



THE ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Abstract Book

9th Annual International Symposium on
“Higher Education in a Global World”
7-10 July 2025, Athens, Greece

Edited by
Nick Linardopoulos & Afrodete Papanikou

2025

Abstracts
9th Annual International
Symposium on “Higher
Education in a Global World”
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Afrodete Papanikou

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Preface

This book includes the abstracts of all the papers presented at the 9th *Annual International Symposium on "Higher Education in a Global World"* (7-10 July 2025), organized by the Athens Institute.

A full conference program can be found before the relevant abstracts. In accordance with Athens Institute's Publication Policy, the papers presented during this conference will be considered for inclusion in one of Athens Institute's many publications only after a blind peer review process.

The purpose of this abstract book is to provide members of Athens Institute and other academics around the world with a resource through which they can discover colleagues and additional research relevant to their own work. This purpose is in congruence with the overall mission of the association. Athens Institute was established in 1995 as an independent academic organization with the mission to become a forum where academics and researchers from all over the world can meet to exchange ideas on their research and consider the future developments of their fields of study.

To facilitate the communication, a new references section includes all the abstract books published as part of this symposium (Table 1). I invite the readers to access these abstract books –these are available for free– and compare how the themes of the conference have evolved over the years. According to Athens Institute's mission, the presenters in these conferences are coming from many different countries, presenting various topics.

Table 1. *Publication of Books of Abstracts of Proceedings, 2017-2025*

Year	Papers	Countries	References
2025	26	13	Linardopoulos and Papanikou (2025)
2024	50	27	Linardopoulos and Gkounta (2024)
2023	26	13	Linardopoulos and Gkounta (2023)
2022	49	22	Linardopoulos and Gkounta (2022)
2021	25	17	Papanikos (2021)
2020	26	17	Papanikos (2020)
2019	35	16	Papanikos (2019)
2018	37	17	Papanikos (2018)
2017	29	13	Papanikos (2017)

It is our hope that through Athens Institute's conferences and publications, Athens will become a place where academics and researchers from all over the world can regularly meet to discuss the developments of their disciplines and present their work. Since 1995, Athens Institute has organized more than 400 international conferences and has published over

200 books. Academically, the institute is organized into 6 divisions and 37 units. Each unit organizes at least one annual conference and undertakes various small and large research projects.

For each of these events, the involvement of multiple parties is crucial. I would like to thank all the participants, the members of the organizing and academic committees, and most importantly the administration staff of Athens Institute for putting this symposium and its subsequent publications together.

Gregory T. Papanikos
President

Editors' Note

These abstracts provide a vital means to the dissemination of scholarly inquiry in the field of Higher Education. The breadth and depth of research approaches and topics represented in this book underscores the diversity of the symposium.

Athens Institute's mission is to bring together academics from all corners of the world in order to engage with each other, brainstorm, exchange ideas, be inspired by one another, and once they are back in their institutions and countries to implement what they have acquired. The *9th Annual International Symposium on "Higher Education in a Global World"* accomplished this goal by bringing together academics and scholars from 13 different countries (Canada, China, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Japan, Philippines, Poland, South Africa, UK, USA), which brought in the conference the perspectives of many different country approaches and realities in the field.

Publishing this book can help that spirit of engaged scholarship continue into the future. With our joint efforts, the next editions of this symposium will be even better. We hope that this abstract book as a whole will be both of interest and of value to the reading audience. May it be a stimulus for further research and the progress of the discipline.

Nick Linardopoulos & Afrodete Papanikou
Editors

9th Annual International Symposium on “Higher Education in a Global World”, 7-10 July 2025, Athens, Greece

Organizing & Scientific Committee

All Athens Institute’s conferences are organized by the Academic Council. This conference has been organized with the assistance of the following academic members of Athens Institute, who contributed by reviewing the submitted abstracts and papers.

1. Gregory T. Papanikos, President, The Athens Institute.
2. Sharon Claire Bolton, Vice President of Research, The Athens Institute ER & Emeritus Professor, The Management School, University of Stirling, Scotland.
3. David Philip Wick, Director, Arts, Humanities and Education Division, The Athens Institute & Retired Professor of History, Gordon College, USA.
4. Nick Linardopoulos, Head, Education Unit, The Athens Institute & Associate Teaching Professor & Public Speaking Course Coordinator, Rutgers University, USA.
5. John Spiridakis, Co-Editor, Athens Journal of Education & Chair and Professor, St. John University, USA.

FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM
9th Annual International Symposium on “Higher Education in a Global World”, 7-10 July 2025, Athens, Greece

PROGRAM

Monday 7 July 2025

07.45-08.30

Registration

08:30-09:00

Opening and Welcoming Remarks:

- **Gregory T. Papanikos, President, Athens Institute.**

09:00-10:30 Session 1

Moderator: Patricia Kardambikis, Assistant Professor, Robert Morris University, USA.

1. Leah Hollis, Associate Dean for Access, Equity and Inclusion, Professor, The Pennsylvania State University, USA.
Title: Ubuntu as Pathway to Resisting Workplace Bullying for American Black Faculty.
2. Lynda George, Professor Emeritus, Central Connecticut State University, USA.
Title: Nurturing Thoughtful Thinking with Socrates.
3. Comfort Pratt, Associate Professor, Texas Tech University, USA.
Title: Addressing the Teaching of the Stative So-Called Meaning Changing Preterites in Spanish.
4. Huiyuan Ye, Director, Research Center for Sustainable Development of Foreign Language Education, Shanghai Jian Qiao University, China.
Title: Interrelating Interdisciplinarity and Interculturality: A Meta-Analysis of the Web of Science Data.

10:30-12:00 Session 2

Moderator: Comfort Pratt, Associate Professor, Texas Tech University, USA.

1. Letian Xiong, Professor, Xiamen University, China.
Title: A Review of the Progress of Postdoctoral Research in China in the Past Forty Years – Visualization-Based Knowledge Mapping and Trend Analysis.
2. Jana Kvintova, Head, Faculty of Education, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic.
Hongyang Liu, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic.
Justyna Dockalova, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic.
Lucie Vachova, Palacký University Olomouc, Czech Republic.
Title: The Relationship between Parental Social Comparison and Intrinsic Learning Motivation: The Mediating Role of Rumination and the Moderating Role of Resilience.
3. Ke Yu, Associate Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.
Puleng Motshoane, Manager, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.
Title: What Makes a Good LMS: Do We All Agree?
4. Erwin Lacanlale, Vice President for Research, Innovation and Extension, Tarlac State University, Philippines.
Title: Teaching and Age-Related Problems of Senior Faculty Members in Selected Higher Educational Institutions.

12:00-13:30 Session 3

Moderator: Ke Yu, Associate Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

1. Martin Combrinck, Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa.
Title: Mentorship during Work Integrated Learning: Experiences and Expectations of Student-Teachers.

2. Kariena Strydom, Professor, Walter Sisulu University, South Africa.
Title: Mentorship: A Catalyst for Women’s Empowerment and Educational Transformation.
3. Alexandra Danial-Saad, Senior Lecturer, University of Haifa, Israel.
Tsvi Kuflik, Lecturer and Researcher, University of Haifa, Israel.
Title: Making Museums Inclusive: Empowering Students as Developer through Multidisciplinary Course.
4. Mark Minott, Lecturer, University of Hull, UK.
Title: The Reflective Approach to Teaching Practicum Debriefing (RATPD): Utilisation across Several Countries.

13:30-15:00 Session 4

Moderator: Erwin Lacanlale, Vice President for Research, Innovation and Extension, Tarlac State University, Philippines.

1. Patricia Kardambikis, Assistant Professor, Robert Morris University, USA.
Christopher Kardambikis, Associate Professor and Director of Studio Arts, George Mason University, USA.
Title: Enhancing Leadership in Education and Studio Arts through Online Learning: A Collaborative Approach.
2. Hilit Maizel, Lecturer, Western Galilee College, Israel.
Rony Tutian, Lecturer, Western Galilee College, Israel.
Maya Kalman-HaLevi, Lecturer, Western Galilee College, Israel.
Miri Sarid, Lecturer, Western Galilee College, Israel.
Title: Predicting AI Literacy and Dependency: The Role of Learning Strategies, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Adjustment to Higher Education.
3. Jingjing Liu, Master Student, Xiamen University, China.
Title: How Does Online Learning Affect College Students’ Deep Learning: The Mediating Effects of Learning Interest and Learning Engagement and the Moderating Effect of Family Income.
4. Lorenzo Manera, Tenure Track and Adjunct Professor, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Italy.
Title: AI-Generated Images and Their Impacts on Media Education in Higher Education.

