# QAA

# Standing Out in the Crowd:
## Principles of Inclusive & Engaging Learning Experience in Business Education

This report is an output from the Collaborative Enhancement Project supported and funded by QAA Membership.

**The project is led by**
University of Lincoln (UK)

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# Testimonials

"A thoughtful, well-structured, and insightful document that strongly aligns with the goals of inclusive pedagogy in higher education."

*Dr Irene Kafui Vorsah Amponsah*

"This document effectively incorporates student voices to emphasise the importance of respect, accessibility, diversity, and psychological safety in fostering meaningful participation and a sense of belonging. Each theme is clearly defined and grounded in practical implications for both teaching and learning. Overall, the principles form a comprehensive and empathetic guide for creating student-centred educational experiences."

*Dr Ashraful Alam*

"It's clear that you've put thoughtful effort into exploring inclusive student engagement, and your commitment to equity and participation is commendable. Overall, this project represents a meaningful and thoughtful contribution to the discourse on inclusive student engagement."

*Heshma Haribhai-Pitamber*

"I commend the clarity and thoughtfulness of the framework. The principles are comprehensive, student-centered, and clearly informed by authentic student voices. I find the language highly accessible, the tone inclusive, and the structure clear. These principles will undoubtedly support institutions aiming to enhance engagement meaningfully. They collectively provide a robust foundation for promoting inclusivity and engagement in higher education settings globally."

*Dr. Krayyem Al-Hajaya*

"Each principle is clearly defined with practical examples, making the document easy to understand and apply for educators and institutions. I love how it's only a few pages and really digestible!"

*Michelle Crawley*

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

In today's fast-changing business world – shaped by technology, sustainability and post-pandemic global changes in geo-politics – keeping students engaged is one of the biggest challenges in higher education (HE), both in the UK and around the world. Student engagement includes more than just coming to class. It is about how students interact, participate, and commit to learning in meaningful ways – emotionally, behaviourally, and cognitively (Fredricks et al., 2004; Imms et al., 2017; Bowden et al., 2021) as well as the broader social and cultural influences that shape how students engage (Kahu and Nelson, 2018; Trowler et al., 2022).

The responsibility for student engagement is shared by educators and students (Wimpenny and Savin-Baden, 2013). Creating a positive, supportive classroom environment can help students connect with their learning (Furrer and Skinner, 2003). This represents a clear need for educators to be aware of and consider how different learning tools and approaches can affect student engagement (Bond et al., 2020) and be open to learning what works, and what does not (Wimpenny and Savin-Baden, 2013).

Student engagement with business schools and their education is crucial in enhancing students' overall university experiences. Of course, what counts as 'good' engagement can look very different depending on the subject, context, or even the student cohort. That is why it is important for universities to actively explore different ways of engaging their students – to stay innovative,  build

lifelong learning habits, and make sure students leave with the confidence and capabilities to thrive in a rapidly evolving world.

Student engagement, despite its importance, remains an underexplored area. A great deal of this current work is experimental – led by academics trying out different techniques to see what connects. What is often missing from this process is the student voice in shaping those strategies. When we invite students into the conversation, especially those from diverse backgrounds, we are far more likely to design engaging teaching and learning experiences that work. As Hubburd and Gawthorpe (2020) assert, inclusivity is key to helping all students succeed, no matter where they are coming from. That is why any model of student engagement should be flexible enough to support all learners and ensure no one gets left behind.

Our research took on this challenge by exploring how student engagement plays out across a wide range of educational contexts. We conducted qualitative research across nine countries on five continents — including Ghana, South Africa, India, Malaysia, Belgium, the UK, Canada, the US, and Australia. This international scope allowed us to look closely at the similarities and differences between how engagement works in diverse settings.

To make sure we were truly hearing from students, we developed a new survey that gave students the space to define what engagement means to them. We ran further global student group workshops

**I**N TODAY'S FAST-CHANGING BUSINESS WORLD – KEEPING STUDENTS ENGAGED IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.

to dig into the learning experience and identify shared principles. This has resulted in a multidimensional model of student engagement that is inclusive, practical, and adaptable. And with input from educator peers through an international review process, we were able to refine and validate our findings.

Through the sharing and dissemination of this work, our aim is to support educators everywhere in understanding the value of engagement and how they can bring more of it into their own classrooms. By learning from global perspectives and centring diverse student voices, we hope to create more inclusive, meaningful learning experiences for all.

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# 2. Literature Overview

## 2.1. Student Engagement – Why it matters and what prevents it

The subject of student engagement has grown within the academic literature over recent years to become a critical component of the learning experience. Due to the complexity and multifaceted nature of student engagement, there is not a single definition that truly captures the breath of concepts and interactions (Tight, 2020; Wilson et al., 2019; Gourlay, 2015; Macfarlane, 2015; Brickhill et al., 2024; Zepke, 2024). Prior literature has identified varying overlapping engagement attributes. For instance, Fredricks et al. (2004), Trowler (2010), Kahu (2013), Evans et al. (2015), and Bowden et al. (2021), identified a behavioural component to engagement that focusses on observable academic performance (e.g., student conduct, class attendance, engagement with content and participation in class discussions) and student participatory actions (e.g. proactive involvement in campus life and self-initiated personal citizenship). Other attributes reported relate to psychological and socio-cultural factors (Fredricks et al., 2004), cognition and institutional efficiency (Trowler, 2010; Kahu, 2013; Evans et al., 2015), self-efficacy, emotions, belonging, and well-being (Kahu and Nelson, 2018), affective, social, and cognitive (Bowden et al., 2021) and socio-ecological and sociopolitical factors (Zepke, 2024).

Creating an environment where students are motivated, feel a sense of belonging, and can participate in their learning process is therefore integral to the engagement process. Thus, a practice where all stakeholders in the learning process (students, educators, and the institution) can input to make meaningful contributions is particularly important. Students acting as co-creators and co-generators of knowledge underpins a student-centred approach that can facilitate and accelerate student engagement. Prior literature identifies student engagement barriers such as language and prior educational experiences (Huang et al., 2020), demographic background (Al-Nimer and Mustafa, 2022), mental factors such as anger, anxiety, and frustration (D'Errico et al., 2016), cultural sensitivity (Santos et al., 2023; Guo et al., 2024), classroom mode (virtual or face-to-face) (Meade and Parthasarathy, 2024) underrepresentation and physical disabilities (Kyte, 2024; Lombardi and Lalor, 2023), as critical to overcome in order to develop engaged learning opportunities for all students.

## 2.2. Inclusivity & Student Engagement

A student-centred approach to engagement calls for strategies and interventions that foster the concept of inclusivity where students feel welcome, comfortable and confident sharing ideas and participating in the educational process (Bishop-Monroe and Garcia, 2023; Glessmer, 2024). It becomes imperative to integrate an inclusive approach to enhance student engagement. Walstra and Chukwuma (2023) argue that inclusive engagement should be a collaborative, open exchange between students and educators. Miller (2016) argues inclusion can result from an educator's creative way of

> CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE STUDENTS ARE MOTIVATED, FEEL A SENSE OF BELONGING, AND CAN PARTICIPATE IN THEIR LEARNING PROCESS IS THEREFORE INTEGRAL TO THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS.

structuring the classroom, ensuring a personal approach to students' interaction and a knowledgeable and responsiveness engagement with student queries.

Inclusion supports the continuous and intentional process of creating a supportive learning environment (Bishop-Monroe and Garcia, 2023). Vallee (2017) and Moore (2023) point to the need for educators to consciously be aware of possible 'silent' factors (e.g., race and gender, social and economic inequity, diverse sexualities and genders, linguistic bases, religious differences, and disabilities) that may result in exclusion. For students from marginalised groups and underrepresented backgrounds, who are typically less academically prepared for tertiary education (Erasmus and Fourie, 2018), Vallee (2017) and suggest the silent exclusion gap can be breached through directing additional efforts to these groups of students, rigorous classroom management and one-on-one student engagement. These bridging interventions can play a critical role in deepening inclusivity while reducing the rate of exclusion in the learning and engagement process. Curriculum internationalisation is a strategic tool for enhancing student inclusion and engagement as it encourages student self-learning and self-development (Phan et al., 2018; Trinh and Conner, 2019).

**IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT EDUCATORS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN DEVELOPING LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT CAN ENHANCE INCLUSIVENESS AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR LEARNING.**

## 2.3. Engagement Outcomes

Student engagement interventions have been linked to student academic performance and outcomes (Walsh and Jaquet, 2023; Chan and Chen, 2023; Mountain et al., 2022) such as student grades, class attendance and retention, lifelong learning, and completion rates (Oz and Boyaci, 2021; Northey et al., 2015; Khademi Ashkzari et al., 2018). Studies continue to examine socio-cultural and socio-economic student differences and how they significantly influence student academic performance (James et al., 2024; Dragomir and Dumitru, 2023; Krasodomska and Godawska, 2021).

It becomes clear that educators play a critical role in developing learning experiences that can enhance inclusiveness and student engagement in their learning. Through the use of best practice principles and tools of student engagement educators can enhance the learning experience and sense of belonging, creating a more equitable environment for learning.

# 3. Project Approach

## 3.1 Exploring Engagement and Inclusivity: Student-centred Research

The decision to use a mixed-method research approach—starting with a survey and followed by workshops—was both strategic and inclusive. Combining these two methods enriched the data and ensured the final framework would be actionable, context-sensitive, and informed by genuine student voice, not just researcher interpretation.

In Phase 1, the survey allowed for broad data collection across eleven institutions in nine countries. With anonymity assured, students could share honest reflections. The structured yet open-ended questions enabled rich qualitative data capture. Responses offered thematic insights on engagement and inclusion at scale.

In Phase 2, the workshops served as collaborative spaces to expand upon survey findings, and 'sense check' the initial results, understandings and impressions. These interactive sessions helped validate survey interpretations, fostered co-creation of potential solutions, and empowered students as stakeholders. This participatory element is aligned with students-as-partners frameworks in HE (Healey et al., 2014), where learners actively contribute to shaping their educational environment. Workshops also allowed researchers to delve deeper into cultural nuances, particularly important in a multi-country study. In Phase 3, we conducted an in-depth review with educators from 12 different countries to collect constructive feedback on our framework. This feedback was then used to adjust the framework to ensure broad applicability of research findings.

The overarching research addresses the challenge of designing a framework that helps students to "stand out in the crowd" — ensuring student visibility, participation, and recognition.

## 3.2 About the survey

In developing the survey research questions, care was given to design a survey which would encourage students to offer insights into student engagement, inclusivity, and exclusion within the classroom. Together the open-ended questions shape the foundational data required to build an empirically grounded framework, enabling the research team to draw meaningful conclusions and stress-test these with diverse student groups.

> *Describe a situation when you felt completely engaged in the class.*

Engagement is not merely about participation—it involves emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment in learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). By asking students to reflect on their peak engagement moments, the study aimed to identify common triggers where students experienced meaningful learning, such as teaching strategies, inclusive dialogue, or collaborative tasks. The question encourages authentic reflection on what made the learning experience impactful and helps identify teaching

**ENGAGEMENT IS NOT MERELY ABOUT PARTICIPATION—IT INVOLVES EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE, AND BEHAVIOURAL INVESTMENT IN LEARNING (FREDRICKS ET AL., 2004).**

strategies (e.g., active learning, storytelling, real-world application) that foster deep engagement. These insights are essential for understanding how inclusive pedagogical practices contribute to student engagement, and they provide actionable feedback for educators aiming to create equitable and stimulating learning environments.

*Describe what you think an inclusive classroom environment looks like.*

Inclusivity is inherently contextual. This question takes the abstract concept from the previous question and roots it in tangible classroom realities. Responses here helped researchers understand whether students associate inclusivity with visible signs (e.g. diverse representation in the classroom) or intangible elements (e.g., psychological safety, respect). Literature points to inclusive classrooms as those that celebrate difference, foster belonging, and mitigate systemic bias (Hockings, 2010). By collecting students' visions of inclusion, an aim of the research is to reflect on teaching methods which meet both students' expectations and institutional standards.

### 3.3 About the workshops



Stand up for inclusive and effective student engagement

Student Workshop

QAA

To complement the survey data, two workshop activities were designed and implemented to sense-check and add contextual depth to student responses.

Attendees were potentially but not necessarily survey responders. Two workshops enabled maximum participation from students across multiple time zones and countries.

