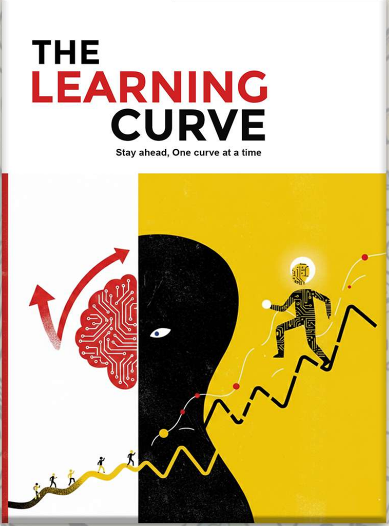

THE LEARNING CURVE

Stay ahead, One curve at a time

CONTENTS

01 **Zunaira Khalid** Editor's note

03 **Dr. Hadia Awan** Change your classroom with gratitude

06 **Dr. Bushra Naz** Change your classroom with gratitude

11 **Rimsha Munir** Value of accessing professional development in early years of teaching

15 **Dr. Hira Mubeen** Why should a teacher do research

19 **Dr. Muhannad Akhyar Farrukh** Faculty Innovation & AI

23 **Sahir Mushtaq** Chinese Language- Learning a new Language

25 **Sikander Sethi** New era for UCP-(Leicester)

29 **Amna Khawar** Strategic Partnership of O and A-level students in higher education

33 **Touqeer Nazir** Ibtida

36 **Muhammad Zafar Ul Haq** Student pedagogy partnership

38 **Amber Sarwar & Aleeha Azher** Student work

43 Recommendations

43 Books & Music

44 Games

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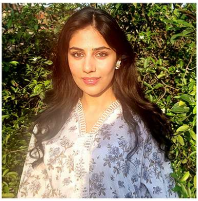


Zunaira Khalid
(HEAD LIC)

Dear Readers,

With this issue of The Learning Curve I want to throw some light on the growing dynamics in the field of education in relation to UCP's continued efforts towards innovating its learning environment. This issue talks about some of the very integral conversations that need to become collective discussions to be able to come together as a learning community in the wake of our challenges. Learning is not just a means to an end but a continuous cultivation of inner reflection to better ourselves. This cannot occur without considering the emotional and mental aspects professional burnout and striving to bring gratitude in our work. There are grand new innovations in research and how it is changing with the rapidly evolving AI technology. At the same time, we also discuss the value of professional development and celebrate the strides we have made in our flagship Student Pedagogy Partnership Program. In terms of always expanding our horizons we also discuss UCP's advent into international education with its partnership with Leicester and the delight in adding new languages into our lives. While UCP grows internally, our desire to improve all that is beyond us also shows in the most impressive initiative for out-of-school-children by a student.

With the challenging times in which we have persisted with our pursuits, it is important to acknowledge the immense strength it takes to relay and pursue our passions while the world affairs constantly send us in disarray. As students and educators in Pakistan, we are not new to troubling time and have almost grown accustomed to the chaos as background noise. Yet, it is important to consider and recognize the effects of these on our lives and celebrate what we have been able to achieve despite all crisis. With this, I welcome you all to immerse yourself in our second issue!

Zunaira Khalid
(HEAD LIC)

GRATITUDE

IN THE CLASSROOM

(Dr. Hadia Awan)
HOD
(Faculty of law)

1. How do you define gratitude in the context of teaching and learning?
I understand gratitude as an emotion, a disposition, a pedagogical tool, and a learnable skill. In teaching and learning, it functions both as an internal mindset and as an intentional practice that shapes interactions between teachers and students.

2. Why do you think gratitude is important in a classroom setting?
Gratitude is important because it acknowledges effort, stimulates engagement, and motivates both students and teachers. It fosters mutual respect and reinforces a sense of value and belonging within the learning environment.

4. How does a grateful attitude from a teacher influence the classroom atmosphere?
A teacher's grateful attitude helps counter negativity bias, buffers stress, and supports perseverance. It contributes to a more emotionally safe, resilient, and supportive classroom climate.

5. Do you think gratitude is a skill that can be taught, or is it a personal trait? Why?
Gratitude is both a personal trait and a skill. While some individuals may naturally incline toward gratitude, it can be cultivated through intentional, repeated practices such as quick reflective actions, planned activities, and outcome-based exercises. Over time, consistent practice transforms gratitude from a skill into a habit and eventually into a personal trait.

effort, support, or contribution. Gratitude may involve publicly recognizing assistance or initiative, but its essence depends more on context and intention than on the form of expression.

7. How can gratitude be practised without compromising academic rigor or discipline?
Practising gratitude does not require compromising academic standards. Just as a strong argument relies on sound reasoning rather than elevated tone, gratitude emphasizes a positive and growth-oriented perspective. It encourages recognizing strengths while simultaneously identifying ways to improve, thereby supporting student development without lowering expectations.

8. How can gratitude be integrated into lesson planning or assessment practices?
Gratitude can be integrated by fostering a positive learning environment where both teachers and students actively learn in their respective roles. Students engage with concepts, while teachers learn from students' curiosity and responses. This reciprocal learning environment involves acknowledging efforts on both sides through practices such as encouraging participation, giving due credit to student initiatives, providing thoughtful and reasoned feedback, and appreciating meaningful questions and engagement.

9. How can teachers balance constructive feedback with gratitude-based communication?
In assessment feedback, I begin by expressing gratitude and appreciation for students' efforts and highlighting their strengths. This is followed by constructive suggestions for improvement, along with practical ideas and strategies that can help students enhance their work.

10. How can educational institutions support teachers in developing gratitude-based pedagogy?
Collecting individual inputs, such as through this questionnaire, is an effective starting point. This process can be strengthened by adopting inclusive approaches rather than directive mandates. Institutions can facilitate open, moderated discussions that highlight the value of gratitude and invite faculty to share strategies for integration. Such sessions may be led by experienced teachers with strong interpersonal skills. Additionally, involving student societies in similar initiatives can help cultivate a school-wide culture of gratitude.

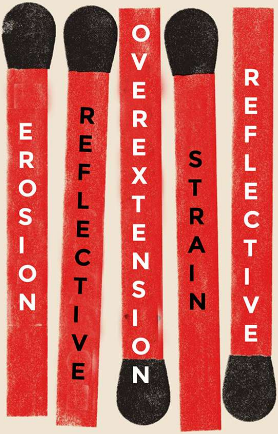
RUCTIVE
ULTURE

3. What are some simple ways a teacher can express gratitude to students?

Teachers can express gratitude through written notes, verbal acknowledgements, classroom announcements, reciprocal gestures, and shared reflective experiences that recognize students' efforts and contributions.

6. How is gratitude different from praise in education?

While gratitude and praise may appear similar in expression, they differ in intent and impact. Praise often focuses on performance or outcomes, whereas gratitude emphasizes acknowledgment of



Dr Bushra Naz
Associate professor,
Faculty of humanities and social sciences

WE ARE DIFERENT!

From your perspective as a psychologist and faculty member, how do you define teacher burnout in the context of higher education?

From my perspective as a psychologist and faculty member, teacher burnout in higher education is a chronic state of psychological and emotional exhaustion that arises from prolonged exposure to academic, administrative, and relational stressors within the university environment. It is characterized not only by emotional exhaustion, but also by cynicism or depersonalization toward students, colleagues, and institutional processes, and a reduced sense of professional efficacy and meaning in one's academic role.

