


CONFERENCE PROGRAM

# Transforming Education with AI-Driven Insights and Student Feedback

تحويل التعليم من خلال الرؤية المعتمدة على الذكاء الاصطناعي واستناداً إلى آراء الطلبة

 Raffles Dubai | Dubai, UAE

 November 6-7, 2023



Sponsored by

 **explorance**

## ABOUT EXPLORANCE BLUENOTES MENA 2023

The Explorance Bluenotes conference is where Higher Education leaders and practitioners in the MENA region and worldwide will connect and share experiences around student feedback. We will explore how data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), sustainability, quality assurance, and student feedback intersect to shape the future of learning.

With the ongoing development of teaching and learning in the region, it is essential that we ensure student feedback is gathered and used ethically and leveraged to encourage sustainability for the successful future of Higher Education.

*Explorance will introduce the Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC).*

This year, 24 Higher Education institutions from UAE, KSA, Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan started a transformative journey with the Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC). HEBC's mission? To empower Higher Education institutions to assess performance, enhance programs, and reach strategic pinnacles.

Data collection was conducted in early 2023, and we will continue discussing how benchmarking plays a vital role in enabling institutions to measure their performance, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions.

## ABOUT EXPLORANCE

Explorance is the leading provider of People Insight Solutions, supporting the needs of 1,000 organizations from 50 countries, including 25% of the QS Top 100 Higher Education institutions.

Our holistic approach to feedback collection is designed to automate student feedback gathering initiatives such as institutional surveys, course evaluations, competency assessments, and much more – ensuring an equivalent learning experience for all staff and students to improve retention rates and better foster student success.

We are excited to host this event to provide the space to encourage the sector and engage through sharing stories, experiences, best practices, and lessons learned, and ensure we all take active responsibility to not only gather but truly transform education.

**Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Agenda at-a-Glance**

TIME	SESSION
08:30 am   09:30 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
09:30 am   09:40 am	<b>Welcome Address</b> Samer Jaffar, Explorance
09:40 am   10:30 am	<b>Day 1 Keynote Speech</b> <b>How Generative AI is Impacting Higher Education in the US and Globally</b> Dr. Rob Nelson, University of Pennsylvania
10:30 am   11:00 am	<b>Amplifying Student Feedback with AI-Powered Student Voice</b> Anastasia Tsimiklis, Explorance
11: 00 am   11:20 am	<b>Morning Refreshment Break</b>
11:20 am   12:20 pm	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <b>Unlocking the Power of Open-Ended Student Feedback for Better Decision Making</b>
12:20 pm   12:55 pm	<b>Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilized Resource Using AI</b> Meagan Morrissey, University of Newcastle
12:55 pm   01:55 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>
01:55 pm   02:55 pm	<b>Debate</b> <b>Should Student Satisfaction be Considered as One of the Key Metrics for Determining University Ranking?</b>
02:55 pm   03:30 pm	<b>Capturing the Student Voice:</b> <b>The Role of Course Evaluation in Quality Assurance and Teaching Enhancement</b> Dr. Philip Carey, Liverpool John Moores University
03:30 pm   03:50 pm	<b>Afternoon Refreshment Break</b>
03:50 pm   04:50 pm	<b>Structured Roundtable Discussions Inspired by Best Practices from Peer Institutions in Higher Education</b>
04:50 pm   05:00 pm	<b>Drawing for First Door Prize</b> <i>All paid trip to Explorance World 2024 – Montreal, Canada, June 25-28, 2024</i>
05:00 pm	<b>End of First Day</b>
06:00 pm   08:00 pm	<b>Explorance Bluenotes MENA Networking Dinner</b> (Location TBD)