While surveys are effective in capturing broad trends and themes, they often lack the nuance and richness that emerge from dialogue and shared reflection. The workshops provided a space for students to expand on the survey responses, clarify meanings, and explore their experiences in greater depth.

This approach aligns with a mixed-methods ethos, where qualitative insights are used to triangulate and validate quantitative or structured data. The workshops allowed students to unpack what terms meant in practice, often revealing subtle differences in interpretation based on cultural, disciplinary, or personal contexts.

The workshops enabled the research team to identify patterns and triggers of meaningful engagement that may not have been fully captured in the survey. Through guided discussions and collaborative tasks, students were able to articulate specific moments of emotional, cognitive, and behavioural investment in their learning—insights that are essential for understanding how inclusive pedagogical practices translate into lived experiences.

**THE WORKSHOPS ENABLED THE RESEARCH TEAM TO IDENTIFY PATTERNS AND TRIGGERS OF MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT THAT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FULLY CAPTURED IN THE SURVEY.**

Importantly, these sessions also created a feedback loop, where students could reflect on the survey findings and contribute to the co-construction of meaning. This participatory element not only enhanced the validity of the findings but also modelled the very principles of inclusivity and engagement that the study sought to explore. It demonstrated a commitment to student voice and partnership, in line with QAA themes around student engagement, inclusive learning and teaching, and enabling student success. In summary, the workshops became
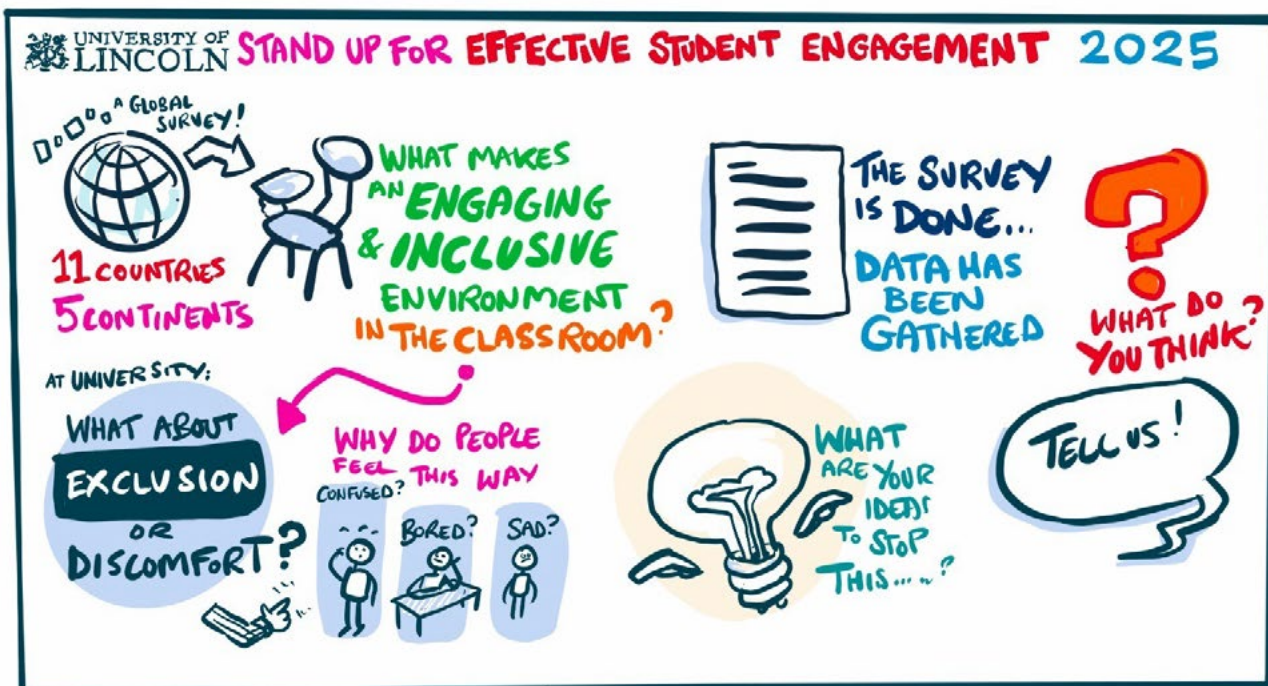
a critical component of the research design, ensuring that data collected were not only representative but also interpretable, meaningful, and actionable. The workshops provided a richer, more holistic understanding of the student experience and offered valuable insights for enhancing inclusive practice in higher education.

## 3.4 About survey participants

**Who took part in our survey?** Almost a thousand people – 928, to be exact – shared their stories with us. They are learners and early-career business professionals who care about business education.

**A genuinely global mix.** We reached students from five continents. Respondents were based in Asia (35%), Africa (25%), Europe (20%), Oceania (11%) and North America (9%). Six in ten were in developing economies, so the findings capture perspectives from both growth markets and more established settings.

**Where they are in their studies.** Respondents are at various stages of higher education. 55% are working towards a bachelor's degree. A further 43% are enrolled in a master's or other postgraduate qualification, and 2% are doctoral candidates. Seven out of ten are studying in their home country, while three out of ten are studying abroad.

### Distribution of Students by Continent

| Continent | Percentage (%) |
| --- | --- |
| Asia | 35 |
| Africa | 24.5 |
| Europe | 20 |
| Oceania | 11 |
| North America | 9 |
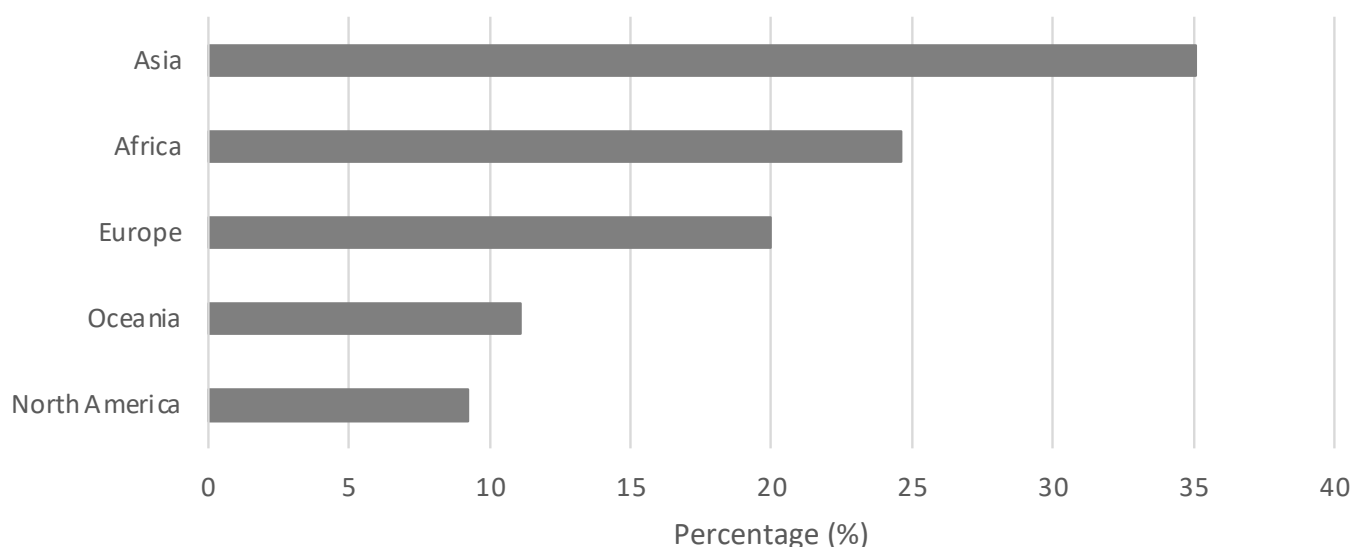
**What they study.** Fields of study reported by students include accounting (39%), finance (14%) and business and/or management degrees (17%). The remainder spans everything from marketing and IT to law and logistics.

**Experience beyond the classroom.** Classrooms are only part of the picture: 42% of participants reported no professional experience. 40% have one to three years of work experience, while another 18% have four or more years of experience.
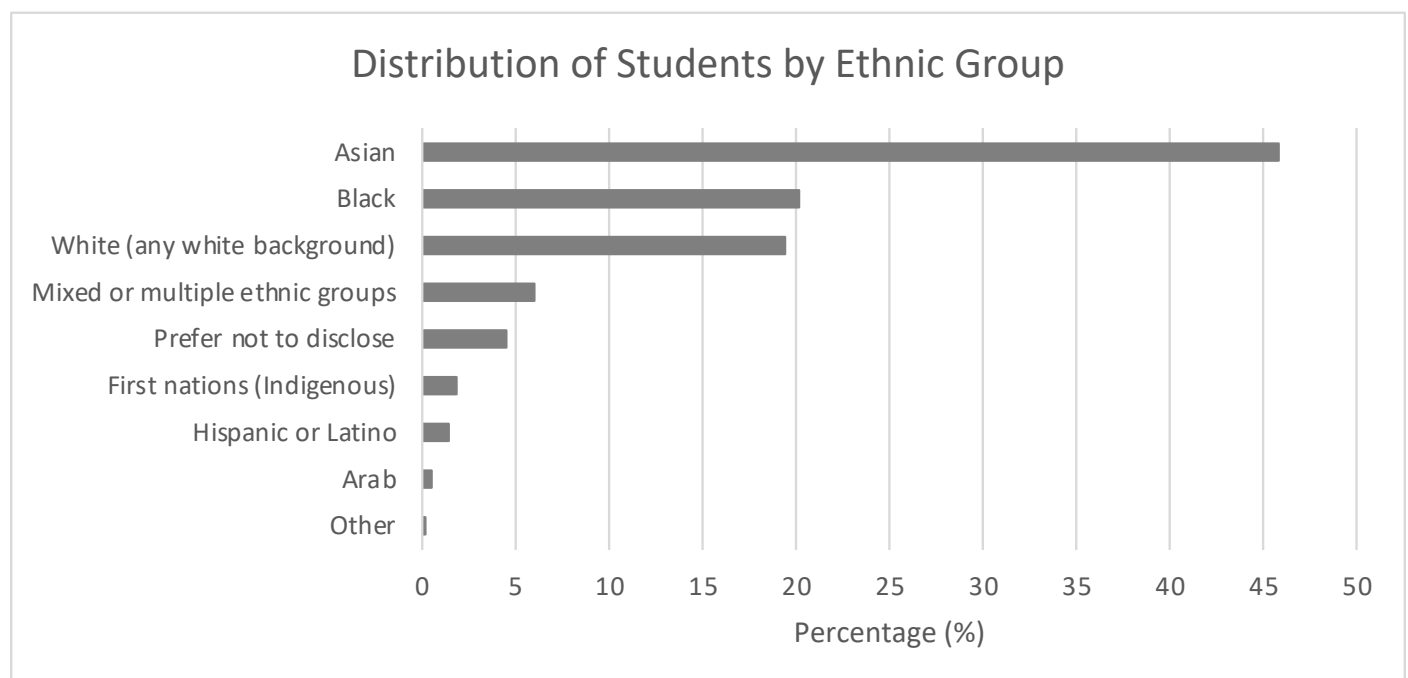
**Age profile.** 77% of respondents are 24 years or younger, yet mature voices are present too, with 4% aged 40 +.

**Gender balance.** The gender split is almost perfect parity – women make up 49 % of the sample and men 48%. One per cent identify as non-binary or another gender, and 2 % prefer not to say.

**Ethnic and cultural diversity.** Cultural breadth is just as strong: respondents mainly identify as Asian (46%), Black (20%) or White (19%), with mixed or multiple ethnicities and other groups completing the picture. 37% say they belong to the majority ethnic group in their country of residence, highlighting how cross-cultural our cohort is.

### Distribution of Students by Ethnic Group



*Chart: Distribution of Students by Ethnic Group (Percentage %)*

- Asian: ~46
- Black: ~20
- White (any white background): ~19
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups: ~6
- Prefer not to disclose: ~4.5
- First nations (Indigenous): ~2
- Hispanic or Latino: ~1.5
- Arab: ~0.5
- Other: ~0.2

**Accessibility.** Finally, 7% disclosed a disability, neurodivergence or long-term health condition, reminding us that accessibility must remain at the forefront of any engagement and inclusive learning exploration.

## 3.5. About workshop participants

Who joined our workshops? A total of 55 students took part in our two workshops, offering valuable qualitative insights alongside the broader survey. Students came with a clear sense of enthusiasm and engagement.