In the higher education context, burnout extends beyond classroom fatigue. It is often fueled by excessive workload, role overload (teaching, research, supervision, service), publication pressures, job insecurity, limited recognition, and misalignment between institutional expectations and personal values. Faculty members may continue to perform their duties competently on the surface, yet experience internal depletion, disengagement, and diminished motivation particularly when efforts are not matched by support, autonomy, or appreciation. Psychologically, burnout reflects a breakdown in coping resources where sustained demands exceed an individual's emotional, cognitive, and relational capacities. Institutionally, it signals systemic issues such as unsustainable performance metrics, insufficient mental health support, and a culture that normalizes overwork. Another important issue is the interpersonal problem that create the burn out.

What aspects of teaching at a university like UCP do you think place the greatest psychological demands on faculty members?

At a university like UCP, one of the most significant sources of psychological demand on faculty members is the high student teacher ratio at BS levels, which directly affects teaching quality, classroom management, and faculty wellbeing. Ideally, an effective university classroom should comprise 25 to 30 students, allowing for meaningful interaction, individualized attention, and a supportive learning environment. However, when class sizes exceed 50 students or more create severe classroom management challenges, making it difficult for faculty to maintain student engagement, discipline, and academic focus. Managing diverse learning needs, behavioral issues, and assessment demands in overcrowded classrooms often leads to mental fatigue, emotional strain, and a sense of reduced control among teachers. This environment also negatively affects students, who may experience reduced autonomy, limited participation, and diminished academic ownership, further complicating the teaching learning process. Another major psychological stressor is restricted academic autonomy and unfair interference in classroom teaching. Such interference disrupts the classroom atmosphere, creates uncertainty, and contributes to chronic stress and frustration. Additionally, classroom evaluation practices can become a source of psychological threat for teachers. Faculty who prioritize deep learning, critical thinking, and independent reading often by assigning books and encouraging discussion may feel disadvantaged when student evaluations favor teaching styles perceived as "easier," such as reliance on slides with minimal cognitive demand. This mismatch between quality teaching and evaluation criteria places pressure on faculty to compromise pedagogical integrity for favorable evaluations, further contributing to stress, dissatisfaction, and burnout.

How do academic roles (teaching, research, service, administration) interact to influence faculty stress and wellbeing?

Academic roles in higher education are deeply interconnected, and it is the cumulative and often conflicting demands of these roles that significantly influence faculty stress and wellbeing. While each role is meaningful in isolation, their interaction frequently creates role overload and role conflict, which are central contributors to faculty burnout. Teaching demands sustained emotional, cognitive, and relational energy, particularly in contexts of large class sizes, intensive assessment, and high student expectations. Research, on the other hand, requires uninterrupted time, intellectual focus, and sustained motivation, yet it is often evaluated through rigid performance indicators such as publications, impact factors, and grant acquisition. When heavy teaching loads coexist with high research expectations, faculty members experience chronic tension between time scarcity and performance pressure, leading to stress and reduced psychological recovery. Service and administrative responsibilities frequently involve tight deadlines, and limited decision-making authority, which can diminish faculty members' sense of autonomy and control key psychological resources for wellbeing.

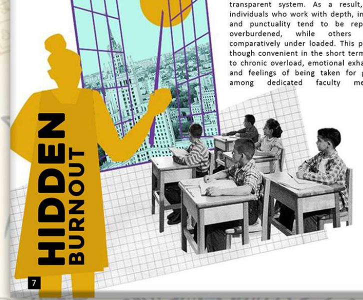
At times, inequitable workload distribution by higher administration becomes a significant source of stress and dissatisfaction among faculty members. Tasks are often assigned based on who is perceived as reliable, efficient, and consistently committed, rather than through a fair and

Another critical issue is the lack of due credit and recognition for faculty members who shoulder extensive administrative and service responsibilities. When hard work, leadership, and sustained effort are not acknowledged either formally or informally it undermines motivation, professional identity, and psychological wellbeing. Faculty may feel invisible despite their contributions, which fosters resentment, disengagement, and burnout.

Among university faculty, burnout commonly manifests through a combination of psychological, emotional, and behavioral signs, many of which develop gradually and are often normalized within academic culture.

Psychologically, faculty members experiencing burnout frequently report persistent mental fatigue, difficulty concentrating, reduced creativity, and a sense of cognitive overload. There is often a growing feeling of inefficacy, where even accomplished academics begin to doubt the value or impact of their work. Decision-making becomes effortful, and motivation for teaching, research, or innovation steadily declines.

Emotionally, burnout is marked by chronic exhaustion, irritability, emotional numbness, and decreased empathy toward students and colleagues. Faculty may feel frustrated, helpless, or emotionally drained, particularly when their efforts are met with limited institutional support or recognition. Over time, this emotional depletion can evolve into c transparent system. As a result, those individuals who work with depth, integrity, and punctuality tend to be repeatedly overburdened, while others remain comparatively under loaded. This practice, though convenient in the short term, leads to chronic overload, emotional exhaustion, and feelings of being taken for granted among dedicated faculty members.



HIDDEN
BURNOUT

SILEN
OVERWOR

What are the most common psychological, emotional, or behavioral signs of burnout you observe among university faculty?

ynicism or detachment, where teaching and academic engagement feel burdensome rather than meaningful

Behaviorally, burnout often appears as withdrawal and disengagement. Faculty may limit interaction with students, avoid committee work, or participate minimally in departmental activities. Procrastination, reduced responsiveness, and declining enthusiasm for professional development are common. Some faculty exhibit overworking behaviors, struggling to set boundaries and compensating for systemic pressures by working excessively, which further accelerates exhaustion. Others may show increased absenteeism, reliance on rigid routines, or resistance to change. Collectively, these signs indicate not a lack of competence or commitment, but a prolonged imbalance between demands and resources. Recognizing these patterns early is essential, as burnout affects not only individual wellbeing but also teaching quality, collegial relationships, and the overall academic climate.

In addition to cognitive, emotional, and behavioral symptoms, burnout among university faculty often manifests through resentment, physical health problems, and withdrawal behaviors, further underscoring its serious impact on wellbeing.

ACADEMIC
STRAIN

How does burnout typically manifest differently in early-career versus senior faculty members?

Among early-career faculty, burnout is often characterized by anxiety, over commitment, and constant performance pressure. These faculty members typically juggle heavy teaching loads alongside expectations for research productivity, publication, and professional visibility, often with limited job security and unclear promotion pathways. Fear of negative evaluations, contract renewal concerns, feeling threat in the whole environment and the need to prove competence may lead to excessive working hours, difficulty setting boundaries, and emotional self-silencing. Psychologically, early-career faculty may experience imposter feelings, heightened self-doubt, and emotional exhaustion, while behaviorally they may avoid voicing concerns, comply with unfair workload demands, and sacrifice wellbeing to meet institutional expectations. They are also feeling lack of training in their specific areas In contrast, senior faculty members often experience burnout with disproportionate administrative, leadership, and mentoring responsibilities. Burnout at this stage often manifests as cynicism, emotional detachment, reduced enthusiasm for teaching or innovation, and a sense of stagnation or diminished meaning. Senior faculty may feel undervalued when their experience is taken for granted or when decision-making authority is limited despite their contributions. Physically, long-term stress may present through chronic health issues, while behaviorally it may appear as withdrawal from institutional engagement or resistance to additional responsibilities.