**Day 2 | Tuesday, 7 November 2023 | Agenda at-a-Glance**

TIME	SESSION
08:30 am   09:30 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
09:30 am   10:20 am	<b>Day 2 Keynote Speech</b> <b>Artificial Intelligence for Personalized Learning</b> Dr. Glenn Hardaker, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
10:20 am   10:55 am	<b>Using AI to Understand the Student Voice</b> Kirsty Bryant, University of Westminster
10:55 am   11:15 am	<b>Morning Refreshment Break</b>
11:15 am   12:15 pm	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <b>Revolutionizing Learning Experiences and Empowering Educators with AI Technologies</b>
12:15 pm   12:50 pm	<b>Next Generation of Feedback Analytics in an AI-Powered World</b> Nitin Sharma, Explorance
12:50 pm   01:50 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b>
01:50 pm   02:50 pm	<b>Panel Discussion</b> <b>Bridging the Divide: Students, Employability, and the Skill Gap</b>
02:50 pm   03:25 pm	<b>How Students Voice Contribute to a Continues Improvement Cycle at Ajman University</b> Amina Wahid, Ajman University
03:25 pm   03:45 pm	<b>Afternoon Refreshment Break</b>
03:45 pm   5:15 pm	<b>Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC) Informative: Lesson Learned, Program Level</b>
5:20 pm   05:30 pm	<b>Drawing for Door Prize</b> <i>All paid trip to Explorance World 2024 – Montreal, Canada, June 25-28, 2024</i> <b>Closing Remarks</b>
05:30 pm	<b>End Of Second Day</b>

**Day 3 | Wednesday, 8 November 2023 | Workshop Agenda at-a-Glance**

Time	Explorance Workshop (Open for all conference participants)
10:00 am   10:30 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
10:30 am   11:15 am	From Insight to Action, Explorance' s Road Ahead
11:15 am   12:15 pm	Leverage AI and Transform Comments into Actionable Insights with Explorance MLY
12:15 pm   12:45 pm	Explorance Workshop – Data Integrated Gateway
12:45 pm   01:45 pm	Lunch Break
01:45 pm   02:45 pm	Explorance Workshop – Dashboards
02:45 pm   03:15 pm	Explorance Workshop – Student 360 Evaluations
03:15 pm   04:00 pm	Networking and Afternoon Refreshment Break
04:00 pm	End Of Explorance Workshop

Time	Benchamrking Workshop (Closed group for HEBC participants)
09:30 am   10:00 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
10:00 am   10:15 am	Introduction to Higher Education Benchmarking
10:15 am   11:30 am	Discuss Benchmarking Indicators and data submissions
11:30 am   11:45 am	Morning Refreshment Break
11:45 am   12:30 pm	Data Collection and Analysis
12:30 pm   01:00 pm	Closing Remarks and Networking
01:00 pm   02:00 pm	Lunch Break
02:00 pm	End Of Benchamrking Workshop

SESSION DESCRIPTION

## Transforming Education with AI-Driven Insights and Student Feedback

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**Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Sessions Description**

TIME	SESSION
09:40 am   10:30 am	<p><b>Day 1 Keynote Speech</b>  <b>How Generative AI is Impacting Higher Education in the US</b>                      Dr. Rob Nelson, University of Pennsylvania</p>
<p>An interactive keynote address that will describe the year since the release of ChatGPT and the ways generative AI is changing higher education in the US and the world. The hype around generative AI as well as the potential for significant change will be discussed as well as the importance of thinking about the ways that MENA nations and Singapore will take different paths to adopting generative AI in education.</p>	
10:30 am   11:00 am	<p><b>Amplifying Student Feedback with AI-Powered Student Voice</b>                      Anastasia Tsimiklis, Explorance</p>
TBD	
11:20 am   12:20 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b>  <b>Unlocking the Power of Open-Ended Student Feedback for Better Decision Making</b>                      Moderator: Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University                      Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Philip Carey, Liverpool John Moores University</li> <li>• Dr. Eslam Elnebrisi, Dubai Medical College for Girls</li> <li>• Dr. Shuliweeh Alenezi, King Saud University</li> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>
<p>In today's higher education landscape, understanding and utilizing student feedback, particularly in the form of open-ended comments, is paramount for continuous improvement. Our expert panel will explore best practices and strategies for effectively analyzing these comments, ultimately driving better decision-making for every stakeholder in higher education. This panel will delve into insights on historical methodologies to categorize unstructured feedback and reflect on how AI technologies will drastically improve the automation and analysis processes; ultimately accelerating insight to action.</p>	
12:20 pm   12:55 pm	<p><b>Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilized Resource</b>                      Meagan Morrissey, University of Newcastle</p>
<p>One of the greatest challenges with qualitative feedback is despite how easy it is to collect, there is nothing easy about processing it. Qualitative resources are severely underutilized because they are often enormous, difficult to analyze and unorganized. But what if they weren't? What if you could process qualitative feedback in minutes, analyze the sentiment and organize the data effectively. What value could be added by quickly assessing sentiment? hotspots, identifying an increase in concerning language or tracking sentiment over time. Making use of this rich data resource takes survey analysis to the next level and with the help of BlueML I will show you how.</p>	



Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
01:55 pm   02:55 pm	<p><b>Debate</b>  <b>Should Student Satisfaction be Considered as One of the Key Metrics for Determining the University Rankings?</b>                      Facilitator: Samer Jaffar, Explorance                      With Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Abhilasha Singh, American University in the Emirates</li> <li>• TBD</li> </ul> <p>Against Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amanda Forte, American University of Ras Al Khaimah</li> <li>• Bradley Jon Tucker, American University of Beirut</li> </ul>
<p>Join us for a thought-provoking debate on the relevance of university rankings in today's academic landscape. Advocates for rankings emphasize their value in assessing academic excellence, providing insights into education quality, research output, and institutional reputation. Opponents question their validity, citing arbitrary criteria and a narrow focus on research. They advocate for recalibration, emphasizing the importance of students' perspectives in evaluating educational institutions. This dynamic exchange will delve into the complexities surrounding rankings, encouraging critical thinking and constructive dialogue about their implications for educational quality and student satisfaction.</p>	
02:55 pm   03:30 pm	<p><b>Capturing The Student Voice:</b>  <b>The Role of Course Evaluation in Quality Assurance and Teaching Enhancement</b>                      Dr. Philip Carey, Liverpool John Moores University</p>
<p>Across the globe, responding to the student voice is seen as central to how higher education institutions can commit to positive change in the student experience. As such, they are expected to employ a range of mechanisms to identify and respond to students' perception of their learning. The presentation will explore some theoretical perspectives behind this growing emphasis on the student voice in quality processes. It will explore processes that sit in an institutional "Student Voice Framework" in one English university - Liverpool John Moores University. This framework outlines a range of mandatory and advisory activities that academic and professional service staff are expected to engage for curriculum development, teaching enhancement and service improvement. Will specifically focus on the role of course evaluation (operated through Explorance Blue) in this framework and how a centrally coordinated process is used for quality assurance and teaching enhancement activities.</p>	
03:50 pm   04:50 pm	<p><b>Structured Roundtable Discussions Inspired by Best Practices from Peer Institutions in Higher Education</b></p>
TBD	



Day 2 | Tuesday, 7 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
09:30 am   10:20 am	<p><b>Day 2 Keynote Speech</b>  <b>Artificial Intelligence for Personalized Learning</b>                      Dr. Glenn Hardaker, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology</p>
	<p>Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is a continued development of adaptive technologies for learning that are integral digital education. Reflecting back on the origins of pedagogy, as a word, alludes to the critical nature of the relationship between learner and teacher. Such a perspective is further identified in how pedagogy utilizes dialogue as a way to connect human beings. Recognition of such relationships enables pedagogy to be conceptualized through dialogue and associated personalized learning experiences. Adaptive and personalized learning, as a pedagogical approach, emerged in the 1970s. AI in education is at a similar stage to eLearning in the late 1990’s when there was rapid innovation in the diffusion and adoption of learner management system and associated learning technologies. Personalized learning remains focused on customizable ‘choice-driven’ learning and education. In addition, personalized learning and instruction is defined as being a responsive and structured method that adapts to each individual learner’s method of learning so that all may achieve their capabilities and actively participate. This solidifies the intrinsic connection between teaching and learning through personalized technologies such as generative AI.</p>
10:20 am   10:55 am	<p><b>Using AI to Understand the Student Voice</b>                      Kirsty Bryant, University of Westminster</p>
	<p>Within a UK higher education context, the Student Voice is imperative. UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are assessed and rated via the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), and students are encouraged to use TEF ratings – which provide a clear signal of a provider's excellence. Institutions submit a range of data and evidence to support their TEF assessment. This typically includes data on student satisfaction, student retention rates, graduate employment outcomes, and other relevant information. The TEF metrics focus on quantitative data and can provide us with a picture of the ‘what’ – for example ‘what is the satisfaction rate of students?’ but it doesn’t tell us the why. Collection and analysis of qualitative student feedback can provide the ‘why’ behind the numbers and provide guidance on understanding the Student Voice and how to make decision that are led with improvements and the Student Voice in mind. With the increasing importance of enhancing the student experience and fostering continuous improvement in higher education, the University of Westminster has employed AI technology to analyse and interpret the multifaceted feedback and sentiments expressed by students. This presentation highlights the power of AI in understanding the Student Voice, and our aims to drive positive change for student experience and student outcomes.</p>

