012). Intrinsic motivation participates in learning for its inherent value, fuelled by curiosity, enthusiasm, or interest, whereas extrinsic motivation is driven by external incentives, including grades or prospective employment opportunities.

Teachers should prioritise the cultivation of intrinsic motivation in their pedagogic approaches. Studies consistently demonstrate that students driven by intrinsic motivation exhibit enhanced engagement with the subject matter, improved material retention, and greater long-term achievement (Benware and Deci, 1984; Gregory and Kaufeldt, 2015; Guthrie et al., 1996; Reeve and Lee, 2014). Nevertheless, the pressure on educators to fulfil performance goals, complete curricula, and prepare students for examinations frequently emphasises extrinsic motivation. To what extent are students motivated to investigate issues only for their intrinsic curiosity, rather than for assessment purposes? Although higher education institutions usually aim to cultivate a passion for learning, the inflexible nature of majority types of assessment can occasionally hinder this objective.

And most likely students have the task of manoeuvring through a system that (either intentionally or unintentionally) emphasises grades rather than education per se. Do students engage in study for comprehension or solely for the purpose of passing? This performance-driven methodology may suppress intellectual curiosity and deter risk-taking, as students might avoid challenging subjects in favour of simpler assignments that ensure better grades. Higher education institutions must critically reflect on the balance between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, prioritising the cultivation of intellectual curiosity above the incentivisation of academic success through external rewards.

Growth Mindset: The Power of Potential

Carol Dweck's concept of the 'growth mindset' has attracted much focus in the field of education (Yeager and Dweck, 2020). A growth mindset is the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through diligence and dedication, in contrast to a fixed mindset, which perceives abilities as inherent and inflexible. Studies indicate that students possessing a growth mindset exhibit more resilience when confronted with adversity and generally attain higher levels of success over time (Calo et al., 2022; Polirstok, 2017; Yeager and Dweck, 2012).

Fostering a growth mindset in students can be transformative for teachers. However, realising this in reality necessitates more than mere encouragement of effort. The manner in which teachers present feedback and assessments has a substantial impact on the perspectives of students. Are students evaluated solely on the basis of their performance, or are they commended for their effort and progress? In

higher education, which is characterised by intense competition and the importance of grades (or, say, the paper of the final degree), individuals may perceive their talents as unalterable, which can lead to a dread of failure and an inclination to avoid challenging assignments. This is particularly relevant in fields like statistics, mathematics, or science, where students may believe that they are inherently incapable and subsequently give up on their endeavours when they face obstacles.

To foster a growth mindset, teachers need to change the way they talk about success and failure. Sahagun et al. (2021) suggest that growth mindset systems work best when students feel a sense of autonomy, which helps them stay persistent in their efforts. Without this, these systems might undermine the performance of students who have already achieved relatively high level of success. Nevertheless, implementing the systems in environments reliant on standardised assessment presents challenges, as institutions may be hesitant to move away from traditional grading in favour of formative evaluation that highlight efforts and development. This evidently requires a fundamental, cultural transformation, perceiving learning as a continuous process that encourages intellectual resilience.

Encouraging a growth mindset involves framing challenges and failures as learning opportunities rather than reflections of fixed abilities. This can be difficult in the high-pressure environment of higher education, where grades and results dominate. Students may struggle to maintain motivation in challenging courses, especially when outcomes are uncertain. To support students in developing a growth-oriented mindset and resilience, institutions should provide empathetic feedback, academic skills training, and enhanced mental health support.

Call to Action

Higher education is at a crossroads. The traditional models of teaching and learning, which prioritise content delivery and assessment, are being challenged by insights from educational psychology. Motivation, cognitive load, and growth mindset are not just theoretical constructs but powerful tools that can transform how students learn and how educators teach.

At FSB, we acknowledge the rapid evolvement of the field, and we are continuously attempting to explore and discover the most suitable approaches to promote teaching and learning in light of our philosophies – to equip students with knowledge and skills that they can actually put into practice.

It is time for higher education institutions like us to critically reflect on their current practices. Are we truly fostering a love of learning, or are we preparing students to merely survive a system that prioritises grades over understanding? Teachers must take an active role in designing learning experiences that promote intrinsic motivation, manage cognitive load, and cultivate a growth mindset. This involves rethinking how content is delivered, how feedback is given, and how students are assessed.

Students, too, must embrace their role in this process. Take charge of your learning journey by developing strategies to manage information overload and by viewing challenges as opportunities for growth, not as obstacles to success.

The time for change is now.

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FSB Lecturer's Research Transforms Classroom Communication by Rethinking Student Silence

By Kunal Chan Mehta, FSB's Public Relations Manager

At his modest yet charismatic office at FSB Leicester, adorned with Confucius quotes, Dr Joe Ce Qiao – an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Tutor, reflects on his work with an air of intellectual curiosity. His passion lies in understanding "Willingness to Communicate (WTC)" — a research concept he has studied deeply since 2017. As he sits back, deep in thought, Dr Qiao explains that "classroom silence, reluctance and language anxiety" are key elements that are shaping WTC. He believes that the dynamics of communication within classrooms go beyond linguistic barriers and plunge (head first) into the psychological and social dimensions that influence students' behaviour.

Photo: Dr Joe Ce Qiao's own.

Dr Qiao's extensive research focuses on the often-overlooked particulars of student engagement. Silence, often viewed negatively in educational contexts, takes on a more profound meaning when seen through the research lens of WTC (see MacIntyre et al., 1998). He asks: "Whenever FSB students are silent, is it because they lack linguistic ability or is there something deeper?" His research has prompted academics to ask critical questions about how they manage classroom interactions. "Do I give enough comprehensible input before I encourage students to communicate? Have I addressed their anxiety or apprehensions?"