In your experience, how does prolonged burnout affect teaching effectiveness, motivation, and engagement with students?

In my experience, prolonged burnout has a profound and detrimental impact on teaching effectiveness, faculty motivation, and engagement with students. When burnout becomes chronic, it gradually erodes the psychological resources that are essential for high-quality teaching and meaningful student teacher relationships.In terms of teaching effectiveness, prolonged burnout reduces cognitive energy, creativity, and instructional flexibility. Faculty members may rely more on routine or surface-level teaching methods, limit interactive activities, and reduce academic rigor not due to lack of competence, but because emotional and

INVISIBLE
LABOR

mental exhaustion constrain their capacity to innovate and respond to students' needs. Assessment and feedback may become more mechanical, and the overall learning experience can lose depth and inspiration.

Regarding motivation, sustained burnout diminishes both intrinsic and professional drive. Teaching may shift from a source of purpose and satisfaction to a task performed out of obligation. Faculty often experience a loss of meaning and professional pride, especially when their sustained efforts are met with inadequate recognition or support. This demotivation can also extend to reduced interest in curriculum development, mentoring, and pedagogical growth. Engagement with students is particularly affected. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization can lead faculty to emotionally withdraw/isolated, limit availability, or adopt a more distant and task-oriented approach. Empathy and patience may decline, making it harder to respond constructively to students' academic or emotional needs. Over time, this weakened engagement can negatively influence students' motivation, learning outcomes, and perceptions of the academic environment.

What personal coping strategies have you found effective for managing stress and preventing burnout in academic roles?

In my experience, managing stress and preventing burnout in academic roles requires intentional, consistent coping strategies that address both personal wellbeing and professional boundaries. While institutional support is essential, certain personal practices can significantly buffer the impact of chronic academic stress. One of the most effective strategies is setting clear boundaries between professional and personal life. This includes defining realistic working hours, learning to say no to excessive administrative tasks, and prioritizing responsibilities rather than striving for perfection in every role. Boundary-setting helps conserve emotional energy and prevents chronic over commitment. Another important strategy is peer support and positive collegial connection. Sharing experiences with trusted colleagues normalizes stress, reduces isolation, and provides emotional validation. Informal mentoring relationships and professional dialogue often serve as powerful buffers against burnout.

Maintaining physical and emotional self-care is equally vital. Regular sleep, physical activity, mindfulness, prayer or reflective practices, and short restorative breaks during the day

Induction and Professional Development of Early Career Educators in Pakistani Higher Education

BRIDGING THE GAP

BUILDING EDUCATORS, NOT JUST ACADEMICS

Rimsha Munir
Program Associate
Learning Innovation Centre

Often early career educators are challenged with the notion to transform theoretical knowledge and mastery into practical realities of teaching and research. In an era where information is readily available, it becomes imperative to transform teaching practices in a university setting. It is often expected of novice teachers with profound theoretical knowledge to be magnificent teacher as well. This expectation mandates that professional development (PD) of early career educators (ECEs) be sustained as strategically imperative for institutional quality enhancement (Khan,2025)

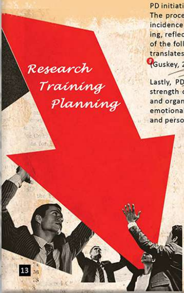
Universities are in a strategic position to do this through enrolling young professionals into organised professional growth programs. With these initiatives, new faculty do not only obtain the modern knowledge in pedagogy, but get to know how to implement them in the classroom. PD can help teachers to attract students employing innovative and inclusive strategies and to instill a culture of lifelong learning within the institutions. This interconnection between professional learning and classroom practice has significant impacts on improving the quality of teaching and learning in institutions of higher education.

In addition to enhancing pedagogical competence, PD influences the emotional status and professional identity of educators through the transformative effect. University faculty are frequently faced with conflicting demands that follow teaching, research, and administrative duties (Afzal et al., 2024). Training that is aligned with internationally recognized teaching standards, such as those by Advance HE (UK), UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers, or the British Council's Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) program, provides educators with the expertise and confidence to balance these challenges effectively. Such initiatives empower teachers emotionally, fostering resilience and a sense of professional fulfillment (Day & Gu, 2010).

Early career educators can be successful only with the support of the institutes. In Pakistan and other countries, it has been found that when the access to professional development and mentoring, as well as teaching resources are offered to novice educators, they become more efficient, confident and innovative (Qureshi, 2020;Aijaz, 2024; UNESCO, 2023). The support of institutions should be not limited to the opportunity of training: it must be a culture of reflective practice, lifelong learning. Teaching portfolios and peer observations are aids to reflective teaching which helps educators to critically reflect on their teaching practices, reconcile theory and practice and record professional development (Schon, 1983; Brookfield, 2017). Mentorship and peer cooperation are also potent triggers of professional development among ECEs. Novice teachers are given a chance to learn through structured mentoring programs and communities of practices where they are allowed to share challenges and develop new teaching strategies together with the experienced teachers (Kram, 1985; Ambrose et al., 2010). An example of this model is the National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP) and Faculty Development Program (FDP) of Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan, which is the integrated knowledge of structured learning, mentoring, and collaboration with peers. As a result of these programs, research suggests the programs lead to better teaching performance, confidence, and faculty retention (Iftikhar et al., 2022).

Moreover, the professional growth should enhance integration of research and teaching. The knowledge base of teaching and learning (SoTL) assists ECEs to use their research talents to the classroom innovation and lead to a reflective, inquiry based method to pedagogy (Brew, 2010). When educators perceive themselves as being both practitioners and scholars, they turn the classroom into a knowledge creation instead of a knowledge transmission center.

The digital revolution has also put professional development into consideration in terms of technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) as a way of equipping an educator with the ability to incorporate technology in the teaching process in a significant manner (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). Digital pedagogy training equips teachers with the capacity to develop interesting, approachable, and inclusive online learning spaces. This is especially crucial because universities are implementing models of blended and technology-assisted learning.Inclusivity is another important element of a successful PD. Due to the growing diversity of the university classrooms, teachers should be provided with a set of ideas and methods that promote fair involvement, cultural responsiveness, and inclusive learning experiences (Florian and Black-Hawkins, 2011). PD programs need to assist ECEs to overcome unconscious bias, support students with different learning requirements, and encourage a sense of belonging to diverse students.
It is also important in terms of institutional alignment. PD must be incorporated in the university strategic and policy frameworks. A connection between involvement in PD and participation in promotion, appraisal, and tenure systems ends up providing motivation and accountability (HEC, 2024). This strategy implies institutional investment in academic excellence and continuous improvement.



PD initiatives are also important in sustainability and assessment. The process of professional learning should not have a singular incidence but must be an ongoing, dynamic process. Peer coaching, reflective journals and evidence-based evaluations are some of the follow-up mechanisms that can be used to ensure that PD translates to long-term gains in teaching and student outcomes (Guskey, 2002).

Lastly, PD helps in sustaining the emotional and psychological strength of teachers. Academic life in its initial stages is hectic and organized PD provides the support systems, confidence, and emotional empowerment. PD can contribute to the professional and personal well-being of educators, as it encourages emotional

To sum up, professional growth among the early career educators is not just a side activity, but it is a strategic pillar of the institutional excellence. PD can change the culture and academic reputation of the whole university, as well as improve the teaching practice of the individual, through reflective practice, mentorship, inclusivity, digital competence, and long-term institutional support. By considering PD as a part of the career development and institutional identity, universities develop reflective, resilient, innovative, and highly committed educators that embrace the transformative nature of education (HEC, 2023; UNESCO, 2023).