What students said before the workshop…

*"Looking forward to have an exciting and educative workshop with you."*

**Where they are in their studies.** Student workshop members were at various stages in their academic journeys. 38% were in the final year of their bachelor's degree, while 18% were in earlier years of undergraduate study. A further 35% were pursuing a master's degree, and 5% were enrolled in doctoral programmes. 4% had already graduated, having completed their studies within the past two years.

**What they study and where.** In terms of academic focus, the vast majority (89%) were enrolled in programmes related to accounting

and finance. A smaller number were pursuing degrees in general business (5%), human resource management (2%), leadership or strategy (2%), and other fields (2%). Most participants (65%) were domestic students, with international students representing one in three workshop attendees (35%), highlighting the global reach of the focus group sample.

**Age profile.** A majority of participants (67%) were aged 24 or younger. One in five (22%) were aged between 25 and 29, while 6% were in their thirties. Another 5% were 40 years or older.

**Gender balance.** The gender distribution skewed towards women, who made up 73% of the sample. Men represented 25% of participants, and 2% preferred not to disclose their gender.

**Ethnic and cultural diversity.** Participants identified across a range of ethnic backgrounds. 40% described themselves as black, while 35% identified as Asian. 18% were white, and the remainder included Hispanic or Latino (2%) and Arab (2%) participants. Two individuals (3%) preferred not to disclose their ethnicity.

All participants were awarded a certificate of participation

## 3.6. International peer-review activity with academics

In Phase 3, we conducted an in-depth review with diverse educators to collect feedback on the framework that we developed in our project. Overall, 25 academics contributed to the study from 12 countries, including the UK (36%), Canada (12%), the USA (8%), South Africa (8%), Australia (8%), India (4%), Ghana (4%), Nigeria (4%), Belgium (4%), Jordan (4%), Malaysia (4%), and the United Arab Emirates (4%).

# 4. Principles of Inclusive & Engaging Learning Experience in Business Education Framework



Principles of Inclusive & Engaging Learning Experience in Business Education

- Diversity
- Respect
- Accessibility
- Managing Conflicts
- Supportive
- Communication
- Safe Space & Belonging
- Experiential
- Influential
- Motivational
- Equity
- Empathy
- Collaboration with Peers
- Participation
- Constructive Feedback
- Learning Culture

## 4.1 Framework Overview

The Principles of Inclusive and Engaging Learning Experiences in Business Education Framework (the framework) presents a set of actionable design principles that can speak to, interact with, and play together to support facilitators in the design of inclusive and engaging learning experiences. The framework draws on key learning experiences and elements raised by diverse student voices through both survey and peer workshop design, stress-tested internationally with leading business educators, to create an actionable set of guiding principles that educators, students, administrators and other types of facilitators can deeply engage with to transform the business education experience.

The framework positions each principle not in hierarchical order, but rather complimentary of each other, working together, supporting one another, to contribute to inclusive and engaged learning experiences.

As such, the circular nature of the framework hints at facilitators finding synergies across principles, overlapping areas of engagement, and numerous configurations for how these principles can be brought together and actioned in the design of inclusive and engaged learning opportunities for business students. The framework envisages talking points and practical reflection for educators, students and university administrators, inviting powerful opportunities for intersection across these key stakeholder groups.

The framework therefore encourages diverse approaches with no singular approach to inclusion and engagement, positioning for collective responsibility and action, and calling for a mindset of continuous improvement. Our understanding of inclusion and engagement will evolve, as will the needs of our students. We will not always get it right, but what matters is that we stay engaged and keep taking action through these guiding principles.



Principles of Inclusive & Engaging Learning Experience in Business Education

Learning Culture · Diversity · Respect · Accessibility · Managing Conflicts · Constructive Feedback · Supportive · Participation · Communication · Collaboration with Peers · Safe Space & Belonging · Empathy · Experiential · Equity · Influential · Motivational

# 4.2 Principles

## Diversity

Diversity means learning alongside people from different backgrounds, cultures, identities, and abilities. Students described feeling valued when differences are acknowledged and celebrated, whether in classroom discussions, group work, or within learning materials. Students emphasised that everyone should be presented with equal opportunities to contribute, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, learning needs, sexuality, or socio-economic status. Diverse perspectives were seen as enriching and essential to both academic and personal growth.

## Respect

Respect is a core principle for fostering engagement and belonging in higher education. Students highlighted the importance of consistent mutual respect between peers and educators, and across all interactions. This includes active listening, valuing diverse perspectives, and creating space for all voices to be heard without judgment. When respect is practised, students feel safe to participate, confident to express themselves, and cultivate awareness of different backgrounds, abilities, values, or opinions.

## Accessibility

Accessibility cultivates a learning environment that supports students' participation in their learning experience, engagement with course content, and navigation of the classroom space. Students emphasised the need for flexible teaching methods, accessible physical and digital resources, and varied formats that cater to diverse needs, physical ability, or learning preferences – such as visual aids, audio materials, and assistive technologies. Accessibility also includes practical elements like classroom layout, seating, and assessments that accommodate participation.

## Managing conflicts

Conflict is acknowledged as a natural and valuable part of the learning process within an inclusive and engaging higher education experience. Students highlight the importance of educators who address conflict with calmness, fairness, transparency, and clarity—creating space for mutual resolution through respectful dialogue and critical thinking. When guided effectively, conflict supports the development of communication skills, mutual understanding and trust, together with deeper engagement and diverse perspectives in the classroom.

## Supportive

Supportive environments are those where students feel encouraged and personally acknowledged. Students emphasised the importance of teachers who understand their individual needs, offer personalised guidance, and create a welcoming atmosphere. Support goes beyond academics to include emotional well-being, access to resources, and the empowerment to grow at one's own pace. When students feel supported, they are more confident to engage, share ideas, and make mistakes.

# 4.2 Principles

## Communication

Clear, open communication builds trust, encourages participation, and fosters a sense of belonging. Students emphasised the importance of two-way communication between peers and teachers, multiple modes of expression (verbal, written, and digital), and language that is accessible to all. Clear communication fosters engagement, collaboration, and mutual understanding among individuals with diverse backgrounds, abilities, and learning needs.

## Safe space and belonging

Safe spaces are environments where students feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment, ridicule, or exclusion. Students feel most engaged when they feel secure, accepted, and free to be themselves. This sense of psychological safety enables participation, idea-sharing, and collaborative learning. A sense of belonging grows when they are accepted, valued, and seen as part of the group.

## Experiential

Experiential learning engagement arises when students connect their academic experiences with real-life contexts. Students reported feeling highly engaged when learning was practical, hands-on, and directly applicable to their future careers or everyday life. This theme emphasises skill development, relatable content, and independent thought, all of which contribute to a deep and immersive approach to learning.

## Influential

Influential engagement is shaped by the personal qualities and instructional approach of the facilitator. Students' responses highlighted how a facilitator's personality, professionalism, questioning style, and passion had a direct impact on their willingness to participate and their overall interest in the course.

## Motivational

Motivational engagement is rooted in emotional and cognitive stimulation. Students felt most involved when they enjoyed the classroom experience, found content exciting, and felt encouraged by the environment and instructional methods. Energy, interest, and freedom to explore ideas made the learning inviting, motivational, and inspiring.

# 4.2 Principles

## Equity

Equity is defined by fair access to learning, participation, and support, regardless of a student's background, abilities, or identity. Students emphasised the importance of being treated equally, without bias or discrimination, and having opportunities to express their ideas, ask questions, and succeed. They valued classrooms where differences are acknowledged without leading to exclusion or unequal treatment. Equity was seen not as uniformity, but as ensuring everyone receives what they need to thrive.

## Empathy

Empathy is reflected in kind and respectful interactions and acknowledging invisible barriers. A sense of emotional safety, shared support, and genuine understanding enables deeper connection and learning. Empathy means recognising mistakes as part of learning and fostering emotional safety through non-judgmental support and genuine care.

## Collaboration with peers

Collaboration is experienced as a shared process of learning, where students work together, support one another, create connections, make meaning together, and engage in group activities that value every contribution. Students described environments where group work, discussions, and peer teaching were common. Effective collaboration is built on open dialogue, shared goals, and the belief that learning is a collective journey.
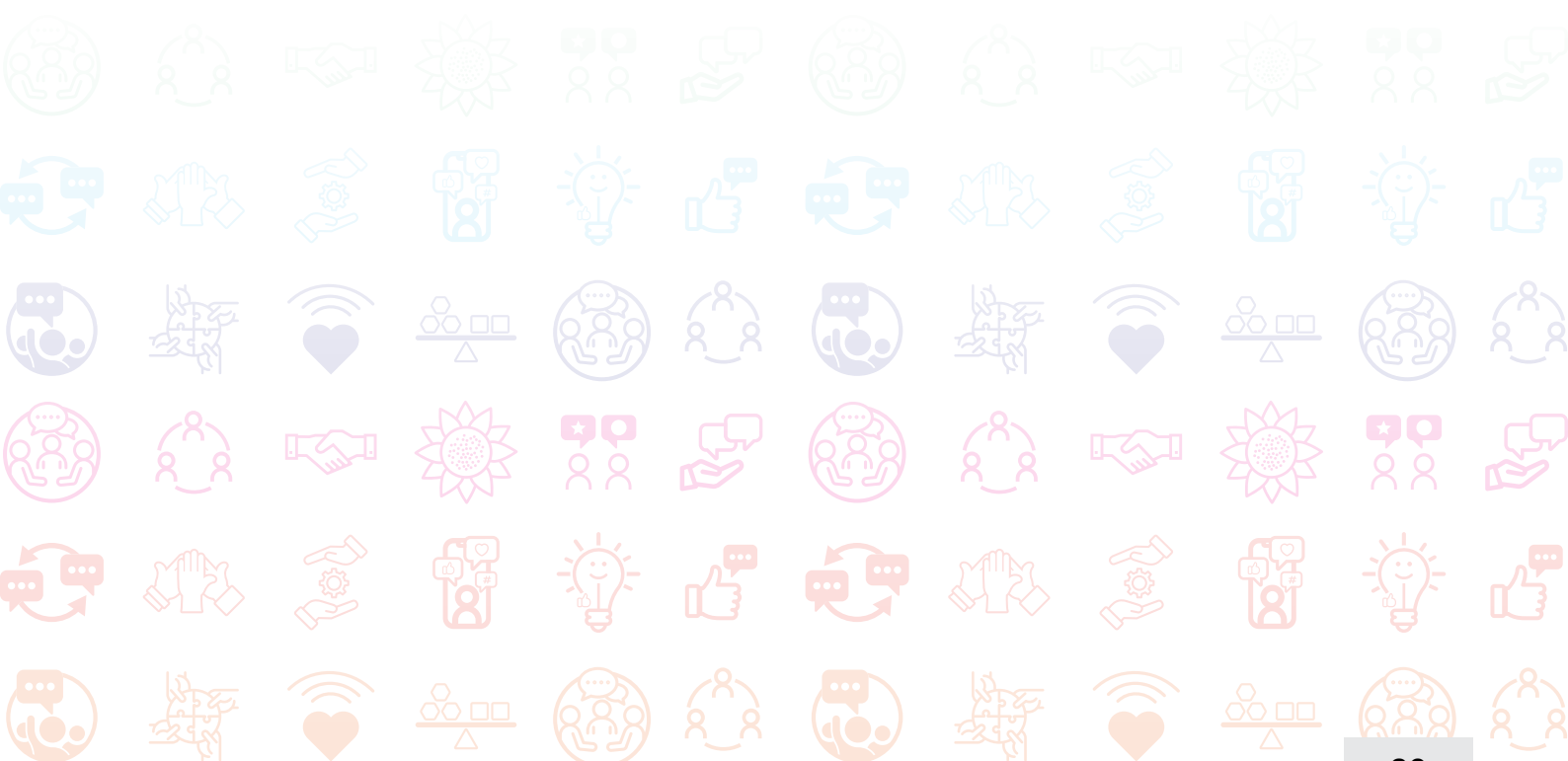
# 4.2 Principles

## Participation

Participation is described as an environment where students feel empowered, encouraged, and included in classroom activities and discussions. Meaningful participation involves diverse voices contributing in various ways, whether through speaking, collaborating, or interacting with content. When teachers foster participatory practices, students are more likely to feel involved, respected, and motivated to learn together.

## Constructive feedback

Constructive feedback is seen as a process that supports growth, learning, and mutual respect. Students value teachers who listen attentively and respond to their needs, and who invite student input to improve the learning experience. Feedback is most effective when it is personal, encouraging, and focused on development rather than perfection. Equally important, students want their voices to improve teaching and learning experiences.

