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BEYOND LECTURES: INSIGHTS FROM BUSINESS DISCIPLINES (REFLECTIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, AND THE HUMAN SIDE OF TEACHING)

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
UiTM CAWANGAN JOHOR

Beyond Lectures: Insights from Business Discipline-

(Reflections, Transformations, and the Human Side of Teaching)

Chief Editor
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

FOREWORD

CHAPTER 1: Transformative Teaching Pedagogies

1	Bringing Technical Analysis into Real Life among Students	*Nurul Haida Johan, Ruziah A.Latif, Zaibedah Zaharum, Mardziyana Mohamad Malom*	1-5
2	Innovative Teaching Strategies: Transforming Higher Education in Preparing Gen-Z for Future Workforce Demands	*Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff, Khairunnisa Rahman*	6-8
3	Gamification in Blended Learning: A Reflective Case from INV537	*Nurulashikin Romli, Tan Yan Ling, Jannah Munirah Mohd Noor*	9-15
4	Reflection on Transforming Quantitative Learning through Scenario-Based Group Case Studies	*Sharazad Haris, Wan Mohd Farid Wan Zakaria, Norashikin Ismail*	16-18
5	The Importance of Project-Based Learning in Understanding Management Theories Through Real-Life Applications: UiTM Johor Case Study	*Muruga Chinniah, Nur Adilah Hj Saud, Mazlina Ismail*	19-22
6	Experiential Financial Education through SULAM: Bridging Financial Theory and Practice in Community Engagement	*Syamsyul Samsudin, Nik Nur Shafika Mustafa*	23-26
7	TikTokPreneur Lab BMC Model: An Experiential Digital Entrepreneurship Model for ENT300 Through Affiliate Marketing Innovation	*Jannah Munirah Mohd Noor, Nurulashikin Romli, Tan Yan Ling*	27-30
8	Can Marketing Lessons Go Beyond the Classroom?	*Nur Auni Afifah Abdul Karim, Azila Jaini, Sharmin Baba*	31-34

CHAPTER 2: Technology-Enhanced Education

9	From Fundamentals of Marketing to Digital Strategy: Reflective Lessons for Impactful Teaching in a Digital Age	*Muhamad Khodri Kholib Jati, Suzana Hassan, Oswald Timothy Edward*	35-38
10	Ethical Challenges of Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education: Balancing Innovation and Academic Integrity	*Norhasniza Mohd Hasan Abdullah, Tay Bee Hoong, Masitah Omar*	39-42
11	Integrating Technology and Artificial Intelligence in Teaching Business Students	*Dalila Abu Bakar, Nur Auni Afifah Abdul Karim, Nor Zubaidah Nor Albashri, Noor Insyirah Mohsin*	43-46
12	Educating the Head, Heart and Hand: A Listening Pedagogy for the AI Era	*Ahmad Syahmi Ahmad Fadzil, Nor Zubaidah Nor Albashri*	47-51

13	Does AI Enhance Students' Thinking?	*Azila Jaini, Sharmin Baba, Nur Auni Afifah Abdul Karim*	52-55
14	Teaching Economics in the Age of AI	*Nur Fatihah Shaari, Mohd Azim Sardan, Bazri Abu Bakar*	56-61
CHAPTER 3: Engaging Learning Challenges			
15	Beyond the Theory: Navigating Student Engagement in Perceived as Dry Subjects	*Tay Bee Hoong, Masitah Omar, Norhasniza Mohd Hasan Abdullah*	62-67
16	Challenges in Teaching Islamic Finance	*Maizura Md Isa, Nor Hazila Ismail*	68-71
17	From Confusion to Curiosity: Introducing Research Methods to Undergraduate Students	*Nurul Aien Abd Aziz, Aflah Isa, Nik Nur Shafika Mustafa*	72-76
18	Teaching a 'Cold' Subject with a Warm Heart	*Rohanizan Md Lazan, Roha Mohd Noah, Nurul Aien Abd Aziz, Nor Hadaliza Abd Rahman*	77-80
19	Emotional Barriers in Teaching Quantitative Finance: Addressing Numerophobia in Students	*Husnizam Hosin, Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff, Mohd Hakimi Harman*	81-85
20	Encouraging Student Engagement through Strategic Learning Challenges	*Zanariah Abdul Rahman, Syaidatul Zarina Mat Din, Akmal Aini Othman, Norashikin Ismail*	86-88
21	Reflections on Basic Econometrics: Challenges, Strategies and Insights	*Tan Yan Ling, Nurulashikin Romli, Jannah Munirah Mohd Noor*	89-93
CHAPTER 4: Practical Finance Readiness			
22	Smart Diversification: Teaching Students How to Build Resilient Portfolios in Uncertain Markets	*Nik Nur Shafika Mustafa, Che Khalilah Mahmood, Aflah Isa, Nurul Aien Abd Aziz*	94-96
23	Empowering Financial Literacy: The Role of Educators as Mentors and Guides in Financial Planning	*Aflah Isa, Nik Nur Shafika Mustafa, Nurul Aien Abd Aziz*	97-100
24	Preparing University Students for Financial Reality: Addressing Investment Scams	*Ruziah A Latif, Nurul Haida Johan, Zaibedah Zaharum, Mardziyana Mohamad Malom*	101-104
25	Teaching ESG and Investment Risk: Transforming Finance Education for a Sustainable Future	*Husnizam Hosin, Mohd Hakimi Harman, Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff*	105-109
26	Highlighting the Importance of Financial Literacy for Generation Z	*Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff, Husnizam Hosin, Mohd Hakimi Harman*	110-112
27	Reflections in Teaching Personal Financial Planning to Part-time Distance Learners	*Nurul Aien Abd Aziz, Rohanizan Md Lazan, Roha Mohamed Noah, Nor Hadaliza Abdul Rahman*	113-117
28	The Role of Interactive and Video-Based	*Zaibedah Zaharum, Ruziah A.*	118-122

