bluenotes
APAC 2023

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Insight to Action:
Harnessing the Power of Feedback
to Enhance Teaching Effectiveness
and Student Learning Experience

Hosted by National University of Singapore

May 30 – June 1, 2023

bluenotes community

NUS National University of Singapore

explorance.

About National University of Singapore

Started out as a modest medical school with 23 students in 1905, The National University of Singapore founded by a determined group of businessmen led by Tan Jiak Kim, to serve the needs of the local community. Today, more than 100 years on, as Singapore's flagship university, NUS continue to be in service of country and society.

They aspire to be a vital community of academics, researchers, staff, students and alumni working together in a spirit of innovation and enterprise for a better world.

NUS singular focus on talent will be the cornerstone of a truly great university that is dedicated to quality education, influential research and visionary enterprise, in service of country and society.

For more information about NUS, visit: https://nus.edu.sg/about.

About Explorance

Explorance is a provider of People Insight solutions. The company empowers organizations with actionable decision-making by measuring students' and employees' needs, expectations, skills, knowledge, and competencies. Through scalable automation with tools including Blue and Metrics That Matter and expert-based services, Explorance facilitates continuous improvement and accelerates the insight-to-action cycle leading to personal growth and organizational agility.

Founded in 2003, Explorance is headquartered in Montreal with business units in Chicago, Chennai, Melbourne, Amman, and London. Since 2014, Explorance has been consecutively ranked as a top employer by the Great Places to Work Institute® and is currently the #1 "Best Workplace in Canada" for 2021. Explorance works with 35% of the Fortune 100 and 25% of the top higher education institutions, including 8 of the world's top 10 business schools. The company has clients in more than 40 countries. To learn more, please visit Explorance.com and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter @explorance.

About Bluenotes Community

Explorance is honored to sponsor the Bluenotes Community's learning activities. The Bluenotes Community is a united community of users of Blue suite solutions in Higher Education, with the mission of "**Connect. Share. Learn. Grow.**" Since 2014, the Bluenotes Community hosts annual conferences and regional chapter activities connecting community members regardless of where they are located. The Bluenotes conferences, aspiring to be a global exchange of ideas for feedback-based continuous improvement for teaching excellence and student success, have been attended by over 750 community members from nearly 300 institutions globally. Connect with the Bluenotes Community member institutions on LinkedIn and Facebook.

Conference Schedule - Day 1 at a Glance

Time	Tuesday, 30 May 2023
07:30 am – 08:40 am	*Registration, Morning Refreshment*
08:40 am – 09:00 am	**Opening and Welcome Remarks** Professor Bernard Tan, Senior Vice Provost, NUS
09:00 am – 10:00 am	**Keynote Speech** **Students Value and Deserve Expert Teaching and a Quality Learning Experience: How can We Ensure They Are Getting the Quality They Deserve?** Denise Chalmers AM, Emeritus Professor, University of Western Australia
10:05 am – 10:45 am	**From Insight to Action, the Road Ahead** Samer Saab, CEO, Explorance
10:45 am – 11:05 am	*Morning Break*
11:05 am – 12:05 pm	**Panel Discussion** **Harnessing the Power of Feedback for Curriculum Review and Program Development** **Moderator**: Denise Chalmers, University of Western Australia
12:10 pm – 12:45 pm	**Strategies to Enhance Course Evaluation Ecosystem In NUS: Lessons Learned** Kiruthika Ragupathi, Yin Xiangwei, and Beh Keng Khim, National University of Singapore
12:45 pm – 01:45 pm	*Lunch Break*
*0*1:45 pm – 02:20 pm	**Key Strategies to Overcome Survey Fatigue and to Achieve a Desirable Response Rate for Students' Feedback in Temasek Polytechnic** Andy YEO, Temasek Polytechnic
02:25 pm – 03:00 pm	**Using Machine Learning to Get the Full Story from Student and Faculty Comments** Alexis Tremblay, Explorance
03:00 *pm* – 03:20 *pm*	*Afternoon Break*
03:20 pm – 03:55 pm	**Student Voice at Abu Dhabi University** Merlyn Kulapurath, Abu Dhabi University
04:00 pm – 04:35 pm	**Building Feedback Wisdom and Resilience: Skills-based Training for Reading, Interpreting and Acting on Student Evaluations of Teaching** Nicole Saintilan, University of New South Wales
04:35 pm – 05:00 pm	**Group photo** **Door Prize Drawing** (must be present to win) **Close for the Day**
05:00 pm	*End Of First Day*
	05:30 pm – 8:00 pm *Social networking dinner event*