## Learning culture

An engaging learning culture is created through respect, openness, and dynamic interaction between facilitators and students. A positive learning culture supports varied methods of engagement through collaboration, fun, lively interaction, and adaptability, making students feel seen, heard, and motivated to learn meaningfully.

## 4.3 Practical application and evaluation of the framework

**Students** are core to the learning environment, with many students interacting with their peers more so than their educators or business education administrators. Students seeking to enhance inclusive and engaging learning environments for themselves and their peers will find these guiding principles beneficial in understanding their role and how they can improve learning contexts for everyone, including themselves.

**Educators** can use this framework as part of their reflexivity and self-reflection in teaching to help create more inclusive and engaging learning environments. The guiding principles can be further used to spark discussion and prompt action across educator teams when designing learning materials and setting curricula.

**Administrators and university leaders** can also use this framework and its guiding principles to reflect on accessibility, inclusion, and student engagement when designing educational policies, reviewing programs and curriculum, as well as creating the student experience and interface with the university.

Table 1: Educator and Student Engagement with Framework Principles

| Principle | Educator Engagement | Student Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| **Diversity** | Audit readings for global authorship; invite guest voices; use positionality statements when presenting material. | Draw on your own cultural examples in discussion; challenge monocultural viewpoints respectfully. |
| **Managing conflicts** | Normalise structured disagreement: set ground-rules, assign "devil's-advocate" roles, debrief with restorative questions. | Approach differences as invitations to probe assumptions; practise "listen-summarise-question" before replying. |
| **Respect** | Model inclusive language, pronounce names correctly, co-create a short agreement that sets out clear expectations and outlines how everyone in a unit will work together. | Call peers by preferred names/pronouns, acknowledge others' ideas publicly, flag disrespect early but privately. |
| **Accessibility** | Apply Universal Design for Learning: multiple means of representation, expression and engagement; caption videos; give choice in assessment format. | Flag access needs early; explore alternative formats (audio, mind-maps) and share hacks that help you. |
| **Supportive** | Adopt "plus-one" feedback (one praise, one growth point); sign-post wellbeing services; schedule micro-check-ins after major deadlines. | Form peer-review groups for accountability; ask for clarification early; use office hours. |

| Principle | Educator Engagement | Student Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| **Communication** | Offer tri-modal pathways (in-class, discussion board, anonymous Padlet); summarise lengthy emails in bullet points. | Choose the channel that lets you contribute confidently; practise concise professional emails. |
| **Safe space and belonging** | Begin modules with low-stakes storytelling; signal that mistakes are learning opportunities, not deficits; intervene swiftly on micro-aggressions. | Share pronouns and learning preferences; uphold confidentiality in peer activities. |
| **Experiential** | Use local case-studies, live briefs with community partners, short "micro-placement" options; connect theory to news events that break that week. | Seek to relate tasks to your own context (e.g. apply stats assignment to part-time job data). |
| **Influential** | Display enthusiasm and vulnerability (e.g. "Here's where I once struggled"); vary questioning patterns; make passion visible through stories. | Give real-time feedback on what helps you engage (e.g. polls after class). |
| **Motivational** | Set "desirable difficulties"; explain "why this matters" every session; celebrate small wins publicly. | Track your own progress journal; set personal stretch goals that align with course outcomes. |
| **Equity** | Introduce anonymous participation tools; rotate roles in group work; monitor engagement analytics for hidden gaps and intervene. | Rotate spokesperson duties; invite quieter peers in; reflect on your own biases. |
| **Empathy** | Open/close sessions with a 60-second empathy check ("high, low, learn"); share weekly video summaries acknowledging common hurdles. | Respond honestly in pulse surveys; practise empathetic listening in group tasks. |
| **Collaboration with peers** | Use heterogeneous team formation; build in peer-assessment; teach conflict-resolution skills before group projects start. | Draft group contracts; divide tasks by strength but cross-train so learning is shared. |
| **Participation** | Embed think-pair-share, fish-bowl debates, rotating moderators; recognise contributions in grading rubrics. | Prepare short comments/ questions before class; volunteer for roles (scribe, summariser). |

| Principle | Educator Engagement | Student Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| **Constructive feedback** | Apply dialogic feedback: student self-evaluation → staff response → student action plan; let students set one criterion in the rubric. | Act on feedback within a week; request clarification with examples; peer-review classmates' drafts. |
| **Learning culture** | Signal growth mindset (display past cohorts' improvement curves); invite co-authoring of reading lists; celebrate cultural festivals in coursework examples. | Contribute to mid-module reviews; suggest resources that speak to your community; mentor newcomers. |

The 16 guiding principles speak a common international language of "student engagement and inclusion" (Table 1). Contemporary scholarship frames engagement as psychological, socio-cultural, ecological and political, each lens highlighting different levers for inclusion (motivation, cultural capital, institutional culture, power). By mirroring this multi-lens view, the framework can be read with equal clarity by colleagues in London, Lagos or Kuala Lumpur: everyone recognises the domains, even if local priorities differ.

Local contextualisation is built into the framework. Principles of Accessibility and Diversity explicitly invite educators to translate them into actions that match their own legal environment (for example, the QAA's call for "flexible educational approaches" in the UK) or their campus demographics (for example, targeted strategies for students from marginalised groups). Because the framework is principle-based rather than prescriptive, individuals can choose the make-up and material most suited to their educational setting, whether a rural polytechnic moving courses online or a research-intensive university decolonising its curriculum.

Equity impact is the moral and empirical core. A large body of evidence links well-designed engagement initiatives to higher attendance, stronger grades and better retention across diverse cultural contexts. Crucially, the gains are greatest for students who have historically been least served – those facing linguistic, socio-economic or disability-related barriers. By foregrounding respect, empathy and equal opportunities, the framework shifts inclusion from an additional "nice-to-have" towards an organising logic for everyday pedagogical design.

Scalability and evaluation are supported rather than assumed. Tools such as Wilson et al. (2019)'s engagement-evaluation model encourage institutions to attach clear outcomes and data points to each principle (participation analytics for Communication; pulse-survey scores for Belonging), enabling iterative improvement rather than one-off compliance. Mixed-method evidence—attendance logs, focus-group testimony, attainment gaps—allows campuses to ascertain what works within their unique ecology.

Finally, the framework's added value lies in how it connects the global to the local through a shared vocabulary and understanding. It permits multi-national partnerships (such as the QAA-led consortium spanning nine countries) to benchmark inclusive and engagement practices, while still empowering each institution to weave its own cultural, legislative and disciplinary threads. The Principles of Inclusive and Engaging Learning Experiences in Business Education Framework works because it is principle-driven and evidence-anchored, thriving locally by encouraging each principle as an open invitation to co-create context-specific action.

# 5. Innovative Application of Principles – Case Studies

## Case Study 1
**Empowering student-driven inquiry in technological and financial innovation**

## Case Study 2
**Teaching marketing research methodology: A scaffolded learning approach integrating industry insights and experiential learning**

## Case Study 3
**T(AI)skmaster**

## Case Study 4
**Navigating Cross-Cultural Classrooms and Supporting Chinese Learners**

## Case Study 5
**Legends and Ledgers – Making Accounting Accessible through Storytelling**

## Case Study 6
**Peer Mentorship and Industry Collaboration: Enhancing Inclusive Engagement at BAC**

## Case Study 7
**Lincoln Be Smarter: Innovative Digital Marketing/AI Education for SME Leaders**

## Case Study 8
**"Lights, Camera, Accountancy!": Developing students' relational and decision-making acumens in an innovative game show evening**

## Case Study 9
**Inclusive Learning through Technology-Enhanced Assessments**

# Case Study 1

Empowering student-driven inquiry in technological and financial innovation

| Case study author | Kieron Barber<br>Lecturer<br>University of Lincoln, UK |
|---|---|
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Accessibility<br>P – Diversity<br>P – Experiential<br>P – Motivational<br>P – Collaboration with peers<br>P – Participation |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V3 – Promoting participation and engagement in higher education and society<br>K2 - Approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study<br>K4 – The use and value of appropriate learning technologies<br>A1 – Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes<br>A3 - Assess and give feedback for learning |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | This case empowers students to choose any one of three financial innovations and independently investigate both the innovation itself and the approach taken by financial regulators, embracing open-ended inquiry where there is no single "right" answer. |

## Context

As part of a module titled 'Innovations in Finance' (Applied Financial Management) for second-year undergraduates, students were invited to take on the role of consultants in a legal and compliance department of a financial services firm that is seeking to diversify its offerings by introducing one of three new innovations (P 'Experiential'). Students were tasked to create a 10-minute video presentation on one of the three proposed new ventures that most interested them: 1) a decentralised digital currency system, 2) a green bond trading platform, or 3) an AI-driven robo-advisory service. In groups of six, students collectively decided how to divide the tasks of research, presentation design, and regulatory critique (P 'Collaboration with peers').

The module aims to familiarise and develop students' awareness and ability to command the various initiatives and tools within finance including exposing them to the regulatory environment and requirements to "practice". Technical skills are taught with the aid of computer data sources and constructs of coding, and financial mathematics, through programming software. The module maintains the importance of an ethical and professional approach, through the review and knowledge of codes of conduct and various external verification techniques and enforcement mechanisms.

The case is provided to the students in the second half of the term, when they have five weeks of the semester to work on the problem. The case learning aligns with the learning outcomes of the module. In particular, the case aims to provide students with an opportunity to:

- Evaluate the role of financial regulation in setting the agenda for investor protection and prevention of harm within the context of investment;

- Analyse the various developments in finance, financial instruments, and the financial environment commenting critically on their impacts, potential or otherwise;

- Reflect on their own learning progress and develop confidence in self-evaluation ability with specific reference to the ability to contribute to a team).

The student discovery nature of the case makes the learning flexible enough for the case to be introduced into applied financial management courses at both the

undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The fact the case works with both current and innovative areas facing the profession and the tensions that can be found in regulatory environments makes the case ideal for out-of-class exploration and in-class discussion.

The case allows finance students to engage in their own learning through discovery in the following ways:

- Carrying out independent research.
- Critically evaluating findings and reporting back, which supports the ability for students to create their own learning.
- Developing transferable skills such as, teamwork, communication, critical thinking.

This case, published by Barber et al., 2025, empowers students to choose any one of three financial innovations and independently investigate both the innovation itself and the approach taken by financial regulators, embracing open-ended inquiry where there is no single 'right' answer.

## Case description

Rather than restricting the case to a single innovation to analyse, the students were given a choice to explore the venture that most captured their interest. This autonomy fostered deeper engagement by allowing them to research innovations that aligned with their career aspirations or ethical concerns (P 'Diversity').

This was matched to the students' own context by placing them on a graduate scheme rotation across various departments at a financial services company based in Lincolnshire, where students are situated in the Legal and Compliance department. The company is performing well and because of this success, the company is embarking on one of three new ventures in the UK.

The new business ventures options include:

### *Decentralised digital currency and cross-border payment system*
A new decentralised digital currency and cross-border payment system targeting international financial transactions operates as a peer-to-peer network, enabling digital financial exchanges without traditional banking intermediaries. Key Technology features are:

- Blockchain-based transaction ledger.
- Encrypted secure transfer mechanism.
- Smart contract capabilities.
- Low-cost international money transfer infrastructure.
- Pseudonymous transaction tracking.

For context see further:
https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/111413/html/
https://ripple.com/company


### *Green bonds issuance and trading platform*
A new innovative green bond issuance and trading platform designed to facilitate sustainable investment opportunities aims to connect environmentally conscious investors with high-impact green infrastructure and renewable energy projects across the United Kingdom and internationally. Key Technology Features include:

- Digital platform for green bond issuance and trading.
- Comprehensive environmental impact measurement tools.
- Blockchain-enabled transparency and verification.
- Real-time sustainability performance tracking.
- Automated reporting and compliance monitoring.

For context see further:
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5804/cmselect/cmenvaud/277/report.html
https://www.climatealigned.co/about


### *Robo-advisory platform*
A new advanced robo-advisory platform that uses sophisticated machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence

to provide personalised investment management services aims to democratise investment advice by offering low-cost, algorithmically-driven portfolio management to a broader range of investors. Key Technology Features include:

- Advanced machine learning and artificial intelligence investment algorithms.

- Personalised risk profiling and asset allocation.

- Real-time portfolio rebalancing.

- Comprehensive financial goal tracking.

- Automated tax-efficient investment strategies.

- Integrated risk management tools.