15:00-16:00 Lunch

16:00-17:30 Session 5 – A Round-Table Discussion on *The Future of US and World Universities*

Moderator: Gregory T. Papanikos, President, The Athens Institute.

1. Leah Hollis, Professor & Associate Dean for Access, Equity and Inclusion, The Pennsylvania State University, USA.
Title: The Endangered University: Grappling with the Politicized, Anti-Intellectual Attack on American Higher Education.
 2. Monika Thadhani, Professor, School of Human Ecology, Design Studies, University of Wisconsin–Madison, USA.
Title: Sanctuary Cultures: How Universities Can Resist Political Repression and Protect Academic Freedom.
 3. John Liontas, Associate Professor, University of South Florida, USA.
Title: TESLA – Technology in Education and Second Language Acquisition.
 4. Burcu Ates, Professor, Sam Houston State University, USA.
Title: Reimagining U.S. Universities: Overcoming Political Challenges and Harnessing AI for Inclusive Teacher Education.
 5. Clara Germana Gonçalves, Head, [Architecture & Design Unit](#), Athens Institute & Invited Assistant Professor and Integrated Researcher at CIAUD – Research Center for Architecture, Urbanism, and Design, Lisbon School of Architecture, University of Lisbon, Portugal.
Title: Quickly Emerging Challenges in University Education: Old Habits in Question.
- Invited Interventions (≤3 minutes):

1. Ke Yu, Associate Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.
2. Hemmat Safwat, Deputy Director, Engineering Division, Athens Institute & Director, Energy Development Services Consultancy, Greece.
3. Marija Liudvika Drazdauskiene, Professor, Wszechnica Polska Academy of Applied Sciences in Warsaw, Poland.
4. Junpeng Fan, PhD Candidate, Keio University, Japan.
5. Eman H.E. Touliabah, PhD Candidate, Hokkaido University, Japan.

18:00-20:00 Session 6 – Visit Aristotle’s Lyceum

It requires pre-booking

20:30-22:30

Athenian Early Evening Symposium (Sequence of Events: Ongoing Academic Discussions, Dinner, Wine and Water, Music, Dance)

Tuesday 8 July 2025

09:30-11:00 Session 7

Moderator: Chara Gkioka, PhD Candidate, Lancaster University, UK.

1. Burcu Ates, Professor, Sam Houston State University, USA.
Francisco Usero-Gonzalez, Assistant Professor, Sam Houston State University, USA.
Helen Berg, Dean, College of Education, Sam Houston State University, USA.
Title: Navigating Language, Culture, and Identity: Pre-Service Teachers’ Reflections on a Transformative Study Abroad Experience in Costa Rica.
2. Derek Stovin, Director of Access Education, University of Winnipeg, Canada.
Title: The Intersection of Culture, Space, and Personal-Professional Identity Development: The Story of a Canadian Alternative Teacher Education Program.
3. Ali Khalil, Associate Professor, Community College of Rhode Island & Adjunct Professor, Arkansas State University, USA.
Title: Student Retention: The Impact of Advising Models on Student Success in the American Higher Education System.
4. Yifan Cao, Postgraduate Student, Harbin Engineering University, China.
Xiujuan Yang, Professor, Harbin Engineering University, China.
Title: A Review of Emotion Researches in the Context of AI Companionship: Current Status and Future Prospects.

11:00-12:30 Session 8

Moderator: Mark Minott, Lecturer, University of Hull, UK.

1. Sotiria Kouli, Assistant Professor, Community College of Philadelphia, USA.
Title: Breaking Silos: Collaborative Innovations in International Student Placement for Graduate Programs.
2. Wience Wing-sze Lai, Associate Head & Senior Lecturer, Division of Languages and Communication, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong.
Title: Enhancing Speech Awareness through Phonetic Training and Acoustic Analysis: A Mixed-Methods Study with Post-secondary Language Majors.
3. Dan Cui, Professor, Harbin Engineering University, China.
Hanhui Chen, Postgraduate Student, Harbin Engineering University, China.
Title: The Relationship Between Regional and National Cultures and Educational Development: An Educational Equity Perspective.

12:30-14:00 Session 9

Moderator: Ke Yu, Associate Professor, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.

1. Brandon Dickson, Research Associate, Western University, Canada.
Donna Kotsopoulos, Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, Western University,

Canada.

Title: A Review of Best Practices in International Higher Education Quality Assurance.

2. Pinhas Haliwa, CEO, Ashkelon Academic College, Israel.

Title: 30 Years of the Academic College Revolution – Have the Goals Achieved?

3. Kreso Tomljenovic, Postdoctoral Research Assistant, University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Title: Validation of the Model for Planning Human Resources in the Education System.

14:00-15:00 Lunch

17:15-20:30 Session 10

Old and New-An Educational Urban Walk

The urban walk ticket is not included as part of your registration fee. It includes professional tour guide and the cost to enter the Parthenon and the other monuments on the Acropolis Hill. The urban walk tour includes the broader area of Athens. Among other sites, it includes: Zappeion, Syntagma Square, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Ancient Roman Agora and on Acropolis Hill: the Propylaea, the Temple of Athena Nike, the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon. The program of the tour may be adjusted, if there is a need beyond our control. This is a private event organized by the Athens Institute exclusively for the conference participants.

21:00-23:00

[An Ancient Athenian Symposium: Continuous Dialogues, Timeless Flavors](#) (featuring authentic ancient Athenian dishes, local wine, and sweet delicacies from ancient Athens)

Wednesday 9 July 2025

**An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Nafplio & Mycenae Visit**

Thursday 10 July 2025

Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 11 July 2025

Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Wednesday 10 July 2024

**An Educational Visit to Selected Islands
or Mycenae Visit**

Thursday 11 July 2024

Visiting the Oracle of Delphi

Friday 12 July 2024

Visiting the Ancient Corinth and Cape Sounion

Burcu Ates

Professor, Sam Houston State University, USA

Francisco Usero-Gonzalez

Assistant Professor, Sam Houston State University, USA

&

Helen Berg

Dean, College of Education, Sam Houston State University, USA

**Navigating Language, Culture, and Identity:
Pre-Service Teachers’ Reflections on a Transformative
Study Abroad Experience in Costa Rica**

Bilingual and ESL teacher education programs increasingly recognize the transformative impact of international experiences on pre-service teachers (Lindahl et al., 2020; Martinsen, 2011; Vande Berg et al., 2012). Research has shown that study abroad programs enhance intercultural competence, pedagogical awareness, and second language acquisition, making them a crucial component of teacher preparation (Kingingier, 2009; Jackson, 2018). This case study investigates how self-reflection, learner agency, and sociopolitical contexts influence language learning during a short-term study abroad experience.

The study examines eight pre-service teachers, including one specializing in bilingual education, who participated in a field-based second language methodology course in Liberia, Costa Rica, in May 2024. Using journal entries, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions, the research explores how participants engaged with their language learning environments, navigated available affordances, and adapted to new linguistic and cultural settings. Findings reveal considerable variation in how pre-service teachers perceived and responded to these learning opportunities, underscoring the role of agency in shaping their experiences. Participants leveraged diverse resources to enhance their language acquisition and teaching skills, aligning with previous findings on the impact of experiential learning in international contexts (Deardorff, 2006; Trentman, 2013).

This presentation will examine the broader implications of study abroad programs for teacher education, emphasizing their role in fostering culturally responsive teaching practices. The discussion will highlight the significance of self-reflection, personalized learning environments, and learner agency in shaping effective educators. Additionally, we will share strategies for designing impactful study abroad programs that prepare pre-service teachers to support English learners in diverse and globalized educational contexts.