STRATEGIC PLANNING

RESEARCH AS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Hira Mubeen
Associate Professor, Department of
Biotechnology Faculty of Science and Technology

1. At its most basic level, why is research important for society, and why must universities lead it?

"Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought."— Albert Szent-Györgyi Research gains true value when it first helps society understand its overlooked problems and then offers solutions to them. During my bachelor's studies, reading about how Watson and Crick uncovered DNA showed me how curiosity can lead to a lasting impact. Over time, this curiosity translated into applied research, including work on low-cost diagnostic approaches for maternal health in Pakistan. Universities are where such curiosity is guided into responsible, solution-oriented science.

2. Why is it essential for a teacher to also be a researcher?

I believe "A teacher who does not engage in research eventually teaches the past" Science evolves rapidly, and teaching must be adapted accordingly. My work in molecular biology and genetics has taught me that knowledge is constantly evolving. Research keeps a teacher informed about what is current and real. Without it, education risks becoming monotonous and obsolete. My motivation for research deepened when I recognized that many national priority challenges such as maternal and cardiovascular health, congenital disorders, and affordable diagnostics remain understudied.

3. How does seeing a teacher engaged in research change students' mindsets?

When students see their teacher as a passionate researcher engaged in advanced and cutting edge research, science stops feeling distant and starts feeling achievable.

What research skills do you pass on beyond the standard curriculum?

Research teaches patience, ethical discernment, and critical analysis. I train students to question their results instead of accepting them at first glance. During my own lab work, I learned that misinterpreting data can be more harmful than failed experiments. While teaching about latest software's and tools in the Bioinformatics course, I guide students on how to validate results, document errors, interpret scientific data and use AI tools carefully. These habits prepare them to make sound scientific decisions.

4. How does a teacher's research portfolio elevate a university's global standing?

When a teacher publishes research or collaborates internationally, the university's name travels with that work. The OIC-COMSTECH Young Women Research Grant brought global attention to our work on maternal health diagnostics. Those papers, citations, and funded projects directly influence how institutions are ranked and perceived worldwide. I have seen how even one well-placed collaboration can open doors for departments and students alike. Over time, this strengthens the credibility of the university and the academic value of its degrees.

5. How does research prepare students for postgraduate studies and scholarships?

Students who work closely on research learn how to think beyond coursework and defend their ideas globally. I guide them through reading real papers, framing research questions, and explaining their work under scrutiny. Also, while teaching a "Advance research methodology course, I help my graduate students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and resilience skills essential for postgraduate studies. I also guide them on open scholarship calls and proposal writing so they are fully prepared. This exposure mirrors how postgraduate interviews and scholarship panels operate. As a result, students are better prepared for the pressure and expectations of international academia

6. Why is research the strongest bridge between academia and industry?

"Research becomes a bridge when it moves beyond curiosity and asks, "Is this usable"? I always ask my students to think about problem-solving, scalability and practicality skills. Seeing my experiments turn into something practical showed me how research naturally links universities with real-world applications. I have always liked trying to make things work, even when I wasn't sure they would. In my lab, whether it was low-cost biosensors, paper based diagnostics, or experimenting with AI tools for drug design, I along with my research students had to think about how it could actually be used outside the lab. Industry doesn't just care about theory alone, but they care if it solves a problem.

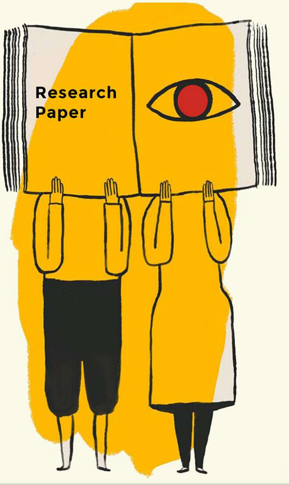
7. How does research improve the quality of lectures?

Research allows concepts to be taught through real experiences. Instead of only explaining theory, I share examples from experiments and projects. This makes complex ideas easier to understand. Students engage more when learning feels real.

8. In the age of AI, why is original human research more important than ever?

I can handle calculations or analyze data, but it doesn't know which experiment to try next or when to take a risk. That process of figuring things out, learning from mistakes, and asking the right questions is what research really teaches. I use AI in genomics, drug design and healthcare, but the human role remains central. From a human lens, one still has to figure out what problem matters most and how to test it. That judgment, and the curiosity to keep trying even when experiments fail, is something only a human can bring. AI is a tool, but the direction and meaning of research come from us

CURRICULUM



Dr. M. Akhyar Farrukh
Director, Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialisation

AI LANGUAGE OF THOUGHT

1. We've moved from AI being a 'novelty' to a 'necessity.' As Director, how are you preparing faculty to treat prompt engineering not as a shortcut, but as a new form of scientific literacy?

In our GenAI workshops, I explain to faculty that prompt engineering is not a shortcut or a replacement for thinking. It is simply a new way of expressing our academic thinking clearly to a machine. Just as good research starts with a well-defined question, effective use of AI starts with a well-structured prompt. When faculty learn how to give context, define objectives, and ask step-by-step questions, AI becomes more accurate and useful. This process improves clarity of thought rather than weakening it. Over time, faculty realize that prompt writing strengthens skills they already value, such as critical thinking, planning, and reflection, making it a form of modern academic literacy.

2. In five years, do you think 'Prompt Engineering' will still be a separate skill, or will it be as invisible and essential as 'knowing how to use a library?

In the coming years, prompt engineering will no longer feel like a separate or technical skill. It will become a natural part of teaching, research, and professional work, much like searching databases or designing lesson plans. While tools will become easier to use, the ability to guide AI thoughtfully will remain important. Faculty will still need to explain what they want, set limits, and judge the quality of AI responses. The name may change, but the habit of clear communication with intelligent systems will stay essential in higher education.

3. How is the university balancing the push for AI-driven productivity with the need to protect Institutional Intellectual Property (IP) ?

One of the most important messages in my training sessions is that AI should be used carefully when it comes to institutional data and intellectual property. Faculty are encouraged to use AI for drafting, organizing ideas, and improving clarity, but not for uploading confidential research data, unpublished results, or sensitive institutional information. AI supports productivity, but ownership and responsibility always remain with the researcher and the university. By setting these boundaries clearly, institutions can benefit from AI without compromising their intellectual assets or academic integrity.

4. How is the integration of Prompt Engineering and AI changing the way we interpret consumer behaviour and data?

AI has made it much easier to analyze large amounts of data and identify patterns, especially in areas like consumer behaviour, business research, and social sciences. Through prompt engineering, faculty learn how to ask AI to summarize trends, compare scenarios, or explore possible explanations. However, AI does not truly understand human behaviour; it only processes data. That is why interpretation, context, and ethical judgment must always come from the researcher. In our training, we emphasize that AI provides support, while meaning and conclusions remain human responsibilities.

5. What is the most common misconception people have about AI's role in the future of insurance or research?

A very common misunderstanding is that AI makes decisions or produces final answers. In reality, AI only generates suggestions based on patterns in data. It does not understand ethics, risk, or responsibility. In both research and fields like insurance, AI can assist with analysis and drafting, but humans must evaluate, verify, and decide. In the workshops, faculty are trained to treat AI as a helpful assistant, not as an authority. This mindset prevents over-reliance and promotes responsible use.