Conference Schedule - Day 2 at a Glance

Time	Wednesday, 31 May 2023
08:00 am – 08:55 am	*Registration, Morning Refreshment*
09:00 am – 10:00 am	**Panel Discussion** **Maximizing the Value of Feedback: Designing Reliable and Valid Student Evaluations of Teaching** **Moderator**: Tim Brennan, Explorance
10:05 am – 10:40 am	**Invited Speaker** **Best Practices for Managing Course Evaluations in a Complex Environment** Scott Campbell, University of Chicago
10:40 am – 11:00 am	*Morning Break*
11:00 am – 11:35 am	**Invited Speaker** **Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilised Resource** Meagan Morrissey, University of Newcastle
11:40 am – 12:15 pm	**Harnessing data to tackle some myth-perceptions about Student Evaluations** Richard O'Donovan, Monash University
12:15 pm – 01:15 pm	*Lunch Break*
01:20 pm – 02:20 pm	**Panel Discussion** **Discussing and Addressing Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching** **Moderator**: Adrian Lee, National University of Singapore
02:25 pm – 03:05 pm	**Prioritizing Student Feedback:** **Enhancing Student Experience Excellence at VinUniversity** Nguyen Hong Ha, VinUniversity
03:05 pm – 03:25 pm	*Afternoon Refreshment Break*
03:25 pm – 04:45 pm	**Round table Discussion**
04:50 pm – 05:20 pm	**Group photo** **Door Prize Drawing** (must be present to win) **Closing Remarks**, Tim Brennan & Yeona Jang, Explorance
05:20 pm	*End Of Second Day*

Sessions Description

Session Time:	**09:00 am – 10:00 am**
Session Title:	**Keynote Speech - Students Value and Deserve Expert Teaching and a Quality Learning Experience: How can We Ensure They Are Getting the Quality They Deserve?**
Presenter:	Denise Chalmers AM, Emeritus Professor, University of Western Australia

University value statements typically claim that "students are at the heart" of their purpose. Governments bodies and their quality agencies similarly have policies that express their commitment to students experiencing a quality learning experience and environment. In order to demonstrate this, universities and government bodies administer multiple surveys for students to complete throughout their studies and when they graduate on their perceptions of the teaching, the courses, and their learning. The results are analysed, dissected, aggregated and reported. But do these surveys fully capture the quality of student experiences?

The surveys draw on the students' direct experience of the instructor in a specific course, context or practice and while this is vital information to gather, they do not encompass the full dimensions of what an academic contributes within the totality of their teaching role. Much of this work is carried out away from the classrooms, for example curriculum and assessment design, but these are as critical, if not more so, if students are to engage in challenging and worthwhile learning in a course. Similarly, planning and administering work integrated learning programs, student support initiatives and developing capacity of teaching colleagues are hidden from students. If a system is over reliant on, or overvalues student feedback and does not capture a wide range of dimensions of teaching, then these valuable contributions remain unrecognised and unrewarded.

Increasingly, it has been acknowledged that it is critical to reward and recognise teaching in its fullest extent so that students will fully engage in an excellent learning experience. The challenge for universities has been to define these dimensions and identify robust evidence that will allow their teachers to be appropriately rewarded and recognised for the expertise and excellence that they contribute to the student learning endeavour, whether it be in front of, or out of sight of, the students.

Over the last 15 years, universities in the Asia Pacific region and beyond have been working towards establishing policies and guidelines that identify teaching dimensions, criteria and evidence that can enable excellent teachers to be rewarded and recognised for their work. However, moving beyond the policies to real outcomes has been slower to emerge. In part, this can be attributed to concerns about the reliability and validity of the different types of evidence offered.

A national project to address these issues and their implementation in universities across Australia and the Asia Pacific has contributed to universities better recognising and rewarding their excellent teachers. Confidence is growing in the range and type of evidence being sourced. In this keynote address, Denise will uncover the challenges and discuss ways in which to harness this broader range of evidence to inform not only the reward and recognition of teachers, but curriculum and broader educational strategic directions.

Session Time:	**10:05 am – 10:45 am**
Session Title:	**From Insight to Action, the Road Ahead**
Presenter:	Samer Saab, Explorance

Explorance's CEO, Samer Saab, will share 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.

Session Time:	**11:05 am – 12:05 pm**
Panel Title:	**Harnessing the Power of Feedback for Curriculum Review and Program Development**
Panelists:	May Lim Sok Mui, Singapore Institute of Technology Scott Campbell, University of Chicago Sahas Sankaran, GovTech Digital Academy
Facilitator:	Denise Chalmers, University of Western Australia

The key question asked was "Are institutions ready to use feedback gathered through SET to help institutional curriculum review and program development processes?" In this session, panelists will share how they are using feedback data in institutional curriculum review and program development. The panel will also discuss challenges in using qualitative comments in these processes such as handling potentially concerning comments, expanding, or clarifying policies and procedures, identifying needed competencies, and ensuring that relevant training and communications are available for students, faculty, and admin staff.

