AUTHORED BY THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE (UU) BOARD 24/25
OUTCOME REPORT – THE EDUCATIONAL BENCHMARKING TRIP 24/25

EBT 2024/25 OUTCOME REPORT

UU!

STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

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A Thank you message.

First and foremost, we sincerely thank everyone who contributed to making the 2024/2025 Educational Benchmarking Trip a success, and to those who made it a enriching experience: Professors **Novelli**, **Murthy, Senyuz, Gilligan, Limao, Myers Mullinix, McCallister, Shirky, Hedge, Statler, Jackson, Pallas, Horton, Bhui, Delisle, Newman**, and Program Director **Linnea Sandin**, as well as students **Chase, David, Erik, Viktor, and Emil**.

The Education Committee board was warmly welcomed by each university we visited, and got to engage in insightful, open, and creative discussions. These interactions inspired valuable initiatives and provided us with numerous opportunities for reflection on improving our home-institution. To all professors and faculty-contacts involved, we are truly grateful for your willingness to meet with us and share your insights, and look forward to staying in touch.

Additionally, we want to express our gratitude to faculty at SSE, particularly Program Directors Karin Fernler, Fredrik Lange, and others for continuously supporting our work. Your guidance have been invaluable in ensuring that our suggestions are both well-founded and realistic.

Until next time,

The Education Committee

The Education Committee Board 24/25

Our report in 50 words – not pages.

Below, we have distilled the key insights from each section into a concise overview of the most essential takeaways.

| Pedagogical Approaches

"SSE's pedagogical shift should emphazise deeper learning, collaboration, participation, and **practical applications to shape tomorrow's leaders.**"

| Assessment Processes

"An assessment reform at SSE is **not about eliminating exams** – it's about ensuring they *accurately measure what matters.*"

| Technological Transformations in Education

"By *promoting* AI Literacy at SSE through a crash course and the adoption of a institution-wide policy, we can **prepare the next generation of leaders and educators of them** to use technology not as a crutch, but as a *catalyst for change*"

2.Introduction

2.1 The Education Committee

The Education Committee renders one of the oldest functions of SASSE: representing all students at SSE and safeguarding their common educational interests. The committee is thus tasked with developing the education of SSE to ensure it continues to meet the expectations of students, faculty, and future employers. Thus, it follows that the President and Board of the Education Committee actively benchmark SSE against other leading business schools, both nationally and internationally – ultimately leading to the establishment of the Educational Benchmarking Trip in 2018. Since then, the Educational Benchmarking Trip has been an annual integral part of the work of the Education Committee.

2.2 The Educational Benchmarking Trip 2024/25

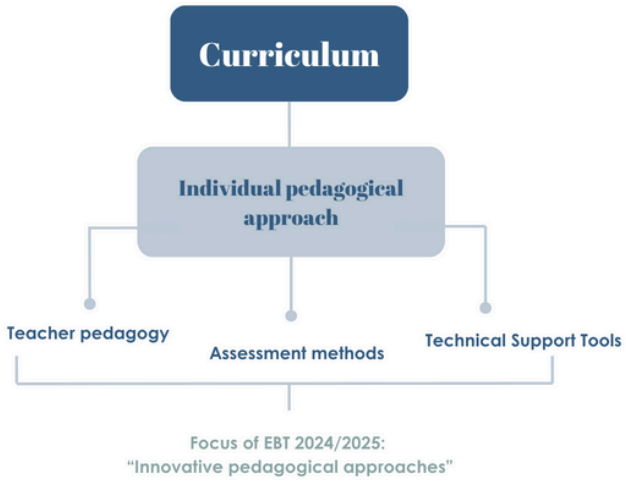
The focus of this year's Educational Benchmarking Trip (EBT), conducted on the East Coast of the United States, centered around "**Assessing the implementation and successful adoption of innovative pedagogical approaches within educational institutions**" – or, more simply put, "Innovation in Education".

The definition of "*Innovation in Education*" was divided into three subcategories, outlined as follows:

1. **Assessment Processes** – Investigating how universities assess student learning beyond traditional final exams, incorporating more practical and application-based evaluations.

2. **Technological Transformations in Education** – Understanding how leading institutions integrate emerging technologies, particularly AI, to enhance both teaching and learning.