6. Can you describe a 'Eureka' moment in your recent research that shifted your perspective on how we support our workforce?

One important realization during recent training sessions was that AI is most valuable when it reduces mental exhaustion rather than increasing speed. Many faculty members feel overwhelmed by repetitive tasks such as drafting outlines, summarizing articles, or structuring lessons. When AI supports these tasks, it frees mental energy for deeper thinking, creativity, and meaningful teaching. This shifted our approach from pushing productivity to protecting intellectual well-being, which is critical for sustainable academic performance.

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7. How do we ensure that as our systems become more 'intelligent' and automated, they remain ethically grounded and human-centric?

Ethics is not an optional topic in GenAI training; it is central to responsible use. Faculty are encouraged to remain transparent about AI assistance, maintain academic honesty, and ensure fairness in teaching and assessment. AI should support human decision-making, not replace it. By keeping humans accountable for outcomes and judgments, we ensure that AI remains aligned with educational values and human needs rather than becoming a controlling force.

8. Generative AI can sometimes 'hallucinate' or mirror the biases in its training data. What protocols are you recommending to faculty to 'audit' the AI's logic

Generative AI can sometimes produce information that sounds convincing but is inaccurate or biased. In training sessions, faculty are taught to always verify AI outputs using trusted academic sources and their own expertise. AI-generated content should be treated as a draft, not as confirmed knowledge. By checking facts, comparing sources, and applying critical judgment, faculty can safely use AI while avoiding errors and misinformation.

9. Burnout is a major issue in academia. Can prompt engineering be a tool for well-being, or does it just raise the bar for how much work we expect faculty to produce?

Prompt engineering can be a powerful tool for reducing burnout if it is used with the right mindset. When AI helps with routine tasks, it saves time and mental effort. However, if institutions expect more output simply because AI exists, it can increase pressure instead of reducing it. In our workshops, we emphasize that AI should be used to improve work quality and balance, not to raise unrealistic expectations. The goal is healthier, more focused faculty—not just faster output.

BET-
TER

HUMAN-
CENTRIC

Sahir Mushtaq
Principal reviewer Chinese Language at
PGC

香
港

Chinese Language

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE

1. How can a student with HSK-2 proficiency provide immediate value to a Chinese-led project in Pakistan?
A student with HSK-2 skills can help Chinese-led projects by supporting basic communication and coordination. They can understand simple instructions, assist in daily conversations, and help Chinese supervisors communicate with local staff, which reduces confusion and improves teamwork.

2. How does the curriculum help students overcome the fear that Mandarin is "too hard"?
The curriculum teaches Mandarin step by step, starting with simple words and everyday sentences. It focuses more on speaking and understanding rather than memorizing, which helps students feel confident and realize that Mandarin is not as difficult as they first thought.

3. How does a standardized HSK certificate differentiate a graduate in the eyes of recruiters?
An HSK certificate, issued by Hanban institute (an authorized institute of the Chinese government), clearly shows a student's level of Mandarin ability. Employers, especially those working with Chinese companies or CPEC projects, see it as proof that the individual is prepared to work in an international and multicultural environment. Being government-recognized, it's valued globally and usable worldwide.

4. Why is the focus on Pinyin (phonetics) so critical for long-term fluency?
Pinyin helps students learn correct pronunciation and tones from the start. This makes speaking and listening easier and helps students communicate clearly as they continue learning Mandarin.

5. How does HSK-2 empower students to start basic trade conversations with Chinese partners?
HSK-2 teaches useful words related to numbers, prices, time, and greetings. With this knowledge, students can start simple trade and business conversations and build good relationships with Chinese partners.

6. How does completing HSK-2 serve as "proof of interest" for international exchange programs?
Passing HSK-2 shows that a student is serious about learning Mandarin and Chinese culture. Exchange programs see this as a sign that the student is motivated and ready to study or work in an international setting.

7. Once a student clears HSK-2, what is the most common next goal for their global career?
"After HSK-2, most students aim to move to higher levels like HSK-3, apply for exchange programs in China, or look for internships and job opportunities with Chinese or international companies. Plus, many Chinese universities offer scholarships - sometimes based on HSK-2 level."

Sikander Sethi
Director International Office

Rameesha Khan
Manager Outreach and Admissions

From Lahore to Leicester – The Blueprint for a Global Graduate

1. How is the curriculum being adapted at UCP to ensure that a student's academic rigor in Lahore matches the exact expectations of a top-200 UK university like Leicester?
These students emerge with a hybrid academic identity, grounded in local context yet fluent in global systems and professional standards. They are confident communicators, critical thinkers, and independent learners. Unlike traditional graduates, they possess a mindset shaped by early international exposure, proactive learning, and the ability to thrive in multicultural settings, equipping them with the competence, teamwork, professionalism, and "survival skills" necessary to excel in both global higher education and international career landscapes.

2. In what specific ways does the 2+2 model transform a student's professional identity, moving them from a local learner to a global "Citizen of Change"?
The 2+2 model fundamentally reshapes how students see themselves from day one. They are not enrolled in just a local degree program but in a globally benchmarked academic journey. This early exposure to international standards cultivates confidence, responsibility, and global awareness long before students physically move abroad. By the time they reach Leicester, students already think, write, research, and communicate like international learners. This gradual transformation, rather than a sudden cultural or academic shock, allows them to step into global classrooms as contributors, not observers, positioning them as future professionals capable of navigating complex global challenges.

3. What are the core "global" traits, such as critical thinking, research ethics, or data literacy, that teachers are now prioritising to prepare students for the UK's academic environment?

Faculty involved in the program place strong emphasis on developing critical and analytical thinking rather than rote learning, alongside academic writing and structured argumentation that meet international education standards. Students are trained in research ethics, and evidence-based reasoning, ensuring academic integrity from the outset. Particular focus is also placed on data literacy and interpretation, especially for analytics-driven disciplines, enabling students to work confidently with information and insights. These competencies are reinforced through independent learning practices that cultivate intellectual curiosity. Collectively, these globally valued traits, central to UK higher education, are intentionally embedded into classroom instruction, assessments, and feedback mechanisms at UCP.

4. How does the direct interaction with Leicester's visiting faculty shape a student's confidence and communication style before they even leave Pakistan?

Interaction with visiting faculty from the University of Leicester exposes students to authentic UK academic expectations, teaching styles, and feedback culture. Through this engagement, students learn how to ask informed questions, defend ideas, participate in academic debate, and receive constructive critique within an international framework. This early exposure not only builds confidence but also encourages a proactive mindset, prompting students to start preparing early, take ownership of their learning, and align their academic habits with UK standards from the outset. By the time they transition to Leicester, students are already familiar with the tone, pace, and expectations of UK classrooms, enabling them to participate assertively rather than adjust hesitantly in the UK classroom.

GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

5. For specialised tracks like Data Analytics or Finance, what are the most challenging global skills students are currently mastering to ensure they are competitive in the international job market?

In Data Analytics, the focus is on analytical reasoning using real-world datasets, strong statistical thinking, and data-driven decision-making, with an emphasis on translating insights for policy, business, and social impact. In Accounting and Finance, students are trained in financial analysis aligned with global standards, an understanding of international markets and regulatory environments, and ethical decision making grounded in professional accountability. Mastery of these skills requires precision, discipline, and global awareness, equipping students to meet the expectations of international employers and rapidly evolving global industries.