Session Time:	**12:10 pm – 12:45 pm**
Session Title:	**Strategies to Enhance Course Evaluation Ecosystem In NUS: Lessons Learned**
Presenter:	Kiruthika Ragupathi, Yin Xiangwei, and Beh Keng Khim, National University of Singapore

In 2016, the National University of Singapore (NUS) transitioned its centralized university-wide course evaluations, known as the SFT (Student Feedback on Teaching) system, from an in-house online system to an automated online system using Blue. These evaluations primarily capture students' perception on their learning experience and satisfaction on instructors (and teaching), rather than teaching effectiveness. In this session, we share the planning process and the strategies used to harness the power of feedback, as well as challenges tackled to implement the university wide transition within a condensed timeline. First, we describe the lessons learned with respect to the importance of aligning key objectives of the implementation to the larger purpose, collaborating, and engaging with the community, educating and engaging students, and building sustainable processes. Second, we share our experience with reporting and the approaches adopted to use feedback data in the overall analytics strategy of the institution. Finally, we end with an overview of our plans forward for the future.

Session Time:	**01:45 pm – 02:20 pm**
Session Title:	**Key Strategies to Overcome Survey Fatigue and to Achieve a Desirable Response Rate for Students' Feedback in Temasek Polytechnic**
Presenter:	Andy YEO, Temasek Polytechnic

Temasek Polytechnic's in-house academic survey system was replaced with Blue in January 2022. The new Teaching Evaluation and Subject Survey System (TESSy) rides on Blue 8 to engage our academic staff, and full-time and part-time learners on subject performance and teaching effectiveness. In this presentation, Andy Yeo will share with you on TESSy's key features, how TP overcame ground challenges during Blue 8 implementation, and TP's strategies to reduce survey fatigue, and improve response rate. Furthermore, some post-survey insights from our end users for continuous improvement will also be shared.

Tuesday, 30 May 2023

Session Time:	**02:25 pm – 03:00 pm**
Session Title:	**Using Machine Learning to Get the Full Story from Student and Faculty Comments**
Presenter:	Alexis Tremblay, Explorance

Universities are increasingly dealing with unstructured feedback, whether this is obtained through surveys, evaluations, social media channels, discussion groups, …etc. Most of the time, this rich source of information remains untapped because of the tremendous effort it takes to sift and dig out information manually. This session will present a new approach using Machine Learning to slice and dice unstructured data in real-time. This will allow you to gain new insights to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities and easily correlate themes with categories, behaviors, sentiments, and recommendations.

Session Time:	**03:20 pm – 03:55 pm**
Session Title:	**Student Voice at Abu Dhabi University**
Presenter:	Merlyn Kulapurath, Abu Dhabi University

The Organizational Planning and Strategy department at Abu Dhabi University administers surveys seeking student feedback on teaching & learning, academic experience, campus life and university services. This feedback plays a vital role in our strategic planning and quality assurance processes towards continuous improvement of our academic and campus operations. This session presents Abu Dhabi University's approach to feedback and how partnering with Explorance has helped us in achieving our goals. Abu Dhabi University will also present key insights obtained through Blue dashboards and how this data has helped senior leadership take effective steps towards improving teaching and learning and overall student experience.

Session Time:	**04:00 pm – 04:35 pm**
Session Title:	**Building Feedback Wisdom and Resilience: Skills-based Training for Reading, Interpreting and Acting on Student Evaluations of Teaching**
Presenter:	Nicole Saintilan, University of New South Wales

The University of New South Wales is a large Australian university with a high commitment to learning and teaching. To build a robust cycle of feedback and growth, the university runs a student evaluation of teaching survey called myExperience. Each year, over 300,000 evaluation tasks are filled out by students, the results of which undergo a duty of care process using Blue Explorance software before being sent to staff and management.

Although universities do quite well in providing students with the skills to read, interpret and act on feedback, they rarely offer the same training for staff. Recently UNSW became aware of high levels of anxiety and distress in staff who receive negative comments in the myExperience survey.