Yifan Cao

Postgraduate Student, Harbin Engineering University, China

&

Xiujuan Yang

Professor, Harbin Engineering University, China

A Review of Emotion Researches in the Context of AI Companionship: Current Status and Future Prospects

With the promotion of artificial intelligence technology, AI has been able to meet human’s emotional needs in conversational interactions. Therefore, scholars have studied the emotional dimension in the context of artificial intelligence companionship from multiple perspectives, such as computer science, linguistics, education, and sociology. Currently, the status of emotion researches in the context of AI companionship can be summarized as wide range of disciplines, scattered research themes, and an extensive body of literature. Therefore, it is of great significance to analyze the status quo and prospects from the perspective of bibliometrics. This study analyzes research papers from 2001 to 2024 about emotion researches in the context of artificial intelligence companionship, sourced from the Web of Science core database. Utilizing the knowledge mapping function of CiteSpace, the study examines trends in annual publication volumes, key researchers, research institutions, and hot topics, and forecasts the frontier status quo of this field. The study finds: (1) in terms of publication volume, the emotion researches in the context of artificial intelligence companionship have progressed through an initial stage, a growth stage, and a significant expansion stage; (2) in terms of researchers, prominent scholars such as Melanie J. Calvert and Alastair K. Denniston have emerged as leaders in this research field; (3) in terms of research institution, University of London, University of California system, National University of Singapore, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Harvard University are the backbone of research; (4) in terms of research hotspots, scholars focus both on the technological advancements in artificial intelligence companionship communication, and on the practical application with social benefits; (5) in terms of frontier status quo, further development is required in the areas of interdisciplinary integration, cultural adaptability, and research precision. The aforementioned research can provide directional references for the development of research in this academic field.

Martin Combrinck

*Deputy Dean, Faculty of Education, Cape Peninsula University of
Technology, South Africa*

Mentorship during Work Integrated Learning: Experiences and Expectations of Student-Teachers

School-based work-integrated learning (WIL), including supervised and assessed teaching practice, constitutes an essential part of the Baccalaureus Educationis (BEd) programme in South Africa. The Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications (MRTEQ) policy informing teacher education in South Africa prescribes that students should spend a minimum of 20 weeks and a maximum of 32 weeks on informally supervised and assessed school-based practices over the four-year duration of the degree. Schools generally allocate a mentor to the students placed at their schools. The role of this person is to mentor the students for the duration of the WIL experience at the school.

The problem is that the role of a mentor in the context of WIL is not prescribed and students and teachers have different views and expectations of the functions of a mentor during WIL. This research aims to deepen the knowledge on how student teachers experience the role of mentors during WIL.

The research question that guides the research is:

What are the experiences and expectations of student teachers during WIL sessions at selected high schools in the Western Cape?

The study is placed in a quantitative research approach. A quantitative research design was adopted to determine the experiences and expectations of student teachers concerning mentorship during WIL. The population for the study is all BEd Senior Phase and Further Education and Training (SP/FET, Wellington Campus) students from Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Questionnaires were handed out to all second, third, and fourth-year students (420) and 136 completed questionnaires were returned.

The data were quantified, whereafter researchers analysed the data according to the responses to the questionnaire statements. The overall picture of the responses was quite positive and indicated that student teachers experienced good mentoring in the schools, although there were some areas of concern

Brandon Dickson

Research Associate, Western University, Canada

&

Donna Kotsopoulos

Professor and Dean, Faculty of Education, Western University, Canada

A Review of Best Practices in International Higher Education Quality Assurance

Introduction: Quality assurance (QA) in higher education internationally considers a wide variety of practices and assessment variables. In particular as a result of the covid-19 pandemic and recent trends which impact universities’ abilities to recruit students, such as caps on international students in Canada, the UK and Australia (Croucher & Zigaras, 2024), universities have become more concerned with their programmatic quality as a way to ensure not just strong academics, but the long-term viability of their institutions. As such, in this moment, there is a need to understand what research exists on QA in higher education and how it might support students and institutions for long term success.

Objectives: This literature review aims to understand where and when research on QA processes have occurred and the different understandings of best practices in the field, to guide where future research ought to focus. As such the research questions guiding this study are as follows: Where and when are studies focused on university quality assurance processes published internationally? How do best practices differ across various sectors performing and enacting QA in universities?

Methodology: We conducted a systematic review following the methodology according to the parameters set out by Alexander (2020) of relevant recent literature on quality assurance as a program and process. The review was focused on the make-up of quality assurance processes around the world to determine best practices. Journal articles published in English in 2010 or later which focused on the process of QA in universities were included.

Data: After title review, 84 articles were included. Abstract review limited this to 57 articles, and following full text review 46 articles were included for review in this research. We include data from the metadata of the included studies such as year of publication and author’s country affiliation as well as an inductive coding of articles

Results: We identify two main sources of QA action, internal to the university and external organizations and discuss implications for and best practices in QA how they can work in tandem to support robust QA processes for long-term viability and student success. These include the need for external QA organizations to act as motivators of change at the institutional level (El-Khawas, 2013; Kakembo & Barymak, 2017) and for QA practices more generally to include student voice throughout development to ensure alignment of goals (Haapakorpi, 2011; Parvin, 2019). We also find that there is a complete dearth of financial considerations in QA research, with the vast majority of studies not mentioning such considerations thereby posing a challenge to universities ability to sustain new program offerings.

Significance: The review is based in a rising need for effective quality assurance as universities are challenged through the hardships imposed in the pandemic and face increasing pressure to maintain their viability and competitiveness during periods of punctuated change. This research serves as a jumping off point for future work to support continued research into QA to support sustainable programming that can support long term student learning.

Dan Cui

Professor, Harbin Engineering University, China

&

Hanhui Chen

Postgraduate Student, Harbin Engineering University, China

The Relationship Between Regional and National Cultures and Educational Development: An Educational Equity Perspective

This paper explores the impact of cultural traditions in different regions and countries on educational development from the perspective of educational equity. By reviewing relevant literature and conducting a comparative analysis of the educational status and cultural characteristics of typical countries and regions, the study finds that cultural traditions profoundly influence educational philosophies, systems, and practices. Based on these findings, the paper proposes recommendations for promoting educational equity, including respecting cultural diversity, learning from successful experiences, adapting to national contexts, and fostering balanced educational development. The aim is to provide insights for the construction of an equitable and high-quality education system.

Alexandra Danial-Saad

Senior Lecturer, University of Haifa, Israel

&

Tsvi Kuflik

Lecturer and Researcher, University of Haifa, Israel

Making Museums Inclusive: Empowering Students as Developer through Multidisciplinary Course

Background: Visiting traditional museum is challenging for blind people in terms of engagement and participation. In general, exhibitions dependence on visual displays protected behind glass, indeed poses a significant challenge for inclusivity. Creating an inclusive museum experience for blind individuals presents several challenges that demand innovative solutions.

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate a course that aimed to train multidisciplinary team Master students, with backgrounds in technology and therapy, to design and develop an accessible environment for the blind by exploring the potential of advanced technologies in intelligent user.

Methods: A project-based learning approach was employed to teach the course, focusing on the utilization of 3D scanning, 3D printing, Sensors - NFC, micro switches and Audio commentary to enhance accessibility for blind visitors. Students worked collaboratively as a team work, engaging with blind individuals and museum staff to gain insights into challenges and opportunities. The challenge lay in devising strategies that effectively translated visual information into tactile interactions and auditory descriptions

Students were divided into four groups. The museum staff selected four topics and several artefacts related to each topic. Each subject was to be presented as a cohesive narrative represented by three to four artifacts from the museum.

The development process include all stages of Design Thinking:

1. Empathy: The students generate empathy and familiarity with the field of development by talking with the museum staff, experiencing the museum blindfolded, and accompanying blind visitors during a visit in the museum, and finally, reviewing relevant literature.

2. Define & Ideate: Teams presented their concepts based on literature reviews and user interviews while producing quick prototypes.

3. Prototyping: Teams developed semi-working prototypes that could be tested with actual users. For that matter replicas were produce

using 3D scanning and 3D printing, audio files were recorded, and primary code was written.