6. Beyond the textbooks, how is the program shaping the "soft skills" and cultural adaptability required for a student to thrive in a multicultural city like Leicester.

The program actively nurtures cross-cultural communication, teamwork in diverse academic settings, professional etiquette, and a strong commitment to academic integrity. Alongside these, students develop self-management skills, adaptability, and resilience, qualities essential for navigating unfamiliar environments. Through presentations, collaborative projects, and sustained engagement with international faculty, students build the interpersonal maturity and cultural awareness required to live, study, and work confidently in a multicultural city like Leicester.

7. How does holding a Leicester degree, earned through this specific pathway, change the way global employers perceive a student's potential and adaptability?

A University of Leicester degree earned through the 2+2 pathway signals strong international academic credibility, adaptability, and resilience. Graduates stand out because they have successfully navigated and performed across two educational systems and cultural contexts. It highlights a student's capacity to engage with and manage diversity, showcasing problem-solving and essential "survival skills." For global employers, this reflects sustained exposure to international educational standards, well-developed transition skills, and a proven ability to meet expectations in globally benchmarked environments. As a result, graduates are viewed as more competitive candidates for international careers and postgraduate opportunities.

8. By the end of Year 4, how will the "DNA" of a student who started at UCP and finished at Leicester differ from that of a traditional graduate?

These students emerge with a hybrid academic identity, grounded in local context yet fluent in global systems and professional standards. They are confident communicators, critical thinkers, and independent learners. Unlike traditional graduates, they possess a mindset shaped by early international exposure, proactive learning, and the ability to thrive in multicultural settings, equipping them with the competence, teamwork, professionalism, and "survival skills" necessary to excel in both global higher education and international career landscapes.

9. How does this partnership foster a mindset of self-reliance and expertise in students, aligning with the broader mission of driving Pakistan's progress?

By training students to meet international standards without leaving Pakistan immediately, the program builds local capacity with global competence. Students develop expertise, confidence, and independence that they can later channel back into Pakistan's academic, economic, and social development. This aligns with a broader vision of empowering youth to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan while remaining globally competitive.

10.What is the most significant "mindset shift" a student undergoes when they realize their education is being benchmarked against international standards from Day 1?

The most powerful shift is ownership. Students quickly realize that excuses, shortcuts, and passive approaches no longer work. Their performance is measured against global standards, not local benchmarks. At the same time, a student is expected to undergo same transition as his/her peer is going through in the UK in the first two years. This creates a culture of discipline, ambition, and accountability, encouraging students to take initiative, plan strategically, and engage deeply with peers. Over time, they become proactive learners who understand that excellence is not optional but expected.

Amna Khawar
Program Manager LIC

The Invisible Gap -

School-to-University Transition

The transition from school education to university is one of the most defining times in a student's academic career. It is a time of anticipation, uncertainty and high expectations. Yet, in spite of the importance of such a transition, this process often shows some gaps that may affect not only the academic preparedness of students but also their confidence in choosing where to continue their studies. These gaps are especially evident when looking at patterns of applications, where students from some schools are well represented, and students from other prestigious institutions are decidedly absent.

This disparity is rarely a matter of academic ability. Instead, it points towards deeper structural and perceptual gaps that impact upon the way that students take up higher education opportunities. For many students, the decision to apply to a university is made long before formal applications are made. It is influenced by exposure, guidance, familiarity and how well the university experience is relayed during their school years.

One of the biggest areas of gap in this regard is in the area of awareness and engagement. It is very important for the students in choosing their institutions for future studies to have a consistent engagement that can be in the form of visits, workshops and other informal academic engagements. These activities enable the students to develop a sense of confidence and belonging. In contrast, students from high performing schools who do not have sustained engagement with certain universities may perceive these institutions as unfamiliar or not in line with their aspirations whether this view is based on reality or not.

Another challenge is detachment of academic expectations. School education is often conducted in structured learning environments with frequent feedback and clear parameters for success. University education, however, requires greater level of independence, critical thinking and self-direction. When this shift is not explained enough the students may feel that they are not ready or reluctant. High-achieving students in particular may be wary of environments in which expectations are unclear, so may prefer institutions that are explicit in the ways in which they support students through this transition. There is also a huge guidance gap. In many schools, University counselling is hands-on with a hand-held support influencing application decisions. Where counsellors have developed relationships with some universities students have had better information and encouragement to apply. On the other hand, when these connections are limited, students may not have insight on the academic culture, support systems and long-term opportunities provided by other institutions. This lack of specific guidance can actually limit the choices of students

INVISIBLE GAP

PEDAGOGY

Addressing these gaps requires a change in the way that universities and schools work together. Rather than viewing the transition as a one-time point of handover, it should be viewed as a shared and ongoing process. Early engagement efforts, such as academic taster sessions, joint learning efforts, or pre-university skill building workshops, can help students, experience university-style learning while they are still in school. These initiatives not only prepare the students in an academic sense, but it also helps to reduce anxiety because the university environment seems more accessible.

Communication is also very important and clear. Universities need to get past standard admissions messaging and focus on transparent messaging around learning expectations, student support and personal development. In this regard, clarity is important to both students and parents. This clarity is not only about academic standards, but also how institutions help students adjust to a new level of autonomy and responsibility.

Similarly, in order to reinforce this transition for students, mentorship and peer engagement can also be useful. Opportunities for potential students to meet with current undergraduates or recent graduates provide real insight into the life of the university. Therefore, such interactions help to break down assumptions while helping students to make more informed decisions based on lived experiences and not simply reputation.

Ultimately, closing the gap between education at the school level and higher education is not all about expanding access or applications. It is about ensuring that students from various academic backgrounds are confident, informed and ready to take on the next step. The transition is no longer a leap but rather a guided progression when schools and universities work together to ensure alignment of expectations, better communication and meaningful engagement.

BRIDGING
THE TRANSITION

Reducing Disparity

Touqeer Nazik
President IBTIDA UCP

1. What was the specific catalyst or observation within underserved communities that led to the birth of IBTIDA?

3. What specialised curriculum or teaching methods does IBTIDA use to help out-of-school children bridge the gap?

IBTIDA utilizes a diagnostic, bridge-based model that prioritizes a child's actual competency over their age. Each learner undergoes an initial assessment to ensure personalized instruction in accelerated foundational literacy and numeracy. The curriculum emphasizes conceptual understanding through real-life examples and human-centered methods like small-group mentorship. This adaptive approach restores a learner's belief in their own capability, effectively bridging the academic and psychological gaps created by years out of the system.

4. How is vocational training integrated with traditional education to foster "skilled entrepreneurs"?

To break the poverty cycle, IBTIDA integrates market-aligned vocational training, such as digital literacy and craftsmanship, once foundational education is secured. This stage focuses on value creation, teaching students to apply technical skills to real-world projects and community needs. By nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset, learners are taught to identify opportunities and manage resources independently. This ensures they are not just prepared for employment but are equipped for long-term economic agency and self sufficiency.

IBTIDA addresses the financial pressures that force children into labor through flexible scheduling and community engagement. By allowing older students to acquire market-relevant skills, the program enables them to generate ethical, supplementary income without compromising their studies.This balanced model reduces the immediate financial burden on families, shifting their perspective from survival-driven decision-making to long-term planning. Education is thus transformed from a perceived luxury into a practical, dual-benefit pathway for the entire household.