Day 2 | Tuesday, 7 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
11:15 am   12:15 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b>  <b>Revolutionizing Learning Experiences and Empowering Educators with AI Technologies</b>            Moderator: Dr. Rob Nelson, University of Pennsylvania            Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Hamad Ebrahim Ali Odhabi, Abu Dhabi University</li> <li>• Prof. Esam Agami, University of Sharjah</li> <li>• TBD</li> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>
<p>As technology rapidly advances, the integration of AI in education holds immense potential to transform learning experiences. Join our panel of experts from education, technology, and artificial intelligence as they delve into the dynamic fusion of cutting-edge technology and pedagogical practices. Discover how AI algorithms, by analyzing extensive data, can personalize learning, address individual needs, and lead to improved learning outcomes. However, ethical considerations and potential drawbacks must be weighed, including privacy concerns and the role of human instructors. This discussion offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of education, where AI innovations are shaping inclusive, adaptable, and effective learning environments for learners of all ages.</p>	
12:15 pm   12:50 pm	<p><b>From Insight to Action, Explorance’ s Road Ahead</b>            Nitin Sharma, Explorance</p>
<p>In this session we will review Explorance’ s vision forward and top strategic priorities, to support higher education institutions in their journey of transformation in the way teaching effectiveness and the student experience are measured and continuously enhanced.</p>	
01:50 pm   02:50 pm	<p><b>Panel Discussion</b>  <b>Bridging the Divide: Students, Employability, and the Skill Gap</b>            Moderator: Dr. Glenn Hardaker, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology            Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Leissa Hassock, Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence</li> <li>• Dr. Hanadi Kadbey, Emirates College for Advanced Education</li> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>
<p>This panel addresses the pressing concern of employability and the growing skill gap. Panelists will explore solutions to bridge the divide between graduate skills and the job market, a challenge faced by students, universities, and employers. Focusing on empowering higher education institutions to equip students with vital workforce skills through curriculum enhancements, practical courses, and strengthened industry ties is critical. Additionally, this panel will examine the pivotal role of employers in providing internships and clear expectations on core skills. This discussion aims to ensure graduates are well-prepared for successful careers and meaningful contributions to the economy.</p>	

Day 2 | Tuesday, 7 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
02:50 pm   03:25 pm	<p><b>How Students Voice Contribute to a Continues Improvement Cycle at Ajman University</b> Amina Wahid, Ajman University</p>
<p>Ajman University (AU) is committed to actively listening to students’ perspective through various institutional surveys including course/instructor evaluations, feedback on academic programs and several surveys that address the satisfaction on administrative and academic support units. These survey instruments encourage students’ participation in actively sharing their perception about the overall learning at AU. The results are monitored, reviewed, and evaluated to assess the effectiveness of the academic programs in achieving educational outcomes. This session will outline AU's approach in improving the quality of students experience and the use of Explorance’ s Blue platform to automate an integrated feedback process over the past seven years. AU will also explore the analysis of open-ended questions and year over year trends to determine the appropriate action plan for follow up assessment cycles.</p>	
03:45 pm   5:15 pm	<p><b>Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC) Informative: Lesson Learned, Program Level</b> Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University, Prof. Mustahsan Mir, Ajman University, Dr. Felly Chiteng Kot, American University of Sharjah</p>
<p>Last year, 24 Higher Education institutions from the UAE, KSA, Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan started a transformative journey with the Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC). HEBC’s mission is to empower Higher Education institutions to assess performance, enhance programs, and reach strategic pinnacles. Data collection was conducted in early 2023, and we will continue discussing how benchmarking plays a vital role in enabling institutions to measure their performance, identify areas for improvement, and make informed decisions.</p> <p>This enlightening session sheds light on the potency of benchmarking within the realm of higher education. We invite you to join us in exploring crucial insights, methodologies, and exemplary practices for the evaluation and enhancement of institutional performance. Discover how benchmarking equips universities with the tools needed for continual improvement and the enhancement of the student experience. We will also examine avenues for further collaboration with other universities and the potential for benchmarking at the program level.</p>	