For context see further:
https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/67246/pdf/
https://www.nutmeg.com

To complete the case, each group is required to provide their solution to three sections.

### Section 1
The first section provides students an opportunity to discuss and explain the technological features of their innovation, clearly explaining the innovative financial product / service. Students then contextualise the innovation within the current market trends and technological developments and demonstrate how the innovation addresses existing market gaps or challenges. For example, for the green bond trading system, students could explain what a green bond is, how the digital platform helps with automated reporting and compliance monitoring, and how it enables real-time sustainability performance tracking.

### Section 2
The second section asks students to outline the key regulatory bodies and their fundamental role relating to investor protection and prevention of harm within the context of investment. In doing so, students need to critically evaluate the effectiveness of the current regulatory framework in protecting investors.

Here students evaluate the current approach taken by UK financial regulators, including the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and the Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA), with a specific focus on investor protection. The primary emphasis is on the FCA's 12 Principles for Business, which provide basic principles for how a regulated firm must behave with both the regulator and its customers. This allows students to not only understand how their potential future employers are regulated, but also provides knowledge of how the students themselves are protected as consumers, particularly with the addition of the new 12th principle on Consumer Duty that states that "a firm must act to deliver good outcomes for retail customers".

For educators wanting to make use of these materials outside of the UK then modifications can be made to include their own geographic regulatory environment and / or organisations could be used that operate both within the UK and home countries.

### Section 3
The final section requires students to identify specific regulatory challenges unique to the proposed financial innovation, whilst examining potential compliance requirements needed. This provides students an opportunity to think about the future and asks students to discuss how the existing regulatory framework is / may be expected to change in relation to this sort of innovation.

For example, and referring back to the green-bond example, students could discuss the Anti-Greenwashing Rule (AGR) that came into effect in May 2024, requiring all FCA-regulated firms to ensure that any sustainability-related claims about their products or services are fair, transparent, and not misleading. However, this is not always straightforward, where regulations and guidance may not yet exist. Regulation may be currently under consultation, and as such, students can discuss their thoughts on potential needed regulations and even provide their own solutions.

In delivering their findings, students record a 10-minute video presentation in a way that best suits the group (P 'Accessibility'). This flexibility values creativity and requires students as a group to make key decisions around presentation and delivery of key findings across the three sections. In implementing the case student groups have recorded presentations in lecture halls, common university spaces, library, and at home via Microsoft Teams calls. Students integrated multimedia elements – presentation slides, props to aid the viewers' understanding, and varied narration styles - that leveraged digital storytelling techniques to enhance clarity and engagement. These videos can then act as a stimulus for in-class discussions (P 'Participation').

The open-ended nature of the case – "what balance should be struck between technological potential and regulatory safeguards?" – aims to immerse students in authentic, inquiry-based learning, where there is no definitive solution, only trade-offs and evolving policy arguments (P 'Motivational').

Given that the financial services sector is one of the most highly regulated sectors, there is this constant struggle between implementing regulations to protect the economy and consumers but not overly regulated that could lead to a lack of innovation and competitiveness that is important for the economy and consumers – this forms the debate at the centre of this case. This aligns with experiential and participatory pedagogies, which focus on student-driven problem-solving and collaborative sense-making. By driving their own inquiry, students not only deepen their subject knowledge and expertise but also sharpen critical thinking, and self-directed learning skills essential for employability in the fast-evolving business environment they will enter.

By positioning students as active agents in a simulated professional scenario, this case exemplifies an innovative, inclusive, and experiential approach that bridges academic theory with the practical demands of the modern finance sector.

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# Case Study 2

Teaching marketing research methodology: A scaffolded learning approach integrating industry insights and experiential learning

| Case study author | Prof Mia Bothma<br>Programme Coordinator for Marketing Management<br>North-West University, South Africa |
|---|---|
| Mapping to principles | P – Respect<br>P – Accessibility<br>P – Supportive<br>P – Experiential |
| Mapping to PSF 2023 | V2: Promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential<br>V5: Collaborate with others to enhance practice<br>K2: Approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study<br>K4: Appropriate use of digital and/or other technologies and resources for learning<br>A2: Teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments<br>A4: Support and guide learners |
| In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative | This case study is innovative because it combines insights from the marketing research industry with a student-centred teaching approach. The case study actively integrates scaffolded learning, peer review, personalised consultations and industry engagement while maintaining a strong focus on developing pervasive skills that are critical for workplace readiness. |

## Context

The case study is based on a marketing research methodology module for postgraduate students which is presented through scaffolded project phases, personalised consultations, peer feedback opportunities and an industry guest lecture.

## Case description

While working in the marketing industry, it became clear that theoretical knowledge alone was not sufficient for success. Pervasive skills such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, self-management, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence proved to be pivotal. The realisation that a marketing degree's value depends heavily on a graduate's ability to communicate, tackle complex problems, manage themselves, and make good decisions guided the vision for the postgraduate marketing research methodology module. The central aim was not to merely teach research theory but to purposefully develop the pervasive skills required in the marketing industry.

At the beginning of the module, students had limited exposure to the practical implementation of research-related concepts, which increased the need for an environment that is built on respect (P 'Respect'). In this module, opinions were valued, and each student was encouraged to express their uncertainty or curiosity. Respect became the daily practice, which was underpinned by open dialogue about research topics, discussions of how to solve research problems and psychological safety. During the first class, students were asked to evaluate and discuss a published dissertation, with limited knowledge about research. The aim of the activity was to show students the research process and the end goal that they should try to achieve. Owing to the difference in students' prior knowledge, accessibility (P 'Accessibility') formed a key design principle. Classroom layout included cluster seating to enhance student collaboration, and classes commenced with clear, stepwise guides and templates, visual resources such as published research dissertations and the use of free user-friendly tools like Jamovi (data analysis program) to perform essential tasks. Learning took place

through a scaffolded approach. The scaffolded approach included 1) assisted learning such as writing classes, research topic and problem discussion sessions, proposal writing classes, templates and direct instructions, and research and questionnaire proposal templates; 2) zone of proximal learning that focused on one-to-one consultations that provided supportive (P 'Supportive') review opportunities where students received constructive feedback to improve their research, questionnaire development class and data analysis demonstrations using Excel and Jamovi software; and 3) unassisted learning where students had to write a research report by evaluating journal articles and using author guidelines. The scaffolded approach enabled students to gradually shift from relying on structured support to taking full responsibility and accountability for their research project.

Experiential (P 'Communication') learning was achieved through a guest lecture delivered by an owner of a research company, who connected research theory with real industry research projects. The guest lecturer practically demonstrated to the students how marketing research concepts like sampling were implemented in real-life research projects, how concepts such as net-promoter scores were calculated, and how customer satisfaction was determined. This experience gave students a practical view of what is happening in research today, helping them see how the methods and theory they learn relate to the work performed in the marketing and research industry.

Through the class activities, demonstrations, consultations and a guest lecture, what began as a hesitant attempt at research evolved into proper writing skills, critical analyses, strategic thinking, and a refined project output, namely a research report. Student reflections and ongoing feedback continuously shaped the module, resulting in a responsive and encouraging learning environment. By the end of the module, students not only mastered the core content of research methodology but also emerged as more effective communicators, decision-makers, and emotionally intelligent individuals, equipped for both academic achievement and dynamic professional roles.

# Case Study 3

T(AI)skmaster

| Case study author | Ryan Girdley<br>Senior Lecturer<br>University of Lincoln, UK |
|---|---|
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Accessibility<br>P – Supportive<br>P – Experiential<br>P – Constructive feedback |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V1, V2, V4<br>K1, K2, K4<br>A1, A4 |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | Utilisation of AI is an innovative area within higher education and accounting education – finding ways to integrate this into curriculum and assessment design is an emerging challenge for educators. |

## Context and Activity Overview

The activity is designed within the context of a traditional classroom. The activity is part of formative work on AI to help students utilise AI within their summative assessment. The activity ran on two modules – Taxation and Personal Financial Planning.

Within an undergraduate taxation module, an innovative classroom activity—referred to as "T(AI)skmaster"—was introduced to enhance students' digital literacy, engagement, and understanding of complex tax principles. The activity required individual students to navigate a sequence of tasks simulating a real-world problem-solving environment. Students were instructed to use generative AI tools, particularly Microsoft Co-Pilot, to translate, interpret, and complete the tasks, which reflected previous seminar topics and was a formative assessment exercise for a future summative assessment incorporating AI.

## Case description

Experiential Learning and Constructive Feedback
This activity aligns strongly with experiential learning (P 'Experiential') principles by encouraging students to engage with authentic tasks that replicate real-world problem-solving. AI is increasingly utilised within the accounting industry for data entry, administrative tasks, client communication and technical knowledge gathering – this task mirrors how students may utilise AI once within the industry including translating foreign documentation within multinational companies, creating client communications and using AI to answer applied taxation questions.

Translating instructions using AI provided the first interaction point, immediately drawing attention to both the capabilities and limitations of the technology. Tasks included using AI to answer prior taxation seminar questions—often areas where AI produces incorrect or partial responses. Students then critiqued these outputs and discussed as a seminar group the issues that individuals had encountered before individually adjusting prompts and resubmitting to refine results. This iterative process of testing, reviewing, and revising responses reflects constructive feedback (P 'Constructive feedback') in action both with discussion with student contemporaries but also utilising the technology as a constructive feedback loop mechanism itself by asking AI to critique its own work. This enables students to become critical evaluators of AI-generated content while reinforcing their own subject knowledge.

## Accessibility and Supportive Learning Environment

The design of the T(AI)skmaster promotes accessibility (P 'Accessibility') by enabling students with diverse language backgrounds and skill levels to interact with AI as a translation and comprehension support tool. The inclusive nature of the activity allowed students to approach content in manageable, scaffolded stages, using AI as a supportive intermediary rather than a final authority. Moreover, because the activity did not rely on prior AI knowledge, it was accessible to all students, regardless of their technical experience.

The classroom environment was intentionally supportive (P 'Supportive'), encouraging collaboration and peer learning between the group. Although the activity was an individual task, students were encouraged to also discuss outputs and co-learn from those around them. Many students, encountering generative AI for the first time, worked together to troubleshoot prompt strategies and share insights about AI inaccuracies in tax-related contexts. This peer-led interaction fostered a low-risk environment where experimentation and learning from failure were normalised amongst the group.

## Link to Summative Assessment and Skill Transfer

Crucially, the activity was directly aligned with the module's summative assessment: a taxation policy presentation, whereby students were actively encouraged to gather tax information and generate slide content. This classroom activity helped them reflect on how prompting and output critique could improve the depth and clarity of their arguments. One component of the activity involved using AI to enhance individual action plans developed earlier in the module, reinforcing reflective practice and self-evaluation skills.

Additionally, by including a task that required AI to generate code for PowerPoint slides—a technical skill outside the students' prior expertise—the activity expanded their digital skill set. This introduced students to creative uses of AI beyond basic text generation, reinforcing the potential of technology to empower learners and bridge skills gaps.

## Conclusion

The T(AI)skmaster activity exemplifies inclusive and engaging learning by seamlessly integrating accessibility (P 'Accessibility'), supportiveness (P 'Supportive'), experiential learning (P8), and constructive feedback (P 'Constructive feedback'). It enabled students to critically engage with AI, develop prompt literacy, and apply these skills directly to their module assessment which incorporated AI for knowledge gathering and communication purposes. By transforming abstract tax theory into a dynamic, interactive experience, the activity successfully fostered student agency through exploration of a tool which is excellent for independent learning and improving digital skill confidence.
(This case study was created with the help of AI)

# Case Study 4

Navigating Cross-Cultural Classrooms and Supporting Chinese Learners

| Case study author | Dr. Jane Terpstra Tong<br>Professor<br>School of Business, Monash University, Malaysia |
| --- | --- |
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Supportive<br>P – Safe space and belonging<br>P – Empathy<br>P – Collaboration with peers<br>P – Learning culture |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V1, V2 and V3<br>K1 and K2<br>A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | It is innovative in that it provides a creative, customised solution to engage less-than-fluent English speakers in the classroom.<br>It is a real case reflecting real challenges and real solutions. |

## Context:

It is a master's level module taught by an experienced educator within a related field. It is related to classroom teaching.

## Case description:

"This semester, we've doubled our student enrolment for the master's course," announced the Course Director at the Malaysia campus with pride. "Most of the new students are from mainland China."

"What implications might this have for our teaching?" asked Dr. Tang, an experienced educator originally from Hong Kong.

