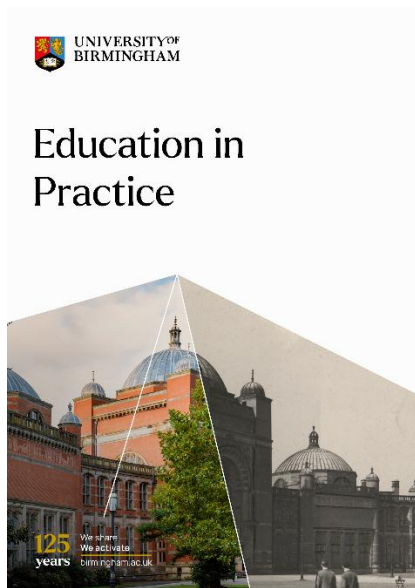




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From evidence to enhancement: reflective practice and the feedback loop in business education

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Business schools increasingly ask their staff to teach as they would have their students learn: through inquiry, iteration, and evidence. Boyer's (1990) call to recognise a scholarship of teaching alongside discovery, application, and integration, and Schön's (1983) account of the reflective practitioner, both argued that professional expertise is built through disciplined reflection on practice, not simply applied from theory downward. The papers collected in this issue take that argument seriously. Drawn from contributors working across our university's UK and Dubai campuses, each begins from a concrete problem encountered in the classroom, the programme, or the publishing meeting, and each closes a loop between evidence gathered from students and a considered change in practice. Read together, they offer a picture of business education scholarship as an iterative, data-informed craft, one that travels across geography and, in one case, across faculty boundaries.

This orientation is especially important at a time when business schools are responding simultaneously to rapid technological change, growing expectations around sustainability, increasingly diverse student cohorts, and closer scrutiny of the relationship between higher education and employment. In such a context, enhancement cannot be understood as a single intervention or a periodic response to formal evaluation. It is better viewed as a continuing cycle in which educators identify a need, design and implement a response, examine the resulting evidence, and refine their approach. Reflection gives this process its critical dimension: it asks not only whether an intervention appeared to work, but for whom, under what conditions, and with what unintended consequences. The contributions gathered here illustrate that cycle at various levels of practice, from individual seminar activities and learning resources to programme-wide systems. They also demonstrate that meaningful educational development does not always depend on extensive funding or radical

curricular redesign. It can begin with a carefully framed question, a willingness to listen to students, and the disciplined examination of everyday teaching decisions.

Closing the loop: institutional and programme-level feedback

The scale at which this feedback loop can operate is demonstrated by Hamayun, Ibrahim, and Ilyas, who report a three-year, programme-wide enhancement initiative within Computer Science provision at the university's Dubai campus. Theirs is the one paper in this collection to come from outside a business school, included deliberately. Its inclusion also makes a wider point about educational scholarship: the disciplinary boundaries that organise academic knowledge do not necessarily map onto the educational problems students and educators encounter. Questions of feedback, assessment, belonging, communication and trust across those boundaries, creating scope for disciplines to learn from one another. The architecture of feedback, action, and communication it describes has no disciplinary boundary, and business school colleagues will recognise the same survey, module evaluation, and student-staff forum mechanisms operating in their own programmes. Drawing on this data, the authors developed a coordinated set of interventions spanning teaching quality, assessment scheduling, curriculum coherence, and pastoral support. The results are striking: undergraduate satisfaction rose in a remarkable manner over the period, with comparable or larger gains at postgraduate level. What distinguishes this paper is less the individual interventions, many of which will be familiar to readers, than the systematic architecture connecting feedback to action and communicating that action back to students. This "you said, we did" ethos echoes a well-established finding in the assessment and feedback literature: feedback only improves learning when students see it acted upon and understand its consequences for their own work (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Gibbs and Simpson, 2004), a principle recent work on teacher feedback literacy continues to sharpen by specifying what staff, not just students, need to do for that loop to close (Boud and Dawson, 2023). Applied here at institutional rather than assignment level, and demonstrably transferable from a computer science context to the business programmes represented elsewhere in this issue, it offers a model for programme teams rebuilding trust in survey mechanisms that students often regard as symbolic rather than consequential.