3. **Pedagogical Approaches** – Exploring innovative teaching methodologies and faculty development strategies that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.



2.3 The Importance of These Research Areas

Globally, educational institutions are undergoing rapid transformations to keep pace with digital advancements, evolving student expectations, and the demands of an increasingly competitive job market. As technology continues to shape how knowledge is delivered and assessed, institutions must adapt their pedagogical approaches to remain effective. A fact and science-based mindset is essential in navigating these changes, ensuring that decisions are grounded in research and evidence rather than transient trends. For privately funded institutions like SSE, with only about **16% of its revenue coming from the Swedish government**, understanding these shifts is crucial for maintaining a competitive edge and equipping students with the skills necessary for success in the modern workforce. As the school works to maintain its EQUIS accreditation and enhance its global brand recognition, it must address the evolving landscape of higher education with an innovative, responsible approach.

Thus, at the Stockholm School of Economics, the need for **educational modernization** is particularly pressing. As an Education Committee, students at SSE have long voiced concerns regarding **outdated assessment methods** and **teaching strategies that do not fully engage them or reflect contemporary learning needs**. An empathetic- and culturally literate perspective is crucial in designing inclusive and effective pedagogical strategies that resonate with a diverse student body.

In re-thinking assessment, the **rise of AI-tools presents both a challenge and an opportunity**: While these technologies can enhance learning and teaching, their use requires structured guidelines to ensure they are employed effectively, and with academic integrity. Encouraging reflective- and self-aware learning practices will help students critically assess how AI tools impact their education, personal development, and future careers. SSE's leadership is actively working toward improving learning experiences by refining course design, integrating technology, and providing faculty with the tools and support needed to enhance pedagogical effectiveness – all whilst aligning to the core values of FREE.

Additionally, now that SSE has established itself as an internationally recognized business school, which admits students from around the world, it is important that they are able to compete on a global level. SSE is a standout school within Sweden and has one of the highest rankings within a business and economics curriculum. However, on an international level, there is room for the ranking to be further improved. This is especially important given SSE's strategic direction of becoming more international; to attract top international talent and increase the value of SSE's degree around the world, it is important to continue to increase its ranking. We firmly believe that a focus on modernizing SSE's education through pedagogical innovation could support this goal.

2.4 Why This Matters for SSE

Benchmarking against top-tier global institutions offers SSE valuable insights that can drive meaningful improvements in its educational framework. By learning from leading business schools, SSE can refine its assessment processes to better evaluate critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and real-world application, moving beyond traditional exam-based evaluations. Additionally, understanding how other institutions incorporate technology in education will help SSE implement innovative solutions while maintaining academic integrity.

Furthermore, by exploring new pedagogical approaches, SSE can enhance faculty training and teaching methods, fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment for students. These improvements will not only elevate the student experience but also strengthen SSE's position as a leading international business school, making its education more appealing to prospective students, faculty, and employers worldwide.

| SUMMARY

With global education evolving rapidly, **SSE must modernize its teaching** to maintain EQUIS accreditation, improve rankings, and meet student- and employer expectations. By learning from top institutions globally, SSE can refine its approach, ensuring its education remains cutting-edge and competitive, and aligned with the core values of FREE.

This was the background for this year's Educational Benchmarking Trip (EBT), where the Education Committee explored **best practices within innovative pedagogical approaches**.

3. Method

3.1 How is the EBT conducted?

The EBT-specific research is based on qualitative data gathered through **interviews and meetings with relevant faculty, staff, and students** at 6 universities in the U.S. East Coast. Beyond interviews, visiting the university campuses itself was useful in observing resources, spaces and pedagogical activities available to students at the respective universities (i.e. classrooms with specific layouts designed to enhance learning outcomes).