"We're not entirely sure yet," the Course Director admitted. "There may be some pedagogical challenges, given the differences in students' prior learning experiences and the typical teaching approaches in China. Be prepared to stay flexible."

Dr. Tang, who grew up in a Chinese-language-based curriculum, recalled the challenges she faced in college, where English was the sole medium of instruction. "I'm sure language will be an issue," she reflected, "but conceptual thinking shouldn't be. Perhaps they'll have a strong learning attitude, too."

As she anticipated, over 90 percent of her Cross-cultural Management class consisted of students from mainland China. The remainder came from Southeast and South Asia, many of whom were fluent English speakers from international school backgrounds. Among the Chinese students, English proficiency varied widely, particularly in spoken communication—from barely understandable to near-native fluency. When she posed questions in class, many students avoided eye contact and kept their heads down.

"This won't work," Dr. Tang thought. "This is a discussion-based class where students are expected to debate concepts and apply their personal experiences. What should I do? This class has consistently ranked in the top 5 percent of the School and remains one of the most popular modules for master's students. I'm not willing to lower the academic standards or significantly change a pedagogy that has proven effective. So how can I engage them?"

## Teaching Note: Navigating Cross-Cultural Classrooms and Supporting Chinese Learners

To analyse this case effectively, it is essential to understand both the educator's and students' learning backgrounds and perspectives, which shape the educator's perspective

of the challenges Chinese students may face in a Western learning environment. The educator in this case, Dr. Tang, is a cross-cultural management researcher who was educated in a Chinese-language environment from grade 1 to grade 12. She now teaches in English and collaborates internationally, using English as her primary language for both professional and daily communication. Her personal journey—from initially struggling to express herself in English to becoming proficient—provides her with deep empathy for students undergoing similar transitions. As a cross-cultural scholar, she is also attuned to the communication styles typically associated with Chinese learners: high-context and less assertive in classroom discourse.

This communication style, combined with the teacher-centred learning traditions common in Chinese education (Liu et al., 2021), can contribute to academic culture shock when students enter Western-style classrooms that emphasise independent thinking and classroom participation (Bai & Wang, 2024; Lai, 2024).

Dr. Tang also recognises the latent potential among her Chinese students, many of whom come from highly competitive academic environments. For instance, business students in China are typically required to complete a minimum of 144 credits to graduate, in contrast to the 120-credit requirement in a typical U.S. undergraduate programme. Some institutions, such as Beijing Jiaotong University, require students in economics and business to complete a minimum of 160 credits. Dr. Tang understands that her students may possess strong conceptual knowledge, even if they struggle to articulate their thoughts verbally in English.

To enhance student learning experiences, educators should avoid adopting a deficit perspective (e.g. Gay, 2018) that views Chinese students as disengaged or underperforming. Instead, they should take a "surplus and asset" perspective (Bai & Wang, 2024), acknowledging the diverse insights and understandings that these students can bring—even if

expressed in less conventional ways.

Dr. Tang also recognises the importance of building rapport with students, particularly in a cross-cultural classroom. As Gay (2018) argues, establishing personal connections with learners is foundational to effective teaching, especially in multicultural settings.

## Pedagogical Strategies Implemented by Dr. Tang

With a clear understanding of the linguistic and cultural challenges her students face, Dr. Tang adopted several inclusive and flexible teaching strategies, aligned with the Principles of Inclusive and Engaging learning experience developed by the team and the Professional Standards Framework (UK PSF 2023).

1. **Acknowledging Linguistic Challenges Early**
   (P "Safe space and belonging'; P 'Empathy')

   o In the first class, Dr. Tang addressed the reality of linguistic barriers faced by students from Chinese-speaking backgrounds.

   o She assured students that making mistakes is part of learning, using affirming phrases like "good try" to reduce anxiety and create a psychologically safe space.

2. **Providing Discussion Questions in Advance**
   (P 'Supportive; P 'Learning culture')

   o Dr. Tang shared discussion prompts ahead of class to allow students time to prepare and reflect.

   o These questions were crafted to challenge conventional thinking while supporting language comprehension.

3. **Allowing Use of AI Tools for Real-Time Transcription**
   (P 'Supportive')

   o Students were encouraged to use AI transcription tools to improve understanding of spoken content, especially during fast-paced lectures.

4. **Implementing Collaborative Slide Activities**
(P5 'Supportive'; P 'Collaboration';
P 'Learning culture')

   - Students worked in small groups using shared slides to respond to critical thinking questions.

   - AI tools were used to aid preparation. One student per group reported verbally, and turn-taking ensured that all had the opportunity to speak across the semester.

5. **Practising Patience and Providing Encouragement**
(P 'Empathy')

   - Dr. Tang made a conscious effort to listen patiently to hesitant or fragmented English and praised students' effort and courage in speaking up.

6. **Engaging in Continuous Professional Development**
(V3: Evidence-informed practice; A5: Enhance practice through continuing professional development)

   - She continuously read academic literature on cross-cultural pedagogy and adapted her teaching accordingly (e.g., Bai & Wang, 2024; Lai, 2024; Liu et al., 2021 in the reference list).

7. **Clarifying Student Ideas Despite Limited Vocabulary**
(P16 'Learning culture')

   - Dr. Tang supported students in articulating their ideas by rephrasing and scaffolding their responses, focusing on the substance of their thinking rather than language form. As such, that not only benefits the Chinese students but also those non-Chinese students who can share different perspectives in class.

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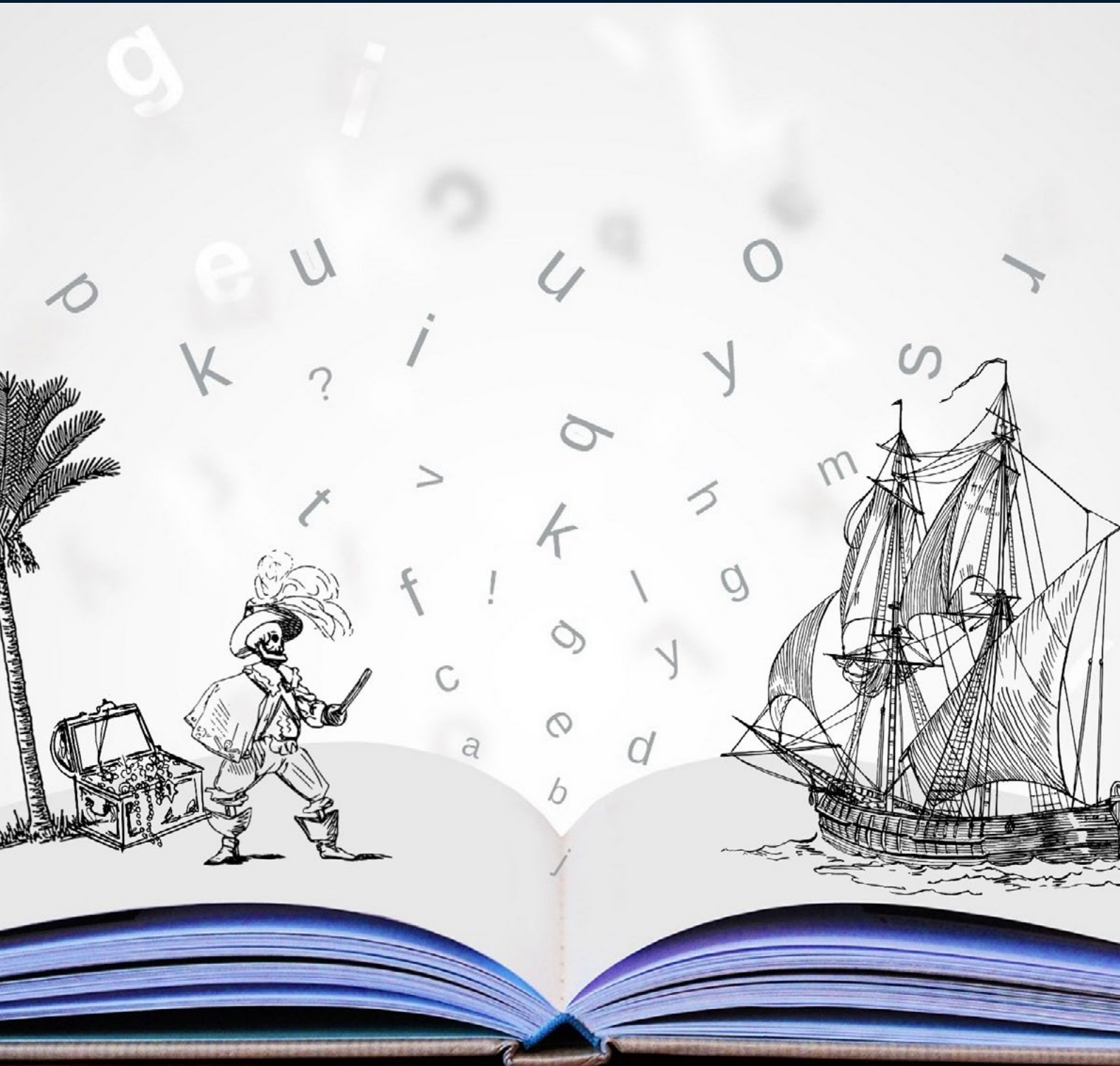
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# Case Study 5

Legends and Ledgers – Making Accounting Accessible through Storytelling

| | |
|---|---|
| **Case study author** | Catriona Hyde<br>Associate Professor<br>University of Leicester, UK |
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Communication<br>P – Equity<br>P – Learning culture |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V2 promotes engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential<br>K1 how learners learn, generally<br>K2 approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study<br>A1 design and plan learning activities and/or programmes<br>A2 teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | Storytelling in the classroom enhances the learning experience, making complex concepts more accessible and engaging for all.  It shifts the focus from abstract theory to relatable experiences, enabling students to have a more engaging classroom experience and fostering deeper learning. |

## Context

Storytelling adds value to the traditional classrooms, making the environment engaging and helping learners with different preferences to feel comfortable with academic requirements.

## Case description

Storytelling can bring the classroom to life. It adds colour and interest where sometimes it is lacking. Stories are used to explain difficult concepts (P 'Communication') and to bring the classroom to life.

One of the most challenging areas for students to engage with when teaching audit is controls testing, which is typically taught in a 2nd-year Accounting and Finance degree.  The topic is extremely dry, and the descriptions in textbooks are often mechanical, detailing the controls carried out by specific areas and the testing of these controls. The concepts can seem quite abstract and outside of the scope of the majority of individual students' experience. In addition, the language is often specific to the area, which makes it even more challenging for international students.

Using a story helps make the entire process more accessible (P 'Learning culture'). I start by setting out the key definitions and explanations related to the simplest area for students to understand – banking (P 'Communication'). Students are accustomed to online banking, password access, and even dual verification for large amounts. The story can act as a bridge between their understanding and the academic requirements of the module, making it relevant and relatable to their lives (P 'Learning culture').

One of my favourite stories to tell is from my experience as a trainee accountant working in a large firm responsible for auditing cash and bank. Adding details to the story enhances credibility and makes the students more engaged (P 'Communication'). Students also engage with the personal element of the story, which makes the classroom environment more relaxed and inviting, often leading to more questions and ultimately a better understanding.

The company being audited had a £70 million turnover, but it had a finance team of only two. The Finance Director was not an accountant, and the individual supporting them also had no traditional accounting training. Adding colour and context makes the delivery more engaging and helps students retain their interest.

The first task was to document the process for making payments in order to identify any existing controls that could be relied upon as part of the audit.  The individual supporting explained their process and that they needed two people to make a payment. Fantastic! They had segregation of duties and a control that could be tested.  Unfortunately, it all went downhill after asking a follow-up question, 'What happens if the Finance Director is on holiday?'  The response from the client was, 'it's fine, I know their password.'  At this point, the majority of students will groan as they realise just how ineffective this 'control' is and as they understand what control weakness really means. Students are then asked what they would do or how they would act in this situation. By engaging students in the process, it not only motivates them but also enhances their critical thinking as they consider the actions they would take. For the avoidance of any doubt, this point is then emphasised and explained so that all learners can understand the impact.

This simple story indicates to students that control testing is within their understanding.  It builds their confidence in the material so that, once they move onto the most challenging areas, they know the types of issues to look out for (P 'Learning culture').  There is a little bit of humour (P 'Communication') in how the story is told, which makes the classroom environment more relaxed and inviting.