	Platforms in Supporting Blended Learning in Malaysia Higher Education	*Latif, Nurul Haida Johan, Mardziyana Mohamad Malom*	
CHAPTER 5: Human-Centred Education			
29	Embedding MQF 2024, Outcome-Based Education and Sustainability in Higher Education: A Reflective Teaching Case Study in Investment Analytics	*Oswald Timothy Edward, Basaruddin Shah Basri, Kamal Fahrulrazy Rahim, Zarith Sofia Jasmi*	123-127
30	Learning by Serving in SULAM Advocacy: Evidence on Values Formation and Industry-Ready Skills	*Mardziyana Mohamad Malom, Ruziah A. Latif, Nurul Haida Johan, Zaibedah Zaharum*	128-133
31	Marketing the Classroom: Co-Creating Value, Trust and Engagement in Higher Education	*Sharmin Baba, Azila Jaini, Nur Auni Afifah Abdul Karim*	134-137
32	Building a Learning Organization in the Classroom	*Khairunnisa Rahman, Rudza Hanim Mohamed Anuar, Nazihah Omar, Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff*	138-141
33	Role of Educators as Mentors, Guides and Learning Designers from Academicians' Perspective in Malaysia.	*Mazlina Ismail, Nur Adilah Saud, Muruga Chinniah*	142-145
34	Universal Design for Learning for Neurodivergent Students: Journey towards Inclusive Education	*Nazihah Omar, Khairunnisa Rahman, Rudza Hanim Mohamed Anuar, Ferri Nasrul*	146-149
CHAPTER 6: Human Side of Teaching			
35	The Evolution of Service Marketing	*Nur Adilah Saud, Mazlina Ismail, Muruga Chinniah*	150-153
36	Professional Growth as an Economic Educator	*Siti Noradiah Amar, Nur Fatihah Shaari, Norfariza Mohd Ali*	154-157
37	The Role of Educators as Mentors and Guides in Contributing Knowledge to SME Entrepreneurs	*Shaherah Abdul Malik , Noreen Noor Abd Aziz, Nurul Aien Abd Aziz*	158-163
38	Role Boundary Conflict in Academia: Integrating Boundary Theory and Social Power Perspectives	*Zuraidah Sipon, Nur Liyana Mohamed Yousop, Zuraidah Ahmad*	164-167
39	Post-Covid-19 Educational Practices: Insights from Teaching and Learning Experiences at UiTM Johor	*Rudza Hanim Mohamed Anuar, Nazihah Omar, Khairunnisa Rahman*	168-170
40	Are We Ready for Generation Alpha?	*Zanariah Abdul Rahman, Jaslin Md. Dahlan*	171-173

ARE WE READY FOR GENERATION ALPHA?

Zanariah Abdul Rahman, Jaslin Md. Dahlan

Generation Alpha may not have fully entered our lecture halls yet, but their arrival is just around the corner. Born from 2010 onwards, they are the first generation to grow up entirely in a world shaped by advanced technology, artificial intelligence (AI), and constant digital connectivity. As educators, many of us are still adapting our teaching approaches to suit Generation Z. But an important question arises: are we truly ready for what comes next?

Generation Alpha is not just "tech-savvy", in fact they are completely immersed in technology. From a very young age, they are exposed to tablets, YouTube, voice assistants, and algorithm-driven content that constantly adapts to their preferences. Students from Generation Alpha have higher demands for teachers to make lessons fun, interesting, and engaging to sustain retention in learning environments (Yong, Mohd Zaid & Tasir, 2024). This environment shapes how they think, how they learn, and even how they focus. However, high exposure to technology does not necessarily mean that learners are effective at multitasking or independent digital learning (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017)

Who is Generation Alpha?

Generation Alpha refers to individuals born from 2010 onwards. Unlike previous generations, they have never experienced a world without smartphones, fast internet, or smart technology. For them, digital interaction is not something new. It is simply a normal part of their life. They are often described as the most technologically immersed generation so far. Many of them are already familiar with AI-powered tools, personalised content, and interactive media at a very young age. This means their expectations toward learning may be very different from what educators are used to. Instead of relying heavily on text-based learning, Generation Alpha tends to respond better to visual, interactive, and engaging content. They are used to fast responses, personalised recommendations, and seamless digital experiences. Naturally, they may expect similar experiences in the classroom.