What to do? Should UNSW protect staff by further scrubbing and erasing comments, or should they try to protect staff by building feedback resilience and wisdom? This paper explores the options and describes the steps that UNSW has taken to care for their community

Wednesday, 31 May 2023

Session Time:	**09:00 am – 10:00 am**
Panel Title:	**Maximizing the Value of Feedback: Designing Reliable and Valid Student Evaluations of Teaching**
Panelists:	Thilo Hagen, National University of Singapore Seah Seng Wee, PSB Academy Richard O'Donovan, Monash University
Facilitator:	Tim Brennan, Explorance

At the heart of good Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) are two key concepts: survey validity and reliability. Flawed data can lead to wrong conclusions. Particularly when stakes are high, we need to be sure that we are gathering the right data. In this panel, panelists will discuss the role of an instrument in SET and the key factors to consider creating an instrument that produces reliable and valid data from students to measure and improve student learning experience and teaching effectiveness. They will also discuss if increasing response rates can improve SET validity and if so, what are some strategies for response rate optimization and for enhancing feedback culture.

Session Time:	**10:05 am – 10:40 am**
Session Title:	**Best Practices for Managing Course Evaluations in a Complex Environment**
Presenter:	Scott Campbell, University of Chicago

The University of Chicago transitioned its undergraduate course evaluations to Blue in 2019. With its success, our 12 graduate and professional schools wanted to move to Blue and be supported by the University Registrar. Even with the institution's decentralized and interdisciplinary academic culture, the implementation was a huge success. Many challenges and considerations were necessary to uncover, such as data governance, confidentiality vs. anonymity, managing open-ended comments, and response rates. Progress is achievable through deep collaboration and effective project and change management initiatives.

Session Time:	**11:00 am – 11:35 am**
Session Title:	**Comment Mining – Diving into Our Most Underutilised Resource**
Presenter:	Meagan Morrissey, University of Newcastle

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 underutilised because they are often enormous, difficult to analyse and unorganised. But what if they weren't? What if you could process qualitative feedback in minutes, analyse the sentiment and organise 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.

Wednesday, 31 May 2023

Session Time:	**11:40 am – 12:15 pm**
Session Title:	**Harnessing data to tackle some myth-perceptions about Student Evaluations**
Presenter:	Richard O'Donovan, Monash University

There are some common views held by academics and higher education administrators around potential influences on student evaluations of courses and teaching which skew the results. Some of these include: the belief that units with exams are viewed more negatively by students; holding surveys during the exam results in more negative feedback; that only some students respond to feedback surveys (e.g., international students are too shy to participate); students who fail units drag results down; racism and sexism have major impacts on student evaluations. We used data collected from the Monash University Student Evaluation of Teaching and Units (SETU) to investigate these concerns, and found that in each case, there was little evidence to support the claims, rendering them - at least for Monash - more myths than actual effects. We used these insights to conduct a series of workshops for interested academics to help them better understand the value of SETU, and dispel the notion that it should be rejected out of hand as a flawed and biased tool.

Session Time:	**01:20 pm – 02:20 pm**
Panel Title:	**Discussing and Addressing Bias in Student Evaluations of Teaching**
Panelists:	Soo Yuen Jien, National University of Singapore Rebekah Lim, Singapore University of Social Sciences Lim Fun Siong, Nanyang Technological University
Facilitator:	Adrian Lee, National University of Singapore

Bias is a common concern about Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET), frequently brought up by faculty, and often reported in the popular academic press. As those responsible for SET, it is important to consider how we navigate this topic at institutions. In this panel, panelists will share experiences and insights regarding: 1) the state of the evidence and discourse regarding bias in SET; 2) how we discuss issues of bias at institutions; 3) some strategies and directions to support faculty and students and ensure fairness and equity in SET

Session Time:	**2:25 pm – 03:05 pm**
Session Title:	**Prioritizing Student Feedback: Enhancing Student Experience Excellence at VinUniversity**
Presenter:	Nguyen Hong Ha, VinUniversity

VinUniversity (VinUni) places great importance on student feedback and actively seeks it out to improve the effectiveness of teaching and enhance the overall student learning experience. Over the past few years, VinUni has implemented various tools to collect student feedback in real-time and on a periodic basis. These tools include the End-of-Course Evaluation, which allows students to provide feedback on teaching quality by end of the semester, the Best-in-Class Survey (Net-Promoter-Score), which measures their satisfaction at every touchpoint of their student journey, and semesterly Town-Hall meetings that foster open communication and address student expectations. Additionally, VinUni provides a user-friendly feedback channel for students to report any issues they may encounter, and the Student Experience Taskforce carefully analyzes and classifies their feedback into high, medium, and low priority areas to take appropriate measures.

As a result of these efforts, VinUni has consistently achieved a student experience score ranging from 82% to 90%, which has helped the institution to achieve a maximum score for this criterion in the QS Stars Rating. VinUni recognizes that student feedback is essential to maintaining a high standard of education and will continue to prioritize and act on student feedback to further enhance the overall student learning experience.