4. Testing Evaluating: For the first usability test the students test the concepts with the two blind users. Although it wasn't fully working and improvements would be implemented in the final projects.

5. The final prototypes were developed and refined according to the observations of the intermediate tests. The interactive sets were presented at the end of the course.

Results: According to the reflective questioners, the educational community responded positively to this innovative approach. Collaborative efforts yielded a wide array of ideas to enhance museum accessibility for the blind. The final project, evaluated by end-users, received glowing feedback. It not only promises to improve participation and engagement during museum visits but also serves as a testament to the power of multidisciplinary, student-led learning in the context of accessible education.

Conclusion: Beyond its impact on museum accessibility, this project empowered students with a profound sense of self-efficacy. They leveraged 3D scanning and printing technologies to create an inclusive museum environment for the visually impaired, transcending the boundaries of traditional teaching methods. This experience of collaborative learning, enriched by multidisciplinary perspectives and innovative pedagogical approaches, represents a model for the future of education.

Lynda George

Professor Emeritus, Central Connecticut State University, USA

Nurturing Thoughtful Thinking with Socrates

This paper discusses the myriad of pedagogy enacted within five of Plato's Dialogues. Very different from the dialogues where Socrates confronts and argues with Sophists, these nurture learning through guidance, support and thinking. When in dialogue with the youth of Athens beyond the use of dialectics, which dominates Socrates' teaching, he uses allegories, imagery, story telling, recollection and thoughtful inquiry while exploring a major topic within each dialogue. "The what" of teaching (the curriculum) is important, but "the how" of teaching (the pedagogy) to engage, enlighten, promote curiosity, nurture a love of learning and a desire to know plays an important role in teaching and learning often overlooked and under appreciated. The primary source texts for this paper come from four of Plato's Dialogues with one or two young people: Meno; Lysis; Laches; and Theaetetus. A fifth text is from Socrates' speech within The Symposium where he reconstructs a dialogue between himself and Diotima, his teacher. His speech, their dialogue, reinforces the pedagogy found within the other four dialogues. A brief description and analysis of each text will be presented regarding the curriculum (topic within the dialogue) and the pedagogy (teaching methods used) as well as the results will show the relevance and importance of Socrates' teaching. A teaching approach deep and rich in pedagogy which are of great importance to these dialogues and are important to think about today.

Pinhas Haliwa
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30 Years of the Academic College Revolution – Have the Goals Achieved?

The higher education system in Israel began to be established before the establishment of the state. In 1925, the University of Jerusalem and the Technion in Haifa were established. Until 1994, the academic system in Israel was made up of universities only.

A plan to expand the system from a monolithic system to a dual system, consisting of two types of institutions, universities and colleges, was officially approved by the government in 1994. This was a plan for the decade 1991-2000. The plan included a solution to absorb the high demand for higher education in two stages: the first stage was set for the 1991-1996 five-year period, and the second stage for the 1996-2000 five-year period. In both phases, about 50,000 new students were planned.

The continuation of the trend to expand the system continued in the 2000-2005 five-year plan: the CHE absorbed under its auspices regional colleges, which operated throughout the country under the auspices of a university, and in which about 75% of undergraduate studies were studied. The students were required to complete the degree at the parent institution – the grantor of the certificate.

Alongside the development of the government system, a new phenomenon has begun in Israel – the opening of unbudgeted branches of universities from abroad, which were opened through private initiatives on a business basis. All of them offered undergraduate studies in professional fields of study, such as law and accounting. This phenomenon led to an increase in the number of institutions of higher education, which reached 57 in 2000. This number rose in 2014 to 67. Of these, 16 institutions were overseas branches.

The opening of the Academy's gates led to a revolution in the number of students:

1. The number of undergraduate students increased from 55,250 in 1990 to 215,583 in 2024, more than fourfold.
2. The total number of students increased from 89,060 in 1990 to 302,674 in 2024.
3. A significant expression of the change can be seen in the abolition of university hegemony over undergraduate studies – the percentage of undergraduate students in universities dropped from 85% in 1990 to 41.5% in 2024.

4. The opening of the gates of academia has led to clear results in the level of education of Israeli citizens, as indicated by the OECD report in recent years – Israel is among the most educated countries in the organization and above the overall OECD average. Half of those aged 25-64 (51%) in 2023 had a high school and higher education, while the OECD average was 40%.

Like any system that undergoes a dramatic change, the academic system has moved from a closed system to an open but less controlled system. Large-scale institutions were added to the system that were not under supervision, or the system was not prepared for proper supervision. The factors in charge, namely the Council for Higher Education and the Ministry of Justice, were forced to establish new arrangements through legislation in order to circumvent the freedom to open institutions in a legal framework. First, the amendment to the law, known as Amendment 10, regulated the status of the regional colleges that served as branches of the universities in Israel and taught 75% of the degree studies. The regional colleges were granted the authority to teach for a bachelor's degree under the auspices of an Israeli university, as an intermediate stage, until the completion of the academia process set for them. Second, the amendment of the Council for Higher Education Law, which is intended to regulate the status of overseas branches and is known as Amendment 11. This amendment gradually led to the closure of most of the overseas branches, and some of them, which met the rules of the Council for Higher Education for recognition of an institution of higher education, became Israeli institutions of higher education, such as Kiryat Ono and others.

After thirty years of change, in this article I wish to examine effects of the change on access to higher education in Israel. The question that will be examined is whether the goals of the program to expand the academic system have been achieved.

The goals defined by the CHE were:

1. Increasing the supply for the rising demand for higher education in Israel.
2. Accessibility of higher education to the social and geographic periphery. This goal was set following the heavy pressure exerted by public figures, legislators, and committees that pointed out in their conclusions a large gap in education and higher education between the center and the development cities, for example, the decision of a ministerial committee headed by Haim Ramon in 2000, to establish a public committee to examine all the issues

related to increasing the share of students from the southern region in institutions of higher education. Another committee was the Parliamentary Committee headed by Member of the Israeli Parliament Ran Cohen and the State Comptroller's report on gaps in higher education.

3. The groups in the population that were marked with a target in another destination on the periphery were the Arabs, the ultra-Orthodox, and the women's sector.
4. Despite the opening of the gates of academia, the plan set a goal not to harm the research budgets that remained in the exclusive hands of the universities, and the colleges were defined as teaching institutions only.

Leah Hollis

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Ubuntu as Pathway to Resisting Workplace Bullying for American Black Faculty

Black faculty remain underrepresented amongst all higher education faculty. Resisting racism, sexism, and bullying can erode one’s persistence. Concurrently, many Blacks are reconnecting with their ancestral history. To investigate if ancestral knowledge positively supports Black faculty, I modified two preexisting instruments regarding bullying and resilience then created original questions about ancestry knowledge to measure the relationship between resilience, ancestral knowledge, and Black faculty perceptions of workplace bullying.

The inception of this study was to understand if Black faculty, armed with their ancestry knowledge, remain resilient in the face of workplace bullying. Ancestry knowledge, in this context, is deeply rooted in ancestral community practices. The community engagement variable directly aligns with Ubuntu, a long-standing sub-Saharan philosophy. Mbiti (1969) stated that Ubuntu focuses on the community, the tribe, and interconnected relationships. This humanistic approach values all community members, who should have dignity and respect, regardless of class. With a social harmony focus, Ubuntu advances cooperation as essential for society. Nolte and Downing (2019) confirm that Ubuntu is a generational notion of caring for all community members, from ancestors to newborns. Mbaya (2010) described Ubuntu as “caring of each other’s well-being ... respect for human rights and responsibilities in promoting well-being of the individuals and societal well-being” (pp. 373). Noble Prize winner Desmond Tutu also remarked, “It also means my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in theirs” (Nolte & Downing, 2019; Tutu, 1999, pp. 34-35). A community can thrive together through social cooperation, which ultimately helps individuals advance (Marovah & Mutanga, 2023).

