

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



ABOUT EXPLORANCE BLUENOTES MENA 2023

The Explorance Bluenotes conference is where Higher Education leaders and practitioners in the MENA region and worldwide 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 Feedback Analytics Solutions, supporting the needs of 1,000 organizations from 50 countries, including 30% 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	Welcome Address Mr. Samer Jaffar, Explorance
09:40 am 10:30 am	Day 1 Keynote Speech How Generative AI is Impacting Higher Education in the US and Globally Dr. Rob Nelson, University of Pennsylvania
10:35 am 11:15 am	Feedback for the Brave: Amplifying the Student Voice with Explorance MLY, the AI-Powered Platform Ms. Anastasia Tsimiklis, Explorance
11: 15 am 11:35 am	Morning Refreshment Break
11:35 am 12:35 pm	Panel Discussion Unlocking the Power of Open-Ended Student Feedback for Better Decision Making
12:40 pm 01:15 pm	Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilized Resource Using AI Ms. Meagan Morrissey, University of Newcastle
01:15 pm 02:15 pm	Lunch Break
02:15 pm 03:15 pm	Debate Should Student Satisfaction be Considered as One of the Key Metrics for Determining University Ranking?
03:20 pm 03:55 pm	Capturing the Student Voice: The Role of Course Evaluation in Quality Assurance and Teaching Enhancement Dr. Philip Carey, Liverpool John Moores University
03:55 pm 04:15 pm	Afternoon Refreshment Break
04:15 pm 05:15 pm	Panel Discussion The Future of Student Feedback in Higher Education
05:20 pm 05:30 pm	Drawing for First Door Prize <i>All paid trip to Explorance World 2024 – Montreal, Canada, June 25-28, 2024</i>
05:30 pm	End of First Day
07:00 pm 09:00 pm	Explorance Bluenotes MENA 2023 Networking Dinner <i>(Dubai Mall Musical Fountain Experience)</i> At: Abd El Wahab Restaurant, Souk Al Bahar, Dubai Mall

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	Day 2 Keynote Speech Artificial Intelligence for Personalized Learning Dr. Glenn Hardaker, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
10:25 am 11:00 am	Using AI to Understand the Student Voice Ms. Kirsty Bryant, University of Westminster
11:00 am 11:20 am	Morning Refreshment Break
11:20 am 12:20 pm	Panel Discussion Revolutionizing Learning Experiences and Empowering Educators with AI Technologies
12:25 pm 01:00 pm	Next Generation of Feedback Analytics in an AI-Powered World Mr. Nitin Sharma, Explorance
01:00 pm 02:00 pm	Lunch Break
02:00 pm 03:00 pm	Panel Discussion Bridging the Divide: Students, Employability, and the Skill Gap
03:05 pm 03:40 pm	Leveraging Survey Results for Continuous Improvement and Strategy Development – Ajman University's Success Story Ms. Amina Wahid Abousharkh, Ajman University
03:40 pm 04:00 pm	Afternoon Refreshment Break
04:00 pm 05:30 pm	Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC) Informative: Lessons Learned
05:30 pm 05:45 pm	Drawing for Door Prize <i>All paid trip to Explorance World 2024– Montreal, Canada, June 25-28, 2024</i> Closing Remarks
05:45 pm	End Of Second Day

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

Time	Explorance Workshop (Open for all conference participants)
09:30 am 10:00 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
10:00 am 11:15 am	From Insight to Action, Explorance's Road Ahead
11:15 am 12:30 pm	Leverage AI and Transform Comments into Actionable Insights with Explorance MLY
12:30 pm 01:30 pm	Lunch Break
01:30 pm 02:00 pm	Advanced Automation & Delegation (Including Data Integrity Gateway 3.0)
02:00 pm 03:00 pm	Blue Feedback Dashboard for Course/Instructor Evaluation
03:00 pm 03:30 pm	Student 360 Evaluations
03:30 pm 04:00 pm	Ask the Expert and Afternoon Refreshments
04:00 pm	End Of Explorance Workshop