# Case Study 6

Peer Mentorship and Industry Collaboration: Enhancing Inclusive Engagement at BAC

| | |
|---|---|
| **Case study author** | Dr. Kelebogile Kenalemang<br>Programme Leader,<br>Botswana Accountancy College, Botswana |
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Accessibility<br>P – Diversity<br>P – Supportive<br>P – Motivational<br>P – Collaboration with peers |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | Professional Values: V4, V5<br>Core Knowledge: K1<br>Areas of Activity: A1, A2, A4 |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | The model introduces a multi-layered mentoring system that links alumni, senior students, and industry players with junior cohorts, offering a contextually grounded and sustainable approach to student engagement within a resource-limited environment. |

## Context

This case is drawn from an undergraduate programme in Botswana, where many students are navigating higher education for the first time. They are often adjusting to academic expectations and urban life. The peer mentoring initiative was introduced as a structured support mechanism to assist with coursework, assessments, and academic integration. It also incorporates field-based activities such as industry tours and job-shadowing, creating opportunities for practical exposure and relational learning beyond the classroom.

## Case description

In response to observed disengagement among early-year students at Botswana Accountancy College, we launched the 'Adopt a Mentee' peer mentoring model in 2023. The initiative draws on the strengths of senior students (Year 3 and 4) and alumni to provide structured support to junior cohorts (Year 1 and 2), particularly around assessments, project work, and professional readiness.

Each semester, we advertise the programme through LinkedIn, class email groups, campus noticeboards, and in-person class announcements. Interested students and alumni submit a short motivational letter explaining why they want to join, their academic interests, and career goals. The Student Committee reviews all applications and selects mentors and mentees who meet the requirements. For mentors, alumni must have graduated with at least a 2:1 classification and be in employment for over six months. Senior student mentors are required to be in good academic standing, have consistent strong performance in core modules, a clean disciplinary record, and evidence of active engagement in the programme community. They must also demonstrate good communication skills and a willingness to commit time to the mentoring process. Mentees are expected to be enrolled full-time at BAC, demonstrate commitment to their studies, and show interest in participating in group learning activities.

The second stage involves short interviews with both mentors and mentees to understand their strengths, preferences, and support needs. Using this information, each mentor is paired with two to three mentees who share common academic or career interests. The process concludes with an induction workshop that formally introduces the pairs, outlines expectations, and sets communication guidelines.

Once matched, mentors offer informal and structured guidance throughout the semester (P 'Supportive'). They meet

mentees weekly, either in person or online to discuss coursework challenges, revise for assessments, and share study techniques. The meet-ups are arranged independently by the pairs depending on their availability. Mentors also act as approachable points of reference beyond formal teaching (P 'Accessibility'), which has increased participation and fostered a stronger sense of belonging, particularly for students from rural backgrounds and first-generation university entrants (P 'Managing conflicts').

We also design activities where mentors and mentees jointly attend industry talks, educational tours, and job-shadowing activities in collaboration with industry partners. These shared experiences promote collaboration (P 'Collaboration with peers') and motivation (P 'Motivational') by linking academic learning to real-world professional pathways. We also build in regular two-way communication. A dedicated WhatsApp group and email updates ensure constant contact, while mentors submit progress notes to the Student Society Executive Committee every three weeks. Monthly peer feedback sessions allow mentors and mentees to reflect on progress and suggest improvements. Typical challenges such as time management, commitment issues, and balancing mentorship with academic workloads are discussed openly, with practical solutions shared among the group.

Operating with minimal financial resources, the programme relies on human capital and a culture of community. It demonstrates how inclusive practices can be embedded in existing programmes to create learning environments that are supportive, diverse, and outward-looking aligning with PSF dimensions that value equity (P 'Equity'), collaboration, and responsive pedagogy.

# Case Study 7

Lincoln Be Smarter: Innovative Digital Marketing/AI Education for SME Leaders

| Case study author | Chang Ge<br>Senior Fellow, Director/Founder, AI/Digital Education Consultant |
|---|---|
| Mapping to principles | This initiative respects and addresses the diverse needs of SME business learners, ensuring inclusivity and empathy in learning environments. The programme promotes equitable access through accessible digital marketing education, integrates evidence-informed, influential scholarship and practical digital applications, and proactively responds to SMEs' digital transformation needs. Collaboration sits at the heart of the initiative delivery. It encourages relationship building with stakeholders, enhances business practices, and helps establish supportive, communicative networks. |
| Mapping to PSF 2023 | Professional Values: V1, V2, V3, V4, V5<br>Core Knowledge: K1, K2, K3, K4, K5<br>Areas of Activity: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 |
| In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative | This case stands out for its fusion of academic insight, localised SME Leaders' engagement, and experiential learning grounded in real-world business scenarios by adopting a relationship-first approach, embedding customer-centric practices, peer collaboration, and ongoing value-added consultancy into the curriculum. |

## Context:

The Lincoln Be Smarter project emerged in response to a pressing need: supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises underpinning the city's economy, to help them navigate digital disruption. The project aimed to build SME capability in digital marketing and prepare for AI adoption. The programme was a co-created educational intervention shaped by academic expertise, industry feedback, and the socio-economic landscape of the region. This initiative targeted time-poor business leaders seeking immediate, actionable value, underpinned by personalised learning and relational support.

## Case description:

At its core, Lincoln Be Smarter* was a transformative engagement amongst the UK government, higher education and the local business ecosystem. Structured around a series of modular, face-to-face workshops, the programme of Lincoln Be Smarter Digital Marketing and AI for Business Excellence combined practical and technical skills development with strategic thinking and planning. Two short courses were designed to demystify digital tools, platforms, and, more

importantly, to ground their use in real-world marketing and AI challenges faced by business participants. Rather than overwhelming participants with jargon or theory, the delivery focused on breaking down tools and platforms into manageable, real-world applications to make the learning feel personal, relevant, and useful. The design and delivery of the programme complemented the strategic frameworks and theoretical foundations typically delivered in university business education with hands-on, customer-centric, and value-driven learning experiences.

Central to the programme's success was its commitment to co-creation. SME participants were not passive recipients but active contributors. In each session, real business challenges and contextual experiences were brought into discussions, interwoven into a strategic thinking and planning framework. What set the programme apart was the way content evolved organically, through live interactions, shared experiences, and the practical needs of participants. The learning environment fostered psychological safety, encouraging experimentation and valuing peer feedback. From marketing dilemmas to operational questions about AI, every session

felt alive and grounded in reality. This dynamic, participatory model nurtured a culture of continuous improvement, underpinned by structured reflection points and iterative refinements based on learners' input.

Digital inclusivity was not an afterthought; it was built into the design to ensure accessibility regardless of prior knowledge, accommodating learners with various digital competencies and from different industry sectors. Mentoring and follow-up support sustained momentum beyond workshop delivery, which helped to build long-term relationships between the university, learners, and the wider SME community. Reinforcing the programme's value-added impact, participants reported measurable improvements in both customer engagement and marketing performance. Peer-led recommendations and shared success stories have contributed to a noticeable increase in interest from businesses across the regional community. This growing engagement indicates the programme's expanding influence and its role in motivating broader participation, particularly among SMEs seeking practical, digitally focused learning opportunities.

This short course has become a touchstone for the region's SME development strategy. It showcases a distinctive, values-driven model of SME Digital/AI education, one that blends practical skills development with strategic adaptability, and combines academic rigour with inclusive, empathetic practice.

### *Footnote:

Lincoln Be Smarter (LBS) scheme is funded by Lincoln Towns Fund Deal and delivered by the Enterprise and Innovation team at the University of Lincoln. It supports businesses within the administrative area of the City of Lincoln Council in adopting digital technologies through digital grants and workshops. The project support includes partnering with academics from the University of Lincoln to develop and deliver workshop sessions on topics such as Digital Marketing and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

# Case Study 8

"Lights, Camera, Accountancy!": Developing students' relational and decision-making acumens in an innovative game show evening

| | |
|---|---|
| **Case study author** | Prof Herman Albertus Viviers<br>Associate Professor<br>North-West University, South Africa |
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Diversity<br>P – Communication<br>P – Experiential<br>P – Motivational<br>P – Collaboration with peers<br>P – Participation<br>P – Learning culture |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V2 – promote engagement in learning and equity of opportunity for all to reach their potential<br>K1 – how learners learn, generally and within specific subjects<br>K2 – approaches to teaching and/or supporting learning, appropriate for subjects and level of study<br>A1 – design and plan learning activities and/or programmes<br>A2 – teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | This case is innovative as it is a unique and one-of-a-kind intervention hosted in the form of a fun-filled, creative and engaging game show evening consisting of various individual and integrated accountancy-related disciplinary games to expose students to the opportunity to develop a variety of relational acumens (i.e. communication, leadership, people skills, relationship building and teamwork skills) and decision-making acumens (i.e. analytical thinking, critical thinking, integrated thinking, problem-solving, judgment and decision-making skills). |

## Context

As part of the Postgraduate Accountancy Programme (consisting of core subject disciplines such as Financial Accounting and Reporting, Auditing, Taxation, Management Accounting, Financial Management, and Strategy), students were divided into teams whereby each team had to appoint individual team members as its subject discipline "experts" to represent the team when competing in subject specific and/or subject integrated games in different rounds of an accountancy game show evening. By combining elements of gamification and experiential learning, various games were designed and developed to be played in different rounds of the game show requiring students to apply prior obtained subject-specific, subject-integrated and/or business and accountancy-related technical knowledge. Through participation, students had to actively engage, take the lead, work together, effectively communicate, apply critical, strategic, analytical, integrated and creative thinking, manage their time, solve problems, apply judgment and make decisions.

## Case description

This case study revolves around an innovative, voluntary game show evening held outside of normal lecture hours and the typical classroom setting in the campus theatre of the university. The intervention was carefully designed to blend gamification and experiential learning (P 'Experiential') to deepen student engagement and foster an inclusive learning culture (P 'Learning culture') that motivates students (P 'Motivational') to participate beyond mandatory academic requirements (P 'Participation').

Recognising South Africa's rich diversity (P 'Diversity'), students were intentionally grouped into eight teams, each comprising ten members from different backgrounds, cultures, and languages. This purposeful diversity aimed to cultivate cross-cultural

collaboration (P 'Collaboration with peers') and communication skills (P 'Communication'). Each team self-selected two individuals to act as their subject-specific "experts" in respect of each of the accountancy programme's major subjects, namely: Financial Accounting, Auditing, Taxation, Management Accounting and Financial Management, and Strategy. These "experts" had to compete on behalf of their team against the other teams' selected experts in either subject-specific or subject-integrated games to ensure holistic and integrated thinking.

Entry was on a first come first served basis, preserving fairness and equity of opportunity. Non-participating students and lecturers attended the game show as an interactive audience. Importantly, participation was ungraded and unprepared, introducing an element of surprise to authentically develop and reveal various skills resonating under the relational and decision-making acumens. This design choice reflects deep insight into how learners learn and aligns with evidence that unstructured, authentic contexts can encourage spontaneous demonstration of soft skills.

The game show event commenced with an icebreaker activity, building rapport and lowering barriers to participation (P 'Communication', P 'Motivational'). Five rounds of subject-specific games followed, where expert pairs from each team competed by applying prior technical knowledge in practical, creative, fun-orientated games. Games demanded students to actively communicate, think critically and creatively, manage time, solve problems, exercise judgment, and make fast decisions under pressure — all key graduate attributes mapped in the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants' Competency Framework (SAICA, 2021) paramount to the teaching and learning of entry-level accountants.

As the rounds of the game show evening progressed, performance scores of each team were continuously announced to add motivational tension (P 'Motivational'). Subsequent rounds shifted focus to the accounting profession and practice more broadly, involving broader audience and team participation (P 'Participation', P 'Collaboration with peers'). In the grand finale, the top two teams faced multiple-choice questions spanning all core subjects. Final answers required whole-team consultation, further reinforcing collaboration (P 'Collaboration with peers') and integrated thinking.

The case design reflects thoughtful planning of learning activities and environments that extend beyond traditional lectures. Embedding experiential, team-based, competitive tasks in an informal, social setting harnessed motivational and participatory drivers (P 'Motivational', P 'Participation') to enhance engagement and nurture a collaborative learning culture (P 'Collaboration with peers', P 'Learning culture'). The approach demonstrates appropriate teaching strategies for advanced accounting students and exemplifies how to teach and support learning through alternative and innovative environments.