To examine the following research questions, I conducted three statistical tests using a conceptual framework of resilience and ancestral knowledge. RQ1: Who faces workplace bullying, Black or white faculty? RQ2: What is the relationship between resilience and ancestral knowledge for Black faculty? RQ3: For Black faculty, what is the relationship between resilience and ancestral knowledge when moderated by workplace bullying? RQ1 was answered with a Chi-Square analysis, which confirmed that Blacks are bullied at a higher rate

than whites, at a statistically significant level. A correlation for the RQ2 confirmed a direct and statistically significant relationship between Black faculty resilience and ancestral knowledge at the $p < .01$ level. For RQ3, a multiple regression confirmed an inverse and statistically significant relationship between resilience and the perception of workplace bullying when moderated by ancestral knowledge.

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**Enhancing Leadership in Education and Studio Arts
through Online Learning: A Collaborative Approach**

Recently, the landscape of higher education has undergone a significant transformation, driven by the rapid advancement of technology and the increasing demand for flexible learning environments. This abstract presents a collaborative study between two universities that explores how online learning has enhanced their respective programs in Leadership in Education and Studio Arts. We highlight innovative pedagogical strategies, the integration of technology, and the positive impact on student engagement and outcomes. The shift to online learning in the Leadership in Education program has enabled educators to reach a broader audience, breaking geographical barriers that previously limited access to quality educational resources. By leveraging asynchronous and synchronous learning modalities, the program has fostered a collaborative learning environment where students can engage with diverse perspectives from peers around the globe. The use tools such as discussion forums, video conferencing, and interactive simulations has enriched the curriculum, allowing students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios.

Furthermore, the incorporation of case studies from various educational systems worldwide has provided students with a comprehensive understanding of global leadership challenges in education. In today’s society, effective leadership is crucial for navigating the complexities of educational reform, equity, and inclusivity. By emphasizing transformational leadership and ethical decision-making, the program prepares students to become change agents who can inspire and motivate others within educational settings.

In parallel, the Studio Arts program experienced necessary, and rapid, transformation while embracing online and virtual studies, specifically during the pandemic. The dramatic shift from “standard” studio programs that centers in-person, process-heavy learning to a virtual environment allowed for a broader access for students but dramatically limited their access to tools and equipment. Curriculum rooted in demonstration, experience, and immediate communication

had to adapt. Post-pandemic, the integration of advanced digital platforms has facilitated the exploration of creative processes and essential techniques in surprising ways. Online workshops and tutorials, virtual critiques, multimedia resources, and collaborative projects have bolstered traditional studio settings, enabling students to showcase their work and receive feedback from both instructors and peers in multiple formats. This shift nurtures creativity, tracks development, and prepares students to practice in a rapidly changing environment.

Additionally, the Studio Arts program strives to develop creative change makers. By integrating themes of social justice and community engagement into the curriculum, the Studio Arts program encourages students to use their skills to address contemporary issues and build communities. In this, learning to navigate both the virtual learning environment and the concrete demands of physical space are necessary.

The collaborative nature of this study underscores the importance of cross-disciplinary approaches in higher education. By sharing insights and best practices, both universities have been able to refine their online curricula, ensuring that they remain relevant and responsive to the needs of their students. The findings suggest that online learning not only enhances the educational experience but also cultivates essential skills.

In conclusion, the integration of online learning in both programs has proven to be a transformative force in higher education. By fostering collaboration between institutions, we can continue to innovate and improve educational practices, ultimately preparing students for leadership roles in an ever-evolving global landscape. The implications of this study extend beyond the participating universities, offering a framework for other institutions seeking to enhance their programs through online learning. We invite symposium attendees to engage in this discussion and explore the future of higher education in a global context, emphasizing the critical intersection of leadership and the arts in shaping a more inclusive and equitable society.

Ali Khalil

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**Student Retention: The Impact of Advising Models on
Student Success in the American Higher Education System**

Advising is fundamental to increasing students’ retention rates (Gravel, 2012; Sanders & Killion, 2017). Importantly, establishing trust between students and their advisors allows students to feel a sense of community, and it connects them to campus (Tinto, 1975; Astin, 1999; Vasher, 2010; McClellan, 2014). However, the variety of advising models—the Market-Style model, Tinto’s model, and the ALP model—have resulted in significant variations in student success rates—instigating a debate on which advising approach would have more effective student retention results. The session will highlight various advising models that boost student retention, address the challenges that impact student success, and propose effective strategies that increase student persistence rates, as seen in the American Higher Education system. Objectives: The objective of this session is to share the views of many retention officers, such as chancellors, college deans, and department chairs from various institutions and regions of the United States, about their advising models to retain students. It also reveals students’ rankings of these models based on efficacy, and it presents their opinions about the challenges that impact their academic success and their sense of belonging to campus. Finally, the session will share data-driven, high-impact strategies for increasing student success rates higher education. Theoretical Framework: This study uses Tinto’s Theory of Academic Integration because advising models have direct ties to students’ academic and social connection to campus—variables that have a deep impact on student success rates (Tinto, 1987; Tinto, 2006). Methodology: This study used a mixed-methods approach which included a survey component and individual interviews with students and retention officers. This approach was necessary because it combines “. . . the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research” and their “. . . combined use provides an expands understanding of research problems” (Creswell, 2009, p.203). Data: This study collected data from six different institutions of higher education in the U.S. The targeted student population included students in different classifications—including transfer, undergraduate, and graduate students who are pursuing their education at a U.S. university. It also included retention officers, such as vice chancellors, college deans, and department chairs.

Results: Participating retention officers and students ranked the Market-Style Advising Model as the least effective one—citing disconnect between advisors and advisees, as a primary factor. Students also cited the scarcity of funding opportunities and the lack of their sense of belonging as the most powerful challenges that impacted their academic success. Therefore, embracing other advising models, such as Tinto’s Model, for example, is necessary for deepening students’ sense of belonging to campus (Tinto, 1975; Petzold and Robinson, 2019). Additionally, the data underscored the importance of better funding and scholarship packages (DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002; Khalil, 2021). Scholarly Significance: The significance of this study is that it reveals the efficacy levels of various advising models by listening to students’ voices, integrating them into the college system, and meeting their academic, social, and financial needs. Choosing an effective advising model is investing in student success and the success of higher education.

Sotiria Kouli

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Breaking Silos: Collaborative Innovations in International Student Placement for Graduate Programs

This session describes an innovative assessment approach to address the challenges of placing international students into graduate programs. It explores our AI-driven assessment method, discusses the research methodology, and presents results from a strategic partnership among top graduate programs to create a reliable and efficient placement test for their international graduate students' needs.

The core purpose of our presentation is to provide attendees with a deeper understanding of how language programs can collaborate and revolutionize how they assess international undergraduate students' English language competence using artificial intelligence. The core topics to be covered in this presentation include:

- a) Collaborative Success with US graduate programs: Our collaboration with graduate programs has been instrumental in refining this assessment model. We will showcase the results, share success stories and outcomes of this partnership, and emphasize how ‘breaking silos’ has benefitted the programs.
- b) AI-Enhanced Assessment: We will discuss the reasoning behind using AI to score the test, and we will illustrate how AI can provide a more comprehensive evaluation of students' language skills by analyzing their proficiency in various aspects, such as syntax, semantics, and discourse coherence.
- c) Methodology and Research: We will provide a synopsis of the research methodology behind our AI-driven academic English assessment. Our approach aligns with recent findings that highlight AI's growing role in educational assessment, particularly in enhancing the precision and efficiency of formative assessments and automatic grading (González-Calatayud et al., 2021). We will also share the insights gained from our comprehensive analysis of student language performance data, along with our assessment of how effectively the placement test has influenced curriculum design, scheduling, and student-centered decisions (Mendoza et al., 2022; Kim & Shin, 2006).

The insights gained from this presentation will empower attendees of this session to implement innovative assessment approaches that

break down silos between language programs, leading to more accurate and comprehensive evaluations of students' language abilities. This, in turn, will improve the overall quality of admissions decisions and contribute to the academic success of international students, thereby strengthening the institution's global academic standing.