Time	HEBC Workshop (Closed group for HEBC participants)
09:30 am 10:00 am	Registration and Morning Refreshment
10:00 am 10:05 am	Introduction to Higher Education Benchmarking Mr. Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University
10:05 am 11:05 am	Benchmarking Indicators and Data Submissions and Validation Mr. Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University
11:05 am 11:20 am	Morning Refreshment Break
11:20 am 12:20 pm	Introducing Program-Level Benchmarking Prof. Mustahsan Mir, Ajman University
12:20 pm 12:30 pm	Closing Remarks Mr. Samer Jaffar, Explorance
12:30 pm 01:30 pm	Lunch and Networking



SESSION DESCRIPTION

Transforming Education with AI-Driven Insights and Student Feedback

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



Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
09:40 am 10:30 am	<p>Day 1 Keynote Speech How Generative AI is Impacting Higher Education in the US 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>	
10:35 am 11:15 am	<p>Feedback for the Brave: Amplifying the Student Voice with Explorance MLY, the AI-Powered Platform Ms. Anastasia Tsimiklis, Explorance</p>
<p>Higher education leaders have a vital role in empowering students on their journey to purpose, impact, and growth through feedback and courageous conversations. Having courageous conversations means being brave enough to ask difficult questions, embrace diverse viewpoints, and, most importantly, commit to meaningful change – this is the essence of Feedback for the Brave.</p> <p>Creating an environment where students feel safe to share authentic feedback and confidence in their institution’s ability to lead change when necessary is crucial. Technology, like Explorance MLY pronounced {mi-lee}, is enabling this by revolutionizing Feedback Analytics.</p> <p>Explorance MLY enables organizations across the globe to transform open-ended comments into actionable insights, identify sentiment, detect feedback patterns, and provide improvement recommendations. With the ability to analyze and categorize 1 million comments per hour, Explorance MLY aligns student feedback with organizational goals.</p> <p>Join us and learn how one AI-powered platform can help amplify the Student Voice to drive student success and teaching effectiveness.</p>	
11:35 am 12:35 pm	<p>Panel Discussion Unlocking the Power of Open-Ended Student Feedback for Better Decision Making Moderator: Mr. Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Philip Carey, Liverpool John Moores University • Dr. Eslam Elnebrisi, Dubai Medical College for Girls • Dr. Shuliweeh Alenezi, King Saud University • Dr. Sonakshi Ruhela, Curtin University Dubai • Dr. Reem AlGurg, Mohammed Bin Rashid University of Medicine and Health Sciences
<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.</p> <p>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>	

Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
12:40 pm 01:15 pm	<p>Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilized Resource Using AI Ms. 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>
02:15 pm 03:15 pm	<p>Debate Should Student Satisfaction be Considered as One of the Key Metrics for Determining the University Rankings? Facilitator: Samer Jaffar, Explorance With Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. Abhilasha Singh, American University in the Emirates • Dr. Sadiq Midraji, Zayed University <p>Against Motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Amanda Forte, American University of Ras Al Khaimah • Mr. Bradley Jon Tucker, American University of Beirut
	<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>
03:20 pm 03:55 pm	<p>Capturing The Student Voice: The Role of Course Evaluation in Quality Assurance and Teaching Enhancement 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' perceptions 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 in 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>

Day 1 | Monday, 6 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
04:15 pm 05:15 pm	<p>Panel Discussion The Future of Student Feedback in Higher Education Moderator: Nitin Sharma, Explorance Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Gweneth Ogroman, Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi • Dr. Diane Nauffal, Lebanese American University • Dr. Maryam AlMannai, Hamad Bin Khalifa University • Dr. Rana Sawaya, University College of Bahrain
<p>Colleges and Universities have historically aligned feedback to accreditation requirements. As Higher Education in general is facing renewed challenges about enrollment, attrition, budget cuts, and increased competition, should educational institutions listen more frequently to (and act upon) students' feedback? Such a shift could mean more surveys and/or providing additional channels for amplifying the student voice while taking into consideration the concern around survey fatigue. This panel explores specific trends related to the future of feedback in higher education including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How frequently should you survey students? • Is your survey data an effective source for supporting change initiatives? • Should you focus more on engaging students through open-ended feedback? • What methods should be adopted to close the feedback loop? • What would institutions do if there were no specific requirements for obtaining feedback? 	