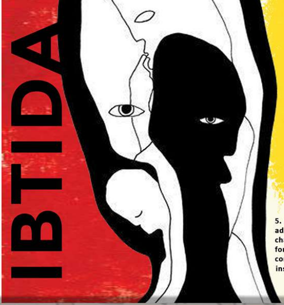
6. Could you share a success story of a scholar who has moved toward self-reliance through this initiative?

Scholars like Bisma and Sadar exemplify the program's systemic impact. Bisma transitioned from a struggling learner in a slum-based community to a peer mentor, guiding new students through the IBTIDA cycle. Similarly, Sadar overcame family pressures to achieve academic

IBTIDA was born from the observation that talent exists in underserved communities, but opportunity does not. Recognizing that temporary charity failed to solve systemic educational exclusion, the program was designed as a full-cycle solution. It transforms passive sympathy into structured action by reintegrating out-of-school children into a system that combines foundational learning with vocational and entrepreneurial pathways. This approach addresses the root socio-economic barriers that prevent children from breaking the cycle of poverty.

2. How does the name "Ibtida" reflect the philosophy of the program for children who have been out of the system for years?

The name "Ibtida" (beginning) symbolizes a fresh start for children burdened by the stigma of lost time or past educational disruptions. Rather than a mere continuation, the program frames education as a restart without age-based judgment or comparison. By focusing on rebuilding cognitive confidence and market-aligned skills, Ibtida validates each child's potential. It transforms the perception of education from a race already lost into a dignified journey toward self-reliance and financial independence.



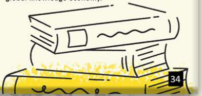
HOW

5. How does the program address the economic challenges that often force children in these communities into labour instead of school?

growth while utilizing vocational skills to contribute to his family's income. Their transformations from educational exclusion to leadership roles demonstrate how IBTIDA produces empowered, employable individuals who act as agents of change within their own communities.

7. What are the long-term goals for scaling IBTIDA beyond its current reach?

IBTIDA's vision is to replicate its full-cycle model nationwide by establishing chapters within various institutions across Pakistan. Long-term goals include scaling vocational training through partnerships with technology hubs and building an ecosystem that supports graduates in launching micro-enterprises. By tracking long-term financial independence and human capital metrics, the program aims to influence national policy. The ultimate objective is to create a self-sustaining, scalable model that contributes significantly to the global knowledge economy.



8. How can the corporate sector or the public contribute to this mission of building a nation of experts?

Stakeholders are invited to invest in the complete IBTIDA cycle to help build a nation of experts. The corporate sector can contribute by funding infrastructure, providing internships, and creating market linkages for student entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, the public can support the mission through sponsorships, mentorship, and local advocacy for inclusive education. By backing the progression from literacy to financial independence, contributors ensure that underserved children become professional leaders and independent contributors to society.

NATION OF THOUGHT

MUHAMMAD ZAFAR UL HAQ - L1F22BSCS0193
Bachelor of Science (Computer Science)

A1. What did you think "student-pedagogy partnership" meant before you started, and how does that compare to what you actually did?

Before:
Before joining, I thought a student pedagogy partnership simply meant being a student representative sharing my personal views about lectures and giving feedback to the teacher from a student's perspective.

Now:
Now, I understand it as a true partnership where students and teachers work together to bridge the gap between teaching and learning. It involves reviewing lectures, sharing student feedback, suggesting improvements, and openly discussing course design and delivery so lectures become clearer, more engaging, and students feel encouraged to ask questions directly.

2. Can you describe the first time you felt like an equal partner rather than just a student in the room?
At the beginning, I was eager to help students by sharing suggestions that could improve understanding, but I was unsure whether my ideas would actually be accepted. I was also concerned about how to give honest feedback if my opinion was not aligned with my faculty partner's approach. Over time, I realised that the purpose of the partnership was genuine review, and that encouraged me to share my thoughts respectfully and honestly

3. What were the primary responsibilities you handled during this partnership?
I worked twice as a student partner with different faculty members, and my responsibilities varied depending on the subject. However, the core responsibility remained the same: creating a friendly space where students felt comfortable sharing honest opinions.
My responsibilities included observing classes, collecting weekly student feedback on lectures, and documenting that feedback. I held 15-minute discussions each week with each section without the teacher present so students could speak openly.I then discussed the issues and possible improvements with the faculty partner, carefully framing feedback in a respectful and constructive manner so it could be implemented effectively while maintaining mutual respect
After changes were implemented, I collected feedback again to see whether the improvements made a difference. To further reduce the gap between students and teachers, I also used Google Forms for anonymous feedback, encouraged students to communicate directly with the teacher when possible, and offered one-to-one support for students who preferred to share concerns individually.

4. Describe a time you and your partner (faculty/staff) disagreed on a teaching method. How did you navigate that conversation?
At the beginning, I shared feedback with the teacher without fully understanding its impact or confirming whether the issue was truly significant, which sometimes led to conflict. Over time, by observing both student and teacher behaviour, I learned to look at situations more thoughtfully and from multiple perspectives.

I then adopted a more constructive approach sharing feedback politely and framing it as a suggestion, such as asking whether we could review an issue together and observe the results. This approach helped teachers better understand the concern, and even faculty members with a strict nature became more open to discussion.

5. Beyond "teaching skills," what soft skills (e.g., active listening, diplomacy, project management) did you find yourself using most?
Beyond teaching skills, I found myself using several soft skills every week. Active listening was key I made sure to truly hear students' concerns during class observations and one-on-one discussions. Diplomacy became essential when sharing feedback, so I could communicate honestly without offending my faculty partners. I also relied on observation and analysis to identify real issues before suggesting changes. Organizing feedback through weekly cycles and Google Forms strengthened my project management skills, and most importantly, empathy helped me build trust with both students and teachers, making collaboration smoother and more effective

6. How did you handle the responsibility of giving feedback to someone who technically has more authority or experience than you?
Initially, giving feedback to someone with more authority and experience was challenging. Over time, I realized that as a Student-Pedagogy Partner, my role was to contribute meaningfully, not just as a student. I learned to approach conversations openly and respectfully, creating a friendly environment where I could share observations and suggestions. By building trust and framing feedback constructively, I was able to have honest discussions that helped improve the course while maintaining a positive relationship with my faculty partner.

7. What is something you noticed about the "behind the scenes" of course design that you never realised as a regular student?
As a student, sometimes it felt like issues were one-sided and could be improved if the teacher wanted. Some topics seemed irrelevant, and I often thought that if the teacher delivered a lecture differently, it would be easier to understand. In short, as a student, I focused on my own understanding, but as a teacher, I realized they design the course to meet the needs of everyone ensuring that whether a student already knows the topic or not, the lecture is structured so all can follow and understand

8. How has this partnership changed your identity as a learner? Do you find yourself sitting in other classes differently now?
This partnership has changed my identity as a learner significantly. Being part of the process made me realize that it's easy to blame from the outside, but once you're involved, you see the many challenges personality differences, rules, and practical constraints. I now approach classes from a broader perspective, thinking about both the teacher's and students' viewpoints. I observe more critically, reflect on how lectures are designed, and appreciate the effort behind each decision. This has made me more thoughtful, patient, and engaged in other classes, noticing things I never did as a regular student.

9. Has this experience changed your level of empathy for faculty? How do you now view the power balance between a student and a teacher?
Yes, this experience has definitely increased my empathy for faculty. I observed that some teachers may have personality differences while they might seem strict or hard at first, if you share your opinions openly and respectfully, they respond positively. Teachers who appear tough often have a warm and approachable side once you spend time with them. Through this, I realized that the power balance between students and teachers is more flexible than I had imagined; it relies on mutual respect, trust, and open communication rather than just authority.