Jana Kvintov

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Hongyang Liu

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Justyna Dockalova

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&

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The Relationship between Parental Social Comparison and Intrinsic Learning Motivation: The Mediating Role of Rumination and the Moderating Role of Resilience

This study explores the relationship between parental social comparison and adolescents' intrinsic learning motivation, examining rumination as a mediator and resilience as a moderator. Data were collected from 576 junior high school students in Guangzhou, China, using validated self-report measures. Correlation analysis revealed that higher parental social comparison was associated with increased rumination and lower intrinsic motivation and resilience. Mediation analysis demonstrated that rumination significantly mediated the negative effect of parental social comparison on intrinsic learning motivation. Furthermore, moderation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Model 59 confirmed that resilience weakened the negative impact of rumination on intrinsic learning motivation, indicating its protective role in academic engagement. These findings contribute to educational psychology and family studies by highlighting the psychological mechanisms underlying parental social comparison and their effects on adolescent learning. The study emphasizes the need for interventions that reduce rumination and enhance resilience to support intrinsic motivation in students.

Erwin Lacanlale

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**Teaching and Age-Related Problems of Senior Faculty
Members in Selected Higher Educational Institutions**

Education has been a part of man’s life. Even during ancient times, education played an important role in shaping and developing the minds of individuals who later became brilliant scholars, educators and great leaders in their respective society. From the time education existed and started, teaching has been part of the educative process.

But because the world today is changing faster than it was before. Many developments, discoveries, innovations and inventions in the field of science and technology, economic, politics, and even in education are taking place. Change of leadership, change in the organization and school climate occur as days pass by. Likewise, the paradigm shift in the curriculum also greatly contribute to the kind of change being experience in the field of education.

In the fast moving, highly competitive global marketplace, change is continuously required, if an organization is to remain competitive. A company cannot remain on the cutting edge by standing still. The key to effective organizational performance lies in the competence and commitment of the people. The clue to effective and successful management lies in understanding the nature of people, their behavior, drives, hopes, fears and expectations, and the circumstances and activities necessary to bring the best act of them. To respect and value people is a basic pre-requisite for effective managing of human resources so organizations have to create the conditions for fostering managements need to create structures and cultures that are positive and organic and develop individuals and groups to their full potential to face emerging challenges (Shiva, 2005).

Teaching problems are fundamental factors that need to be given emphasis in order to understand the behavior and performance of the teachers in their work setting. Teaching is a serious intellectual work that entails much duties, responsibilities and obligations. In the world of academe, everything gets done through the teachers’ power and the power of work (teaching). Teachers have been and will always be the indispensable partners of the educational and learning institutions and organizations in achieving excellent and quality education. But the teaching and age-related problems of teachers are crucial in all kinds of higher educational and learning institutions today. One of the pressing

problems facing educational and learning institutions today is on how to make their teachers work productively and increase their feelings of satisfaction and involvement with their job, especially when they get older and their retirement is fast approaching. That is why it is a must to develop or find a precautionary measure on how to prevent or lessen this pressing problem. As a response to this problem, it is essential to know and identify the factors that determine the teaching and age related problems of senior faculty members in higher educational institutions. Giving attention and emphasis to these kinds of problems are perceived necessary and will be beneficial to the students, teachers and to the academe.

From the study, it was found out that great number of the respondents are on the age-range of 55-59 years old, majority are females, married, receiving a monthly income of 30,001-40,000, have been teaching for 26-30 years, occupying the rank of Associate Professor, most of the respondents have 25 units load and above with 2-3 preparations as to the number of subjects they are teaching.

Majority of the respondents' teaching problems were having difficulty in complying with the new demands/requirements of the institution, have problem of being sensitive to students' remarks or actuations/gestures, have experiences of burn out signs/symptoms, was being sleepy inside the classroom, and have technological problems

Majority of the senior faculty members, as to the physical aspects, identified bodily stress as the most age- related problem they have experienced, followed by health problems (kidneys, lungs, liver, heart problem, etc.) and numbness or aching problems in different body parts (chest pain, arthritis, gout, etc.), sleeping and waking problem and hypertension. As to cognitive and mental aspects were memory declines, forgetfulness, difficulty in recalling and recognizing names, people, facts, places, events, etc.. As to the emotional aspects were being moody, emotionally sensitive, irritable, feeling nervous/anxious, feeling of emptiness or hopelessness and fearful. That as to social aspects were the inability to attend social activities/gatherings, problem of being alone at home, then problem of not easily trusting people and lastly difficulty in dealing with people.

Respondents' remarkable effects of their problems in their performance were having emotional and physical exhaustion when teaching, planning to have an early retirement when experiencing problem in class, becoming less productive when teaching, loss of motivation to teach, confused with subject, class and room assignment, do not like to be given special assignment, do not attend school activities, late submission of grades/requirements, and arrive late in class.

That the dealings of the respondents with the problems and effects of their teaching and age-related problems were watching health and wellness program, saving money, wearing of eyeglasses, self-motivation and praying, taking a nap during vacant time, taking medicines and exercise regularly, makes reminder of activities and use of alarm clock, accepting the situations/conditions of being a senior, and hiring of typist, encoder or checker.

Wience Wing-sze Lai

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Enhancing Speech Awareness through Phonetic Training and Acoustic Analysis: A Mixed-Methods Study with Post- secondary Language Majors

This paper explores how post-secondary language majors can enhance their speech awareness through a series of meticulously designed in-class exercises. These exercises involve transcribing English, Cantonese, and Putonghua words using the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), recording their own pronunciation, performing simple acoustic analyses for the three languages using Praat, and evaluating authentic pronunciation by describing sound articulation. The study is grounded in the principles of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Phonetic Training. The Affective Filter Hypothesis suggests that emotional factors such as motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence can influence language learning (Krashen, 1982). By creating a supportive and engaging learning environment, the study aims to lower the affective filter and facilitate better phonetic learning. The concept of Automaticity refers to the process by which language learners develop automatic responses to linguistic stimuli through repeated practice (DeKeyser, 2001). The structured exercises in the study are designed to promote automaticity in phonetic transcription and pronunciation. Phonetic theories relate the physical attributes of sounds with their linguistic function, and experimental phonetics investigates how speech is produced, perceived, and transmitted (Ashby & Maidment, 2005). The use of Praat for acoustic analysis allows for detailed examination of speech sounds, providing learners with insights into their pronunciation and areas for improvement (Boersma & Weenink, 2024). The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Participants, who are post-secondary language majors, engage in a series of structured exercises designed to build speech awareness. Data is collected through pre- and post-intervention assessments, student feedback, and performance evaluations. For the quantitative analysis, non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test are used to compare the performance of students before and after the intervention. The findings indicate that students showed significant improvement in their ability to transcribe phonetic details accurately, recognize and produce sounds across the three languages, and perform acoustic

analyses. The exercises facilitated a deeper understanding of the phonetic characteristics of English, Cantonese, and Putonghua, thereby enhancing students' speech awareness. Furthermore, the evaluation of authentic pronunciation and articulation descriptions fostered critical listening and analytical skills. The study concludes that in-class exercises involving phonetic transcription, pronunciation recording, acoustic analysis, and sound articulation evaluation are effective in building speech awareness among post-secondary language majors. These activities not only improve phonetic competence but also promote a comprehensive understanding of linguistic phonetics. Future research should explore the long-term impact of such exercises on students' phonetic skills and their application in diverse linguistic contexts.

Jingjing Liu

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How Does Online Learning Affect College Students’ Deep Learning: The Mediating Effects of Learning Interest and Learning Engagement and the Moderating Effect of Family Income

The aim of this study was to determine the mediating effects of learning interest and learning engagement on the relationship between online learning and college students’ deep learning, as well as the moderating effect of family income on the relationship between online learning and learning interest, and between online learning and learning engagement. A sample of 2,458 college students participating in online learning of mainland China was studied. Results showed that online learning had a positive impact on students’ deep learning. Both learning interest and learning engagement had multiple mediating effects on the relationship between online learning and students’ deep learning. Family income had a moderating effect on the relationship between online learning and learning interest, as well as a moderating effect on the relationship between online learning and learning engagement. For lower-family income students, online learning significantly improved both their learning interest and learning engagement. However, online learning had no impact on learning interest and lower impact on learning engagement of students from higher-income families. This showed that online learning was more effective when students’ family income was lower. More support should be given to disadvantaged students who have less access to online learning.