After the event, students reflected on the skills developed through a follow-up questionnaire and focus group interviews,

closing the experiential loop and promoting metacognition about their acumens and skills development. This final step anchored the experiential design in a meaningful cycle of reflection (Kolb, 1984), consistent with best practice for embedding learning outcomes related to relational and decision-making acumens in a real-world context.

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# Case Study 9

Inclusive Learning through Technology-Enhanced Assessments

| | |
|---|---|
| **Case study author** | Dr. Seyram Kawor<br>Senior Lecturer<br>University of Cape Coast, Ghana |
| **Mapping to principles** | P – Accessibility<br>P – Supportive<br>P – Safe Space and Belonging<br>P – Experimental<br>P – Constructive Feedback |
| **Mapping to PSF 2023** | V4: Professional values<br>K3: Designing effective learning environments<br>A3: Use appropriate methods to evaluate learning |
| **In a few words, please describe why your case study can be considered innovative** | Technology-enhanced assessments with real-time feedback accommodate all kinds of students. This aligns with practice where students will be required to use technology in the job market. It also reduces the workload of lecturers, as large student numbers typically exist. |

## Context

This case study focuses on blended course design for undergraduate students in their final year, incorporating technology-enhanced assessments to promote inclusivity and support. Students are grouped into teams of five members each. These teams are given assignments that require the use of technology, and in most instances, lectures are conducted online. This is to prevent a situation where in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the universities in Ghana had to close down. Students refused to undertake any lectures online and this affected academic work for almost a year.

## Case description

Universities in Ghana are committed to providing an inclusive and engaging learning environment for their students. Our universities have diverse student populations with varying needs. To address this, lecturers were asked to incorporate 21st century skills into teaching and learning. Business schools, both public and private, to meet the varying needs of the students and make their studies relevant to the 21st century, formed teams to design and implement inclusive learning strategies (P 'Accessibility'). This runs through courses with a student population of more than 200. There are courses in Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, Banking, and Supply

Chain Management with over 1000 students. It is therefore prudent to ensure all students are included in the learning environment and will not be left out. Feedback on assessments is crucial in helping learners appreciate what they have learned (P 'Supportive').

Universities then designed an e-learning platform to create flexible learning pathways, incorporating multimedia resources and adaptive assessments. Assessments are done online and anytime students take tests, results are displayed and sent to their e-mails immediately with feedback on areas to improve upon. To make this system work effectively, faculty members received training on using the system to provide timely support and feedback (P 'Supportive'; P 'Constructive feedback'). This e-learning platform is manned by professionals, and it enables faculty to provide personalised feedback, enhancing student engagement and motivation. These are done to meet the specific needs of businesses in Ghana.

Students are usually grouped in teams of five members to use technological tools to complete assignments and presentations. They use accounting and finance software and analytical software such as python, R, STATA and Microsoft Excel. Additionally, accounting courses can be completed using pen and paper. Financial analysis is

carried out using these tools. Students are asked to analyse the financial performance of companies listed on the Ghana Stock Exchange for a period of at least five years (P 'Experiential'). They were also required to make video presentations using appropriate technological tools. Lectures take place online using ZOOM, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams and sometimes using social media platforms such as Telegram. These teaching methods reflect what happens in practice and create that flexibility our students need. In Ghana, anytime it rains, there is flooding, and lectures have to be called off because the students cannot get access to the lecture halls. Using this method helps solve that problem. Also, due to the large numbers of students, lectures start from 6.30am to 8.30pm. This flexibility allows students to access the lecture halls remotely and during online lectures, feedback is given on work that had been given to them. The online lecture sessions are recorded and shared with (P 'Safe space and belonging').

These approaches used had improved student satisfaction with assessment, citing flexibility and accessibility since exams can be taken in the comfort of their halls of residence. Our students demonstrate improved learning outcomes, particularly for the students with diverse learning needs and disability. Faculty members at the various universities appreciate the system's ease of use and effectiveness in providing supportive feedback. We have through this engagement created a more inclusive and supportive leaning environment, promoting student success and well-being.

# 6. Overview of Project Outputs

### Literature review report

Gulko, N., Wood, N., Blondeel, E., Churyk, N.T., Derbyshire, L.E., Kawor, S., Lento, C., McGuigan, N., Merendino, A., Middelberg, S.L., Sahoo, S.K., Tong, J.T., and Withanage, N. (**2024**) Enhancing Inclusive Student Engagement in Higher Education: Literature Review. Report. **Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education**, pp. 1-22. [LINK]

### Blog

Gulko, N. and Derbyshire, L.E. (**2025**) All Stories are Different - Motivation for the "Standing Out in the Crowd: A Framework for Inclusive and Effective Student Engagement", Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Blog, 11 Sep 2025. [LINK]

### Conference presentation

**Gulko, N**., Wood, N., Blondeel, E., Churyk, N.T., Derbyshire, L.E., Kawor, S., Lento, C., McGuigan, N., Merendino, A., Middelberg, S.L., Sahoo, S.K., Tong, J.T., and Withanage, N. (**2025**) Celebrating Student Voices: Co-Designing a Global Inclusive Student Engagement Framework. Presented at the **Advance HE Annual Conference** 2025.

**Gulko, N.**, Wood, N., Blondeel, E., Churyk, N.T., Derbyshire, L.E., Kawor, S., Lento, C., McGuigan, N., Merendino, A., Middelberg, S.L., Sahoo, S.K., Tong, J.T., and Withanage, N. (**2025**) Celebrating Student Voices: Co-Designing a Global Inclusive Student Engagement Framework. Presented at **I-TELL Conference** 2025, Manchester Metropolitan University.

# 7. Conclusion

This report presents the outcomes of a global, student-informed project that sought to define and promote inclusive and engaging learning in higher education. Drawing on the voices of 928 survey student respondents across five continents, 55 workshop student participants, and supported by contributions from 25 academic reviewers, the project developed a practical framework grounded in lived experience and pedagogical insight.

to enhance engagement and real-world application, while UK case studies showcase the role of student-led inquiry, storytelling, and AI integration in fostering accessibility, innovation, and relevance in business education. In Ghana, technology-enhanced assessments were used to provide immediate feedback and flexible access to learning, addressing both accessibility and supportiveness. In Malaysia, inclusive classroom strategies were implemented to



The findings underscore that inclusive engagement is not a singular intervention but a constellation of interconnected principles—such as accessibility, respect, collaboration, and motivation—that shape how students experience learning. These principles were not only identified through literature but validated through student-led workshops and international peer review.

The framework is enriched by real-world examples. In South Africa, educators use experiential and gamified approaches

support Chinese learners navigating language and cultural transitions, demonstrating empathy and the creation of safe spaces. Meanwhile in the UK, students engaged in experiential learning through a finance case study that allowed them to explore regulatory challenges in emerging technologies, fostering participation, collaboration, critical thinking and teamwork skills. Botswana's peer mentorship model linked alumni, senior students, and industry professionals with junior cohorts, enhancing belonging and academic integration in a resource-limited environment.

Contributions from India highlighted the importance of culturally responsive teaching and inclusive classroom dialogue, while academic reviewers in Australia emphasised the alignment of inclusive engagement with professional standards and reflective practice. In Canada and the USA, educators provided feedback that helped refine the framework's applicability across North American higher education contexts, and in Belgium, insights focused on the role of communication and feedback in fostering inclusive learning cultures. Finally, student voices from the United Arab Emirates reinforced the importance of diversity and equal opportunities in internationalised classrooms.

These examples illustrate how inclusive engagement can be embedded across diverse educational contexts. The framework is designed to be adaptable and actionable—supporting educators in reflecting on their practice, guiding institutional policy, and empowering students to take an active role in shaping their learning environments.

By putting the student voice and co-creation at the heart of the conversation, this work contributes to sector-wide efforts to enhance teaching and learning. It affirms that inclusive engagement is both a shared responsibility and a strategic imperative—one that underpins academic success, personal development, and the broader mission of higher education.

# 8. Acknowledgments

The project team would like to express sincere gratitude to all the students who generously shared their experiences, insights, and aspirations through surveys and workshops. Their voices were central to shaping the framework and ensuring its relevance across diverse educational contexts. Special thanks are extended to the academic colleagues from institutions across Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and Oceania who participated in the international peer-review activity. Their thoughtful feedback and reflections helped refine the framework and enhance its applicability. The team also acknowledges the support of institutional partners and programme leaders who facilitated data collection and workshop participation across eleven institutions. Their collaboration was vital in enabling a truly global and inclusive research process. Appreciation is also due to the contributors of the case studies, whose innovative practices brought the framework principles to life. Their willingness to share practical examples has enriched the report and provided valuable inspiration for educators and institutions. Finally, the team thanks the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for supporting the development and dissemination of this work, and Krimson for their design and production expertise.
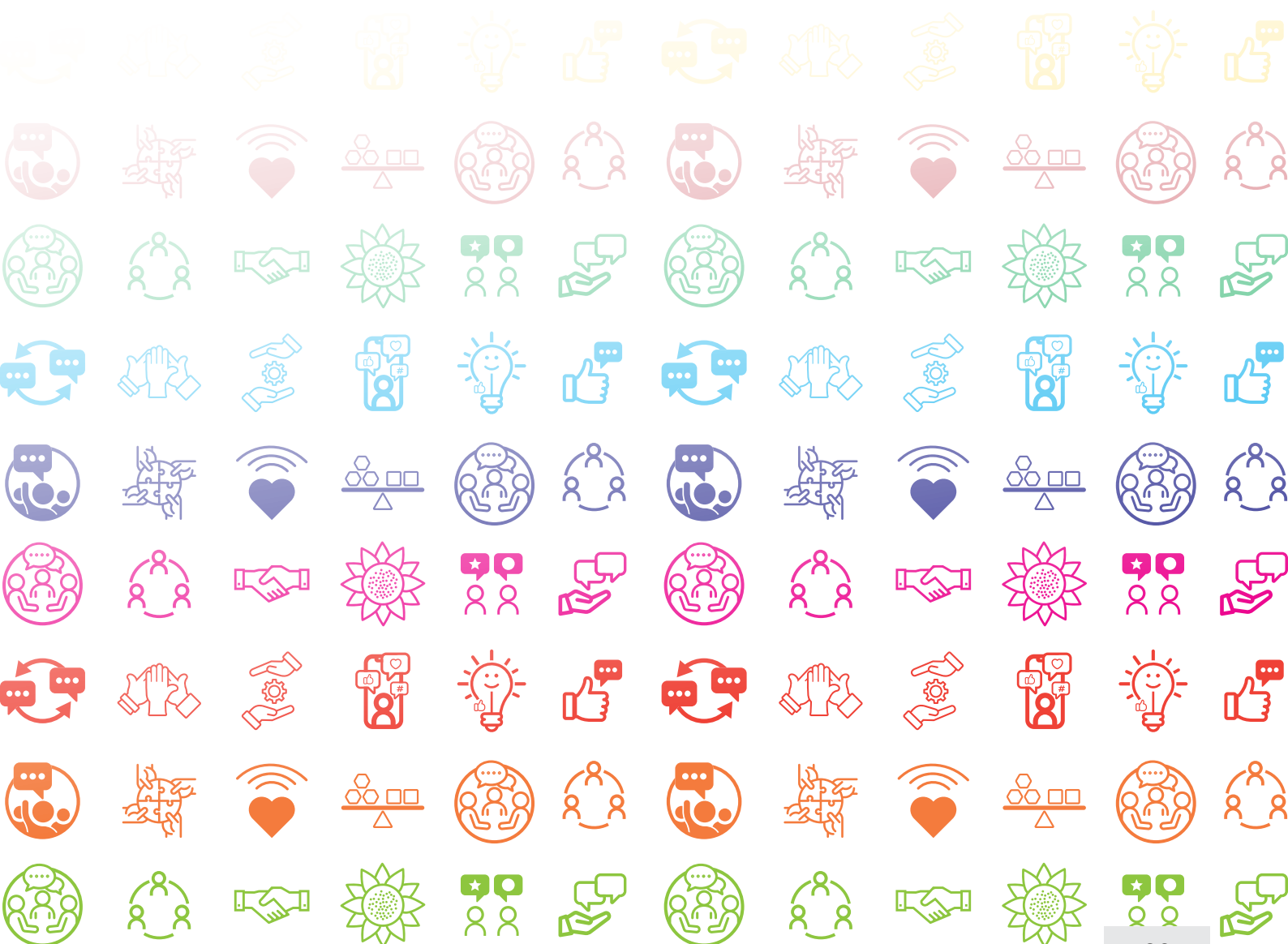
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