Discipline-specific innovation: technology, sustainability, and active learning

A second cluster of papers, spanning both our Dubai and UK campuses, works at module level, testing how specific pedagogical designs shift student engagement within business and accounting disciplines. Al-Samarrai's case study, based in Dubai, of Business Intelligence integration in a third-year accounting module responds to a well-documented gap between the analytical competencies employers expect and those traditional accounting curricula develop (Oesterreich and Teuteberg, 2019), a gap recent survey of

accounting faculty confirm is still driven as much by workload and confidence as by institutional resistance (Xu, Liu, and Krahel, 2024). Structured around Yassin and

Toumeh's (2024) five-stage integration framework and Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, the intervention had students build self-directed Tableau 'stories' for a corporate audience, with strong academic outcomes and faculty development running in parallel. Konovalova's paper, based at our UK campus, turns to a related tension: how to embed sustainability within a core, profit-oriented module rather than confining it to electives, precisely the integration gap a recent systematic review of over a decade of scholarship identifies as still under-addressed at student and curriculum level (Beaumont *et al.*, 2024). Her carbon emissions simulation, run within taxation seminars, draws on dialogical learning (Cunliffe, 2002) and group flow theory to show how a short, low-cost game can prompt genuine critical reflection on the trade-offs between regulatory design and profitability. Sadri's contribution, again from Dubai, completes this cluster with a broader suite of active learning strategies, including a Shark Tank exercise, problem-based learning in management accounting, and Think-Pair-Share activities, grounded in constructivist and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984; Prince, 2004). Taken together, these three papers share a conviction that authentic, participatory tasks, whether built around software, simulation, or structured dialogue, do more to develop analytical and critical capacities than transmission-based teaching, a conclusion consistent with evidence that high-intensity active learning narrows achievement gaps between student groups rather than merely raising average performance (Freeman *et al.*, 2014; Theobald *et al.*, 2020), and one that clearly holds regardless of which campus, and which national or cultural context, the module is taught in.

Designing for the learner: resources that meet students where they are

Rogers and Samuels, writing from our UK business schools, shift the focus from classroom activity to learning resource design, presenting a case study of a research methods textbook proposal, since accepted by a British publisher, written specifically for international master's students in business and management. Their analysis of the market identifies a persistent gap: existing texts are either broad, discipline-neutral guides to academic skills or comprehensive but lengthy discipline-specific research methods books, and few are built around the coursework, word limits, and confidence-building needs of an increasingly international and EAL student population (Ballard and Clanchy, 1997; Lea and Street, 1998), a population whose distinctive supervision and feedback needs recent cross-national research continues to document (Nangimah and Walldén, 2023). Their proposal, developed with feedback from students and a commissioning editor, foregrounds explicit academic literacy support alongside methodological content. The paper is a useful reminder that pedagogical innovation is not confined to contact hours; the design of the resource's students' study from independently, particularly for cohorts navigating unfamiliar research and writing conventions, is itself a legitimate and under-examined site of scholarly enquiry.

The cross-campus and cross-disciplinary character of this issue adds a further dimension to its contribution. Although the UK and Dubai campuses operate within the

same institutional framework, their students encounter higher education through different cultural, professional and educational contexts. The papers range widely, from programme-level enhancement in Computer Science to Business Intelligence in accounting, sustainability simulation, active-learning strategies and learning resources for international master's students. The value of bringing these studies together therefore lies not in assuming that an intervention can be transferred unchanged from one setting or discipline to another, but in making its underlying design principles visible. Authenticity, structured participation, clear communication, and responsiveness to evidence recur throughout the collection, even where the teaching methods and student populations differ. These common principles create opportunities for colleagues to learn across geographical and disciplinary boundaries while remaining attentive to local needs. Good educational scholarship allows practice to travel without assuming that it is universally transferable, enabling colleagues to interrogate, adapt and test ideas within their own disciplinary, cultural and institutional contexts.

This approach also challenges a narrow understanding of educational innovation as the pursuit of novelty. Several of the practices discussed in this issue draw on established methods, including experiential learning, simulations, dialogical teaching, and student feedback. Their contribution comes from adapting these methods thoughtfully, examining their effects in a particular context, and making the resulting learning available to others. Innovation, in this sense, is not simply the introduction of a new tool or activity. It is the purposeful redesign of practice in response to evidence, followed by reflection on what should be retained, revised, or reconsidered.

Concluding thoughts

Across these five contributions, drawn from both our UK and Dubai campuses and, in one instance, a common methodological posture emerges: each author treats their own teaching context as a site of enquiry, collects evidence, whether survey data, reflective writing, or publisher and student feedback, and uses it to justify a specific design decision, rather than presenting pedagogy as a matter of personal preference or received wisdom (Trowler and Cooper, 2002). Several papers are explicit that their evidence is indicative rather than causal and analysed through practitioner reflection rather than controlled study. This is not a weakness to be apologised for; it reflects the practical constraints of scholarship conducted alongside a full teaching load, and is precisely the kind of practice-near evidence the scholarship of teaching and learning was conceived to value (Healey, 2000; Fanghanel, 2012). What these papers share with the wider ambitions set out elsewhere in this issue is a conviction that business education improves through the deliberate, cumulative work of noticing what is not working, assessing an alternative, and reporting honestly on what changed. We hope readers will take from this collection both specific interventions they might adapt in their own contexts and a broader confidence that their own classroom-level enquiry is worth documenting and sharing.