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&

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Predicting AI Literacy and Dependency: The Role of Learning Strategies, Academic Self-Efficacy, and Adjustment to Higher Education

This study examined the impact of learning strategies, academic self-efficacy, and adjustment to higher education on AI literacy and AI dependency among higher education students. AI literacy refers to the ability to critically assess, ethically apply, and effectively utilize AI tools (Ng et al., 2021), encompassing evaluation skills, AI communication, and online AI engagement (Long & Magerko, 2020). While AI offers significant opportunities, excessive reliance on AI tools may lead to AI dependency, characterized by both frequent use and psychological reliance (Zhang et al., 2024).

Learning strategies play a crucial role in students' academic success, encompassing cognitive, metacognitive, and resource management techniques that facilitate self-regulation and effective study habits (Pintrich et al., 1991). The resource management techniques include management of time and learning space and also help-seeking behavior. Help-seeking behavior involves recognizing the need for assistance, identifying appropriate sources of support (e.g., instructors, peers, or supplementary materials), and actively seeking help to enhance learning and problem-solving processes (Pintrich et al., 1991), and plays a crucial role in enhancing learning by facilitating social interactions, promoting self-regulation, and supporting academic success (Ying & Wang, 2021).

The increasing integration of AI in higher education raises the question of how students' learning strategies as his/her characteristics affect AI literacy and dependency.

A total of 683 students (24% male, 76% female; $M = 25.8$, $SD = 4.8$) participated in the study via an online survey assessing AI literacy, AI dependency, and learning strategies. Regression analyses revealed that older age and higher academic self-efficacy were associated with greater AI literacy. Conversely, AI dependency was predicted by younger age,

lower academic self-efficacy, and reduced use of resource management strategies (e.g., time and learning space organization). Additionally, higher help-seeking behavior emerged as a significant predictor of increased AI dependency. The model explained 11% of the variance in AI dependency, emphasizing the role of self-regulated learning in AI usage. These findings highlight the importance of fostering balanced AI engagement and enhancing students’ adaptive learning strategies in higher education.

Lorenzo Manera

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AI-Generated Images and Their Impacts on Media Education in Higher Education

In the essay “The reconfigured eye” (1992), Mitchell described the transition into the post-photographic era, retouching is entirely consistent with professional photographic procedures, and manipulating visual content is just as necessary as controlling the audio information in recorded music. With the advent of digital images, the decrease in the documental value of the images went to the advantage of other values, such as the association of the act of photography with connectivity and communication (Fontcuberta, 2024). Firstly, this contribution addresses how post-photography substituted the value of memory with hyper-visibility and the idea that photography is no longer the process of “writing with light” associated with documentary and conviction aspects but rather a universal language everyone uses daily. Secondly, it tackles the emergence of synthographies, images generated through softwares that involve linguistic prompts, processed by encoded semantic systems able to capture compositional aspects of arbitrary language text inputs (Saharia 2022). Thirdly, this contribution argues that the decrease in the documental value of the images went to the advantage of other values, such as the association of the act of photography with connectivity and communication. If the advent of digital photography re-defined the image – which moved from a permanently marked surface to a transient surface (Meo 2018) – the possibility to easily create synthographies almost indistinguishable from real photographs might separate the interaction between the detective and the depictive functions to the advantage of the latter. A particularly problematic aspect is that in the case of synthographies generated with text-to-image technologies, as opposed to depictive forms such as painting and sculpture, it is very hard to distinguish between an image that performs a detective function and one that does not perform such a function. Furthermore, we argue that the broader process of erosion of what remained of the visual reliability and documental value of the images is redefining the status of images and the relationship we establish with them. Finally, this contribution presents and discusses recent experiences of image education aimed at sustaining visual competencies and critical reflection on the impact of text to image technologies.

Mark Minott

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The Reflective Approach to Teaching Practicum Debriefing (RATPD): Utilisation across Several Countries

Over the past 30 years, the teaching profession has embraced the notion of the teacher as a reflective practitioner, which has led to an increased emphasis on higher education/ teacher education programmes offering learning experiences that model and encourage reflective practice. Programmes embracing the notion of the teacher as reflective practitioner offer learning experiences that model and foster student teachers’ reflective capabilities, thus empowering future teachers as reflective professionals.

This presentation extracts the results of several qualitative case study research (2012 - 2025) exploring the usefulness, benefits, and challenge of an innovative approach to teaching practicum debriefing – namely, an exercise called the reflective approach to teaching practicum debriefing (RATPD).

The global reach of the RATPD is evident through its creation at a Higher Education Institution in the Cayman Islands and subsequent development in the United Kingdom. For example, it has been modified and utilized in several UK higher education institutions, including Durham University School of Education and the University of Hull, UK School of Education. Additionally, the RATPD was accepted for showcasing at the International Conference of the Higher Education Research Development Society of Australia (HERDSA) in Gold Coast, Australia (2011), and featured in the HERDSA NEWS Showcase section (ISSN 0157-1826: 40(2) May 2018). A review of the RATPD handbook appeared in the HERDSA NEWS Review section (ISSN 0157-1826: 40(4) July 2018).

Comfort Pratt

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Addressing the Teaching of the Stative So-Called Meaning Changing Preterites in Spanish

The teaching of languages to second-language learners encounters many challenges due to the fact that there is a tendency to insist on finding corresponding features of the target languages within maternal languages, in order to simplify the acquisition process. This practice ought to be avoided as languages have their independent systems and their features do not need to coincide. The Spanish preterite-imperfect aspectual dichotomy has featured among the most drawn-out challenges for learners, due to widespread representations that do not match native usage. This presentation reports on an investigation of the teaching of the stative so-called meaning-changing preterites in Spanish to second-language learners. The study focused specifically on the claim that a change from imperfect to preterite indicates a meaning change, which is widespread in classroom teaching practices as well as in textbooks and on websites. An empirical study was conducted with forty native speakers of Peninsular Spanish to tap into native speakers' intuitions of the uses of *conocer*, *poder*, *querer* and *saber* in the preterite. The participants listened to a sentence, and then a number of statements that were supposed to mean the same thing were read to them. They were then asked to choose the statement that most closely matched the meaning of the original sentence. The results were then compared to website and textbook explanations. The findings revealed that the verbs did not change meaning but rather functioned in consonance with the Spanish aspectual system. This provided validation for the preliminary hypothesis of the study, that many of the translations offered by websites and textbooks are overgeneralizations that do not always match actual

Derek Stovin

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The Intersection of Culture, Space, and Personal-Professional Identity Development: The Story of a Canadian Alternative Teacher Education Program

Canada is a country that struggles with the negative past and ongoing impacts of its colonial history. As a result of a class action law suit, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was established to begin to address the atrocities committed against Indigenous people through the residential school system. The TRC findings called attention to the central role that education must play in working toward Canadians’ reconciliation with Indigenous people. In particular, call to action number seven is “to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians” (TRC, 2015, pp. 5-6) and call to action number ten, in part, is to improve “education attainment levels and success rates ... [and to develop] culturally appropriate curricula” (TRC, 2015, p. 6). Unfortunately, almost a decade later, there has been little change in the educational and employment gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada.

While laudable and certainly necessary, the aims expressed by the TRC cannot and will not be achieved unless the body of professional teachers is comprised of far greater numbers of Indigenous teachers. Given this context, I will share the story of one set of long-running and renowned alternative teacher education programs at one Canadian university that serve Indigenous and other equity-seeking higher education students. Through this narrative organizational case study (Stovin, 2016), I aim to: 1) Describe the culture and cultural growth of the programs; 2) Describe the space in which the programs and students are situated and how it is mediated; and 3) Discuss how the interplay of this space and culture has supported student success and facilitated personal-professional identity development (Stovin, 2023). As a result, these programs are not only making a substantial impact toward increasing the diversity of the local professional teaching body but are also graduating teachers who are improving the educational experience for K-12 students by enacting their well-developed personal-professional identities.

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Mentorship: A Catalyst for Women's Empowerment and Educational Transformation

Introduction: This study explores the crucial role of mentoring in empowering women and transforming education, particularly within the African context. It highlights how effective mentoring strategies can enhance women's educational advancement and foster societal change.