Day 2 | Tuesday, 7 November 2023 | Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
09:30 am 10:20 am	<p>Day 2 Keynote Speech Artificial Intelligence for Personalized Learning 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 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 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>
10:25 am 11:00 am	<p>Using AI to Understand the Student Voice Ms. 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 does not 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 decisions 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 analyze 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
11:20 am 12:20 pm	<p>Panel Discussion Revolutionizing Learning Experiences and Empowering Educators with AI Technologies Moderator: Dr. Rob Nelson, University of Pennsylvania Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Hamad Ebrahim Ali Odhabi, Abu Dhabi University • Prof. Esam Agami, University of Sharjah • Dr. Husa Ali Alangari, Princess Nourah Bint Abdul Rahman University • Ms. Maryam Riyaz, Ministry of Education
<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>	
12:25 pm 01:00 pm	<p>Next Generation of Feedback Analytics in an AI-Powered World Mr. 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>	
02:00 pm 03:00 pm	<p>Panel Discussion Bridging the Divide: Students, Employability, and the Skill Gap Moderator: Dr. Glenn Hardaker, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Hanadi Kadbey, Emirates College for Advanced Education • Dr. Maher Alandiyjany, Batterjee Medical College • Mr. Rashed Al Shamsi, Zayed University • Dr. Wafa Almansoori, American University of Bahrain • Dr. Anguelina Popova, American University of Central Asia
<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
03:05 pm 03:40 pm	<p>Leveraging Survey Results for Continuous Improvement and Strategy Development – Ajman University's Success Story Ms. Amina Wahid Abousharkh, Ajman University</p>
<p>Ajman University (AU) is committed to regularly conducting and analyzing performance surveys for academic programs and satisfaction surveys of various kinds for administrative and academic support units. The purpose of these surveys is to monitor, review, and evaluate the effectiveness of academic programs in achieving educational outcomes and the performance of all services and offices to ensure continuous quality enhancement at AU. This session will present AU's seven-year experience in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning as well as various support services provided by AU, based on feedback obtained through the Explorance Blue platform. Additionally, it will demonstrate the use of open-ended questions and trend analysis of survey statements across years to develop more effective strategies for the next assessment cycle.</p>	
04:00 pm 05:30 pm	<p>Higher Education Benchmarking Consortium (HEBC) Informative: Lesson Learned Mr. Samit Lotlikar, Zayed University Ms. Rana Sawalha, Zayed University Mr. Samer Jaffar, Explorance</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.</p>	

Day 3 | Wednesday, 8 November 2023 | Explorance Workshop Sessions Description

TIME	SESSION
10:00 am 11:15 am	<p>From Insight to Action, Explorance’s Road Ahead Mr. 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>	
11:15 am 12:30 pm	<p>Leverage AI and Transform Comments into Actionable Insights with Explorance MLY Mr. Chris Slack, Explorance</p>
<p>With Explorance MLY, you can see what matters most to your students, instructors, and staff, instantly getting actionable insights from their qualitative feedback. Join this hands-on workshop and learn how to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplify student, instructor, and staff feedback for data-driven decision-making. • Discover the different insights Explorance MLY uncovers from open-text comments. 	
01:30 pm 02:00 pm	<p>Data Enhancement: Enter the Era of DIG 3 Mr. Tariq Jarrar, Explorance</p>
<p>This session will explore project automation and delegation options to effectively manage various aspects of Explorance Blue, such as response rates, communication with stakeholders, analysis, and reporting. Participants will learn how automation and delegation can optimize these processes, resulting in increased productivity and efficiency.</p>	
02:00 pm 03:00 pm	<p>Student 360 Evaluations Ms. Aya Alruzzi, Explorance</p>
<p>As education has shifted towards competency-based learning, many institutions are starting to measure the impact of education on students’ soft skills. Blue 360 offers a platform to assist competency development in various contexts including peer reviews, internships, and employer feedback. In addition, such a platform can also facilitate staff evaluation, faculty peer review, and general 360-degree feedback.</p>	
03:00 pm 03:30 pm	<p>Blue Feedback Dashboard for Course/Instructor Evaluation Mr. Tariq Jarrar, Explorance</p>
<p>The Explorance Blue Dashboard is an analytics module that supports data-driven decision-making at every level of the organization. Visualize your data using widgets, charts, tables, and Heatmaps. You can slice-and-dice your data using enhanced filtering and comparison menus.</p>	