From Generation Z to Generation Alpha

We are currently teaching Generation Z, and they have already pushed us to rethink traditional teaching methods. They prefer group activities, and learning that feels relevant to real life, engaging, and practical learning approaches that connect theory with real-life application (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018). However, Generation Alpha is expected to take this even further. While Gen Z grew up with technology, Generation Alpha is growing up with AI. This means they are not just users of technology; they are surrounded by systems that think, suggest, and respond instantly. Because of this, they may expect learning to be faster, more personalised, and more natural.

Another key difference is attention and focus. If Gen Z already struggles with long lectures, Generation Alpha may find it even harder to stay engaged in traditional classroom settings. Their exposure to fast-moving, highly engaging digital content may reduce their tolerance for passive learning. At the same time, they may become highly dependent on technology for answers. Instead of exploring or analysing deeply, there is a risk that they may rely too much on AI-generated responses.

Challenges in Teaching Generation Alpha

1. Over-Reliance on Technology and AI

One of the biggest challenges is the possibility that students become too dependent on technology. With AI tools providing instant answers, students may feel less motivated to think

independently or explore ideas in depth. The assumption that digitally immersed students naturally possess advanced learning abilities is often misleading and requires careful instructional guidance (Kirschner & De Bruyckere, 2017).
This does not mean technology is bad, in fact, it is extremely useful. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that students still develop critical thinking skills rather than simply relying on tools to do the thinking for them.

2. Shorter Attention Span
Generation Alpha is constantly exposed to fast, engaging, and personalised content. Because of this, maintaining their attention in a traditional classroom may become more difficult. Long lectures without interaction may not work effectively. Students may lose focus quickly if the lesson does not capture their interest within a short period of time.

3. Expectation for Personalised Learning
Another challenge is their expectation for personalised experiences. Since many digital platforms already tailor content based on user preferences, students may expect learning to be customised to their needs, pace, and interests. For educators, this can be challenging, especially when teaching large groups of students with different abilities and learning styles.

4. Communication and Social Skills
With increased digital interaction, face-to-face communication may become less common. This can affect students' ability to express ideas clearly, participate in discussions, and build confidence when speaking. This is something educators need to actively address in the classroom.

How do we prepare for Generation Alpha?
The answer is not to completely change everything, but to start adapting our teaching approaches in a more intentional way. Educators are encouraged to adopt flexible and student-centred teaching strategies to effectively engage modern learners in higher education settings (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018).

1. Make Learning Active and Technology Balanced
Instead of relying heavily on lectures, lessons should involve students actively. This can include group discussions, problem-solving tasks, and collaborative activities. When students are involved, they are more likely to stay engaged and understand the content better. Even though Generation Alpha is highly digital, not all learning needs to happen through screens. In fact, using low-tech approaches can sometimes be more effective.
For example, using A3 paper for mind mapping activities allows students to organise ideas visually and present them without relying on slides. This encourages them to think, explain, and communicate based on their own understanding.

2. Use Visual and Creative Approaches
Since Generation Alpha responds well to visual content, incorporating drawings, diagrams, and simple sketches can be very helpful. Drawing activities allow students to translate abstract ideas into something more concrete. It also makes learning more engaging and memorable.

3. Encourage Critical Thinking
To avoid over-dependence on AI, educators need to design tasks that require thinking. Instead of asking students to find answers, we can ask them to explain, justify, compare, or evaluate. This pushes them to go beyond surface-level understanding.

4. Build Communication Skills
It is important to create opportunities for students to speak, present, and share ideas. Activities that involve presenting without slides, group discussions, or peer feedback can help students build confidence. These skills are essential, especially in preparing them for future workplaces.

Aspect	**Generation Z**	**Generation Alpha**
Technology Exposure	Grew up with internet & smartphones	Born into AI, smart tech & automation
Learning Style	Interactive, hands-on	Highly visual, personalised, immersive
Attention Span	Short	Potentially shorter
Information Access	Fast	Instant (AI-driven)
Learning Expectation	Engagement & relevance	Personalisation & seamless experience
Main Challenge	Focus & critical thinking	Over-dependence on AI

Table 1: Differences between Generation Z and Generation Alpha

Conclusion
In conclusion, whether we like it or not, Generation Alpha is coming, and they will bring new expectations, behaviours, and challenges into the classroom. While they are highly advanced in terms of technology, they will still need guidance in areas such as critical thinking, communication, and deep understanding. As educators, the goal is not to completely change how we teach, but to evolve. By combining active learning, creativity, and meaningful engagement, we can create a learning environment that is suitable not only for Generation Z but also for the generations to come. Preparing for Generation Alpha starts now, and small changes in our teaching practices today can make a big difference in the future.

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