Background: The empowerment of women through education is vital for the development of inclusive societies. An education system that prioritizes mentorship supports individual women's growth and cultivates the next generation of female leaders, educators, and change-makers.

Problem Statement: Despite the importance of education for women's empowerment, various socio-cultural and economic barriers still hinder their access to higher education in Africa. This study addresses the need for effective mentoring initiatives to facilitate women's educational participation against these challenges.

Research Objective: The primary objective of this study is to identify gender-sensitive curriculum adaptations and mentoring initiatives that can enhance women's participation in higher education, thereby contributing to gender equality and social progress.

Research Methodology: A semi-systematic review was conducted using Scopus and Google Scholar resources, including peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, books, and reports. The focus was on studies illuminating the intersections of women's empowerment, educational transformation, and the vital role of mentoring. The screening process identified research specifically addressing mentorship's role in increasing women's educational success and engagement.

Findings: The thematic analysis revealed that effective mentoring programs, curriculum reforms, and institutional changes are essential for promoting gender equality in education. Mentors provide critical guidance, support, and encouragement, essential for helping women navigate educational challenges, particularly within the African context, where cultural and socio-economic barriers are prevalent.

Conclusion: This study underscores the critical role of mentorship in advancing women's empowerment within higher education. By integrating mentoring into educational strategies alongside curriculum reforms and institutional partnerships, we can create a robust framework

that fosters female empowerment and addresses the systemic challenges faced by women.

Recommendations: The research calls for multi-level mentoring approaches involving educational institutions, policymakers, and community organizations. Investing in mentorship as a core component of educational reform is essential for unlocking the potential of Africa’s female population and aligning efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to promote inclusive growth and equity.

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Validation of the Model for Planning Human Resources in the Education System

This research highlights the need for strategic planning using simulation modeling methods in the education system. Croatia is among three nations in Europe that doesn't conduct systematic labor market analyses in order to forecast employability after graduation from higher education.

Using the system dynamics method with elements of agent-based modeling, a hybrid model was developed and applied to the primary education system in Croatia. The methodological framework of the development of dynamic models in four stages was applied. The last stage is model validation, i.e. assessment of applicability by model users. This paper presents the results of the model validation.

The examination covered all 7 faculties that educate future teachers of primary education in Croatia. The respondents are 12 members of the faculty administrations for human resources and enrollment policy at their institutions and are potential users of the model. Considering the diversity of scientific fields and areas represented in the education of future teachers and the heterogeneity in the areas of expertise of the respondents, the relevance of the respondents for the assessment of the model was emphasized.

Before conducting the survey itself, the respondents were presented with the model and the possibility of using it via a graphical user interface that enables users to use the model, without the need to know tools for model development or knowledge of dynamic modeling methods. Within the graphical interface users can run simulations using created scenarios that allow interactively changing the values of a series of parameters. The questionnaire consists of 3 parts. In the first part, there is information about the respondents, their role in the faculty management, profession, work experience, etc. The third part of the survey is open-ended questions, for suggestions and proposals for future research. The second part of the survey is for evaluating the validity of the method and the presented model. Attitudes were examined by Likert scale of values from 1 to 5, with three sets of statements.

Attitudes related to the applicability of the system dynamics method for model development are examined through 4 statements (Cronbach $\alpha=0.68$). 91.7% of respondents consider the method useful and efficient, with 6.3% of neutral attitudes. Next 9 statements examine the usefulness

of the presented model of the primary education system and the offered scenarios for conducting experiments (Cronbach $\alpha=0.89$). 96.3% of respondents consider the developed model and scenarios useful for human resources management, with 3.7% neutral attitudes. The final 6 statements examine the usefulness of the developed interface for independent experimentation with the model by the user (Cronbach $\alpha=0.85$). 100% of the respondents consider the web application as a good way to present and use the model.

The results of the survey validate the developed methodological framework and the applied dynamic modeling methods and confirm the applicability to the human resources decision support in the education system.

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A Review of the Progress of Postdoctoral Research in China in the Past Forty Years – Visualization-Based Knowledge Mapping and Trend Analysis

As the core reserve of national high-level innovative talents, the significance of the role of postdocs has transcended the scope of individual academic growth and become a key force to support the strategic transformation of the country. This year is the 40th year of China's postdoctoral system, and it is of great value to systematically sort out and analyze the literature on postdoctoral students in China in order to grasp the research dynamics and trends in this field. With the help of CiteSpace software, we analyzed 402 core documents on postdoctoral research in China Knowledge Network database from 1985 to 2025. It is found that the research evolution is characterized by three phases: the ice-breaking exploration period (1985-2000) focuses on system construction and introduction of foreign experience, the rapid development period (2001-2015) focuses on scale expansion and system innovation, and the maturity and adjustment period (2016-present) shifts to the quality enhancement and career development research, and the number of papers issued shows a parabolic fluctuation trend. The core scholars of postdoctoral research present obvious central-radial distribution characteristics, but have not yet formed a more fixed, sufficient number of academic groups with close cooperation, and the openness between groups is insufficient; colleges and universities are the main force of postdoctoral research, and the degree of cooperation between research institutions is low. The research hotspots focus on the innovation of talent cultivation mode, academic career development path, optimization of management system, logic of institutional change and evidence-based design method, and the research focus and characteristics have undergone an important shift. Generally speaking, postdoctoral research has been steadily advancing, rich in themes and with a clear perspective, but the amount of publications, especially the volume of core literature, is relatively small, the research community has not yet been formed, and the innovativeness and transdisciplinarity are still insufficient. Future research should focus on building postdoctoral academic communities, expanding postdoctoral research fields, and innovating postdoctoral research paradigms.

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**Interrelating Interdisciplinarity and Interculturality:
A Meta-Analysis of the Web of Science Data**

UNESCO's 2030 Agenda claimed higher education to be a key driver for its sustainable development goals and pinpointed interdisciplinarity and interculturality as two of the three "interrelated" themes to be focused upon. Is this "interrelatedness" reflected in the ongoing global research? If so, how does the trend look like going through the three development phases of UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework, i.e., DESD (2005-2014), GAP (2015-2019), and ESD for 2030 (2020-2030)? Through a meta-analysis of the Web of Science data covering the three time periods, this study showed the trends of interdisciplinarity and interculturality being researched upon separately and together, stratified by two binary variables of "higher education" and "empirical research". The findings showed both similarities and differences of the research trends regarding interdisciplinarity and interculturality as well as a distinctive lack of "interrelatedness" between the two. The trends also showed distinctively different patterns of the three development phases of ESD, especially an intriguing downward curve for the most recent phase. The originality of this study is demonstrated in empirically interrelating interdisciplinarity and interculturality in higher education. Its significance is demonstrated in a recommendation for UNESCO's ESD framework to further leverage research to achieve its aim.

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What Makes a Good LMS: Do We All Agree?

The Learning Management System (LMS) has become ubiquitous in teaching and learning in the Higher Education sector worldwide. Since its introduction in the late 1990s, its functions have been increasingly expanded, to allow lecturers not only to plan, facilitate, administer, and manage the content of their courses or training programs, but also to address learning gaps through analytical data and reporting. Its market and usage have seen massive growth with the rise of the internet and online teaching and learning, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even for contact or blended teaching, one would still note its increasing presence, e.g. to manage teaching material and assessments.

Building on existing literature on what makes a good LMS, this presentation reports a self-study and conversation of one lecturer and one academic development (AD) support in terms of the two most popular LMSs on the market: Blackboard & Moodle during an LMS transition. Comparing and reflecting on these two LMS for various content delivery modes (physical, blended & completely online) as well as the reasons for the system transition, the two authors discuss and reflect on a wide range of issues related to what each needs, wants, what is feasible, as well as other considerations of a good LMS, covering functionality, performance, interface and other (e.g. cost-effectiveness) aspects. This self-study reveals that a consensus on what makes a good LMS might be hard to reach because different aspects might be included or prioritized in one’s consideration and judgment by different LMS stakeholders (including lecturer, AD, but also students, administrators, IT support, regulators & auditors, university management, LMS providers etc) at different times. This complication may give rise to conflicts and resistance.

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