Dr Qiao believes that understanding and improving WTC can dramatically reshape educational outcomes across Higher Education. "When students understand their unwillingness to communicate, they are better equipped to engage actively. This is not just a linguistic issue! it is about cultivating confidence and a sense of belonging in the classroom." His personal experience highlights this belief. "During my degree, reading recommended journals and papers, even when I felt lazy, prepared me to engage. My WTC directly correlated with how well I knew the material."

His innovative term, ABU (Able But Unwilling to respond), further advances FSB's understanding of classroom dynamics. Unlike traditional models of WTC, ABU shifts the focus to the social and psychological factors behind student silence. Dr Qiao says, "For me, ABU allows us to see the students who are linguistically capable but remain silent due to fear of being judged or seen as a show-off." This rethinking of silence reveals the complex interplay between ability and behaviours – especially in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

Dr Zahra Fatima, Associate Dean at FSB Leicester, says: "Dr Qiao's work is reframing how we see student participation at FSB. By understanding the nuanced barriers to communication, we can create more inclusive and supportive learning environments."

Building on this, Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB, reflects on the broader significance of Dr Qiao's research: "This work not only enhances our

Dr Qiao's WTC Model. Source: FSB

academic framework but touches the very heart of what education should be— empowering every student to find their voice." Mr Zaidi continues, "Dr Qiao's concept of ABU is pivotal in helping our educators understand that silence in the classroom is more complex than we thought. It is about more than language — it's about identity, confidence and the broader social factors that shape how students interact."

Dr Qiao's work, therefore, extends beyond linguistic theory into the psychosocial realm and addresses how culture, identity and fear all shape educational experiences at FSB. "Some students are often caught between modesty and fear — fear of being seen as too ambitious or not capable enough," Dr Qiao explains.

For educators, this research offers transformative insights. Dr Qiao encourages teachers to go beyond assessing students' linguistic skills, instead focusing on the deeper social behaviours that silence can represent. "We must create classrooms where students feel safe to speak – rather than just be capable to speak," he asserts.

'This philosophy aligns with FSB's broader commitment to inclusivity and academic excellence, where student wellbeing is seen as central to intellectual growth,' added Mr Mohammed Zaidi, FSB's CEO. "Dr Qiao's work offers a very important exploration of the delicate balance between ability and willingness in classroom communication. His introduction of ABU presents a significant view of student reticence and opens doors to more compassionate, informed teaching practices. By challenging the conventional understanding of silence and encouraging critical thinking, Dr Qiao is not only reshaping academic research but transforming how we perceive and engage with students in higher education."

At FSB, Dr Qiao's research reminds us that education is not just about knowledge transfer — it's about building an environment where every student's voice, silent or otherwise, is valued.

For inquiries regarding this article, please feel free to contact the author, Kunal Chan Mehta, at kunal.mehta@fairfield.ac.

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Read more of Dr Qiao's work here:

Qiao C (2022) Methodological Issues in Approaching Confucianism and its Influence on Confucian Heritage Culture/CHC Learners' Reticence. Journal of Education and Social Policy, 9 (3). https://www.jespnet.com/; https://doi.org/10.30845/jesp.v9n3p1

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Transformative Workshop on Mastering Literature Reviews Held at FSB Digbeth

By Kunal Chan Mehta, FSB's Public Relations Manager

FSB Digbeth (Birmingham) hosted an invigorating literature review workshop led by Dr Mustafa Kasim, Senior Lecturer in Economics and Finance and MA and MBA Dissertation Lead – and Professor Mostafa AboElsoud from The British University in Egypt. The event was designed to empower FSB's MSc Digital Marketing (accredited by Ravensbourne University London) students with advanced research skills for literature reviews that act as a crucial component of scholarly research. Dr Kasim emphasised the nuances of literature reviews and highlighted their role as the backbone of academic and scientific inquiry at FSB.

The joint workshop underlined the critical importance of literature reviews in academic research demonstrating how they (1) provide a comprehensive overview of existing knowledge within a field, (2) contextualise new research by synthesising past findings and (3) identify gaps in the current understanding to drive future studies.

Additional focus was placed on the growing disparity in the quality of literature reviews, particularly in comparison to systematic reviews, which are now regarded as the gold standard for evidence synthesis. The session also discussed the evolution of literature reviews in the modern research landscape.

Professor AboElsoud and Dr Kasim with MSc Digital Marketing students at FSB Digbeth. Photo: FSB

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Dr Kasim states that a "literature review serves not only as an intellectual gateway into a topic but also as a platform of responsibility for the researcher. Done well, it can provide clarity, coherence and academic career direction. Done poorly, it risks perpetuating bias, presenting skewed conclusions and undermining the credibility of subsequent research."

Professor AboElsoud provided an in-depth exploration of how FSB students can uphold rigour by ensuring their literature reviews are comprehensive, unbiased and valuable to the academic community. Further focus was placed on utilising sophisticated academic tools such as Scopus and JSTOR to locate peer-reviewed and high-impact research. Professor AboElsoud added: "It was a privilege to guide the MSc Digital Marketing students in enhancing their understanding of the literature review chapter, an essential component of academic success."

Mr Mohammed Zaidi, CEO of FSB, praised the workshop, remarking: "A strong literature review is not just a stepping stone for academic research but a testament to our intellectual rigour and responsibility. This workshop is a reflection of FSB's commitment to nurturing our students who will challenge assumptions and uphold academic standards while contributing meaningfully to their fields."

Dr Kasim is planning a series of follow-up bespoke workshops focusing on advanced methodologies, critical appraisal techniques and integrating AI-driven tools for data analysis and source evaluation.

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