10. What one piece of advice would you give yourself and to others thinking about being part of a student pedagogy partnership?
My advice would be to embrace your role fully and think of yourself as a partner, not just a student. Be open, respectful, and honest in sharing your observations and feedback. Focus on building trust with both students and teachers, and create a friendly environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts. This mindset makes the partnership more meaningful and effective for everyone involved.

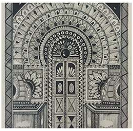
STUDENTS WORK

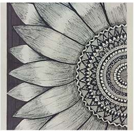
SILENT EMOTIONS ON PAPER

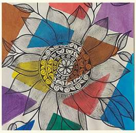
Amber Sarwer - L1F21PHMD0140

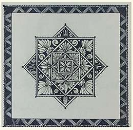
Art, for me, is a way of expressing emotions and thoughts that words often fail to convey. Through my artwork, I explore my feelings, inner struggles, and moments that are usually overlooked in daily life. My work focuses on translating emotions into visual form, allowing the viewer to connect with the piece on a personal and emotional level.
My inspiration comes from personal reflections, emotional experiences, and the desire to give a voice to feelings that remain unspoken. Observing people, their emotions, and life experiences motivates me to create art that feels real and relateable.

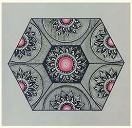
My background as a Pharm D student has helped me develop discipline, observation skills, and patience, which strongly influence my artistic journey. Art has been a constant companion for me, especially during phases of self-growth and emotional exploration. Over time, my style has evolved to focus more on meaning, emotion, and storytelling rather than just visuals.

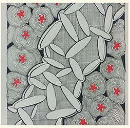


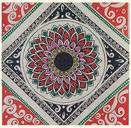












Aleeha Azhar - (L1F23BSCS0019, FOIT)

Tick. Tock.
That's time — running, spinning, laughing at us.
It never stops, never slows, never even looks back.
And we?
We chase it — breathless, desperate, believing there's a finish line somewhere ahead.
What did we do last Tuesday?
Go ahead. Think about it.
Nothing comes up, right? Just a blur — maybe a class, maybe a deadline, maybe a day that looked exactly like the one before it.
The days don't have shapes anymore. They're just hours we survive until we can close our eyes and start surviving again.
But it wasn't always like this.
Once, we loved learning.
We'd ask why the stars shine, how water finds its way through soil, where the sun goes to sleep.
We didn't open Google — we wondered.
We weren't afraid of not knowing.
Curiosity used to feel like magic, not a mistake.
Somewhere between grades and growing up, that magic faded.
We stopped learning and started performing.
We stopped wondering and started calculating.
Now we don't ask why — we ask will this be in the exam?
Look around.
The library's full, but everyone's alone.
Headphones in. Eyes down. Racing invisible clocks, measuring our worth in productivity.
Someone asks, "How are you?" and we say, "Busy."
Like that's an emotion.
Like exhaustion is an achievement.
We're tired — not sleep-tired, but soul-tired.
The kind of tired that sits behind your ribs and whispers you're always behind, even when you've caught up.
We chase deadlines we'll forget next week.
We memorize things that vanish the moment we click submit.
We're building a future so hard that we forget to show up for the present.
And the worst part?
We've gotten good at it.
Functioning on autopilot.
Looking fine while slowly disappearing.
But sometimes — sometimes — something breaks through.
A professor's story that makes us smile.
A late-night walk under soft streetlights that hum like they're listening.
A friend's laugh that wakes something up inside us.
Tiny, fleeting seconds that remind us we're still here.
Not performing. Not pretending. Just being.
We won't remember the all-nighters.
We won't remember the perfect GPAs or the tenth cup of coffee at 3 AM.
We'll remember the smell of wet earth after rain.
The way our friend's eyes crinkled mid-laughter.
The seconds we accidentally lived instead of just survived.
Here's the truth no one says out loud:
Time won't stop.
The pressure won't vanish.
The world won't slow down for us.
But we get to choose how much of ourselves we lose to it.
Tomorrow will come, loud and fast.
More work. More deadlines. More everything.
But maybe — just maybe — we'll notice something real.
The taste of our coffee.
The warmth of sunlight slipping across our desks.
A breath we actually take instead of rush through.
We'll still be busy. Still behind. Still human.
But we'll also be alive.
Not perfect.
Not winning.
Just alive.
And in a world that forgets to breathe —
that's everything….

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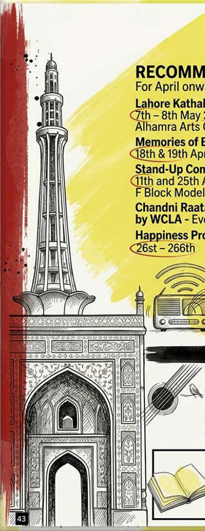


RECOMMENDATIONS

For April onwards in Lahore

Lahore Kathak Festival
7th – 8th May 2026
Alhamra Arts Council

Memories of Belonging by Olomopolo
18th & 19th April – 25th & 26th April

Stand-Up Comedy - Open Mic
11th and 25th April at Aangan
F Block Model Town

Chandni Raatain at Shalimar Bagh
by WCLA - Every Saturday

Happiness Program by tou Soul Sanctuary
26st – 266th

LISTEN TO THIS

1. **BBC PUNJABI VLOG**
   by Mohammed Hanif
2. **Dr Sheen Gurrib**
   The Dream Girl Show
3. **Nabeel Abbas** - Pakistani Idol
   Star to watch out for

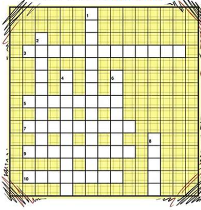
SONGS

4. **Jana Hai Wahin** - Kasmir & Hassan Raheem
5. **Staring At Me** - Ali Raza, Shae Gill
6. **Dream Girl** - Neha Karim Ullah
7. **Dosti** - Nazia Hassan & Zoheb Hassan
8. **Shehzad Roy** - Late Ho Gaye!

BOOKS

1. **Mother Mary Comes to Me** - Arundhati Roy
2. **Sophie's World** - Jostien Gaarder
3. **A Splintering** by Dur e Aziz Amna
4. **Heart Lamp:** Selected Stories by Banu Mushtaq

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

3. -Design the process of creating learning experiences & materials.
5. The method and practice of teaching as a theoretical concept.
7. Assessment intended to provide feedback during instruction.
9. Ensuring all students have equal access to learning.
10. The ability to find, evaluate, and communicate information.

DOWN

1. Faculty and students working together to improve delivery.
2. Educators examining teaching practices to identify improvements.
4. Providing guidance and support to early-career teachers.
6. A state of emotional and physical exhaustion.
8. A scoring tool used to outline criteria for assignments.

Jargon Scramble

Instructions: Unscramble these high-impact teaching terms.

1. LIPPEDF
2. CAFFOSTLIDNG
3. METACOGNITION
4. SYNCHRONOUS

Jargon Scramble Answers: (Answer: SCAFFOLDING)
(Answer: METACOGNITION) (Answer: SYNCHRONOUS)

Crossword Answers : 3. Instructional 5. Pedagogy 7. Formative 9. Inclusion 10. Literacy
1. Collaboration 2. Reflection 7. Mentorship 9. Burnout 8. Rubric