Over the course of ten working days, the committee engaged with the following stakeholders at the respective institutions, discussing their experiences in teaching business-related courses:

Georgetown University – McDonough School of Business

- Eylem Senyuz, Adjunct Professor - School of Foreign Service, Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy
- Andrew T Gilligan, Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy
- Nuno Limao, Wallenberg Chair in International Business and Finance
- Cathrine Novelli, Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy
- Dale D. Murphy, Teaching Professor in Commercial and Social Entrepreneurship
- Margaret Myers Mullinix, Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy
- Linnea Sandin, Associate Director of the Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy

University of Pennsylvania - The Wharton School

- Chase Kelley, Exchange Student through the Swedish Program @ SSE
- Emil Tallberg, Exchange Student at Wharton during Fall Semester 2024
- Victor Byman, Exchange Student at Wharton during Fall Semester 2024
- David Han, 180 Degrees Consulting Club co-president at Wharton

Columbia University – Columbia Business School

- Larry Jackson, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum
- Aaron M. Pallas, Arthur I. Gates Professor of Sociology and Education
- Rachel Horton, Director, Strategic Projects Dean's Office

New York University – Stern School of Business

- Clay Shirky, Vice Provost for AI and Technology in Education
- Deepak Hegde, Seymour Milstein Professor of Strategy

- Matthew Statler, Clinical Professor of Business and Society
- Cynthia McCallister, Associate Professor of Literacy Education

Harvard University – Harvard Business School

- Sarah Newman, Director of Art & Education at metaLAB at Harvard
- Erik Gyuander, Student at the Harvard Business School

MIT – Sloan School of Management

- Rahul Bhui, Assistant Professor, Marketing
- Sebastien Delisle, Associate Director, Action Learning Office

It is important to acknowledge that the selection of interviewees was **not random,** but rather informed by research conducted by the Education Committee board members. For a more detailed list of the roles of each interviewee and rationale behind meeting with them specifically, please check the appendix section *7.2 Interviews*. A majority of the stakeholders were reached through cold-emailing, while some faculty members were selected based on recommendations, through internal connections or prior engagements during previous benchmarking trips.

3.2 Additional research methods

Focus group session

To complement our insights from the Benchmarking Trip and provide a broader foundation for our recommendations, the Education Committee organized a so-called *'Focus Session*' upon returning home – an event where SASSE-members are invited to discuss a certain topic in exchange for lunch. In this session, we presented our key takeaways and proposals from the Educational Benchmarking Trip, inviting students from **all programs and education levels** to engage in discussion, hoping to ensure representation of all programs. The session was announced through our Instagram and made publicly available on SASSE.se for all members. As the reader will notice, the perspectives and concerns raised by students during this session are integrated into our report, both in the formulation of our final recommendations.

Continuous feedbacking and faculty interaction

Additionally, as an Education Committee, we are responsible for periodic feedback on most courses including all mandatory courses, electives, specializations for the BE-, RM-, and Master programs. To support our work, we recruit Class Representatives for each of these courses, who gather student and faculty perspectives, concerns and feedback. This feedback is relayed through the committee board onto relevant faculty and program directors. We also have ongoing meetings with Program Directors Karin Fernler and Fredrik Lange, the Bachelors' Committee, and faculty at all levels through class representatives; providing us with a thorough understanding of faculty perspectives on various topics.

Over time, we have developed an **increasingly broad and strong understanding of the recurring issues, strengths and patterns in courses at SSE**. This underlying knowledge serves as a basis for all our writing in this outcome report, including the selection of the research topic itself. All our research and recommendations is a reflection, to the best our ability, of overall student perspectives on various topics.

3.3 Research limitations

However, given our methodological approach, we remain mindful of potential limitations in our research: The perspectives of individual professors, while valuable, do not necessarily represent the entirety of pedagogical experiences across institutions, and comparisons between courses of different sizes – such as a seminar of 30 students versus a lecture of 300 – may lead to misleading conclusion, when taking the teachings of one and translating it directly onto the other. These methodological constraints, along with their implications for the validity of our recommendations, are *further discussed in Section 6*.

The Educational Benchmarking Trip (EBT) is based on **qualitative interviews** and **on-site observations** at six U.S. universities, including Georgetown, Wharton, Columbia, NYU Stern, Harvard Business School, and MIT Sloan.

To **validate findings and ensure student representation**, the Education Committee conducted a Focus Session at SSE. Additionally, ongoing faculty interactions and student feedback mechanisms – including class representatives and meetings with program directors – have **provided the Education Committee with a a broader understanding of SSE's pedagogical landscape.**

Methodological limitations exist, as individual professor perspectives do not fully represent institutional pedagogy, and comparisons between courses of different sizes may risk misleading conclusion – **something that is further adressed under 'Limitations'.**

4. Findings

This section provides a summary of the key findings from all of those with whom we spoke with through our interviews and the focus group session after the EBT. Through our research it was clear that each individual and each institution had its own view on pedagogy; however, some ideas and approaches were shared by several actors across institutions, and these will be presented here. For a more detailed discussion of the findings from individual interviewees, please refer to appendix section 7.2 Interviews.

In short, the key takeaways from those we spoke to were:

- Shift away from **high-stakes final exam** for assessment;
- Importance of **active participation** and **engagement from students**;
- **Lack of clarity on artificial intelligence** on an institutional level;
- Innovative teaching methods (real world application and **experiential learning**);
- Faculty training and **institutional change**;
- Continual **importance of ethics in business education**.

In the upcoming sections, these findings – and respective suggestions solutions to the concerns brought up – will be summarised under three pillars, representing the research areas of the Educational Benchmarking trip.

PILLAR 1 | PEDAGOGY

Most U.S. institutions adopt a more *heterarchical* approach to learning, where **knowledge is generated through active participation rather than traditional lectures.** To encourage engagement, professors implemented various methods to foster discussion and interaction.

To address this in an SSE-context, the Education Committee proposes a **shift toward more discussion-based seminars**, **application-driven learning**, and innovative pedagogical activities such as digital simulations, and real-world case studies.

This can be implemented by individual course- and program directors, and aims to **enhance student engagement, psychological safety, and critical thinking,** ensuring that learning is both interactive and impactful.

4.1 Importance of Active Participation and Engagement from Students Focus on Students *Creating Knowledge rather than Professors Dictating*

When compiling our findings, it becomes evident that many of the interviewed professors employed a **heterarchical** approach to learning, where knowledge is generated through active participation and discussion rather than solely dictated by the teacher. To foster engagement, some awarded participation and attendance points, with contributions accounting for up to 30% of the final grade in certain courses, whilst others believed participation should be voluntary, allowing students to speak up at their discretion.

The following is a compiled list of methods used by various professors to encourage a heterarchical classroom and promote student engagement:

- **Engaging in-class pedagogical activities:** videos, physical movement, peer dialogue, performing skits, music and song, role-playing, incorporating guest speakers, real-time clickers and polls, group work, students as discussion leaders, digital simulations, presentations, in-class tasks, and more (see 7.2.2.3 Statler, 7.2.1.4 Limao, 7.2.1.3 Murthy)
- **Discussion-based learning:** Courses are discussion based, knowledge is created and the professor only speaks 20% of the time see 7.2.2.3 Statler, 7.2.4.1 Bhui).
- **Frequent changes of in-class activities to ensure engagement:** Statler attempts to never do the same thing for more than 10 minutes to ensure students are engaged.
- **Room design:** classrooms are set up as hollow squares to encourage students to engage and interact, rather than teachers 'feeding' students the required information (see 7.2.2.3 Statler).
- **Name tags:** teachers bring name tags and the professor refers to everyone by name (see 7.2.2.3 Statler, 7.2.2.2 Hegde)
- **Options for students who don't want to speak up:** an option of submitting reflection journals for students who don't want to speak up in class to still get points is offered (see 7.2.2.2 Hegde)

Did you know that **roughly 14% of the final grade** for various courses researched* was attributed to **attendance and participation**?

**Average of courses thought by the professors we consulted.*

When discussing the importance of engaging seminars- and lectures at the Focus Session back at SSE, students' highlighted a preference for speaking up in smaller seminar environments rather than lectures; some mentioning for instance, the cold-calling pedagogy of Business Law 1-course as especially deterring. In contrast, the name tags in the *Management Organization*-course, or the smaller subgroups in the Marketing-seminars, within the RM-program made participation easier, according to one participant. They also mentioned the importance of feeling safe and comfortable to speak up in a classroom environment, something that is not a given but needs to be established by the teacher.

4.2 Innovative pedagogical methods (with a focus on application-based learning)

One of the Committee's main research topics was around i**nnovative pedagogical methods employed by professors** at the respective universities we visited. A concept that appeared repeatedly, and made up a large fraction of the grade for most courses was application-based learning (also known as experiential-, project-based-, or *action learning*). In short, this approach involves 'learning by doing'. Relating back to the idea of transitioning away from traditional, exam-based learning, experiential learning seems to be taking over.

This focus on project-based learning (PBL) is backed by scientific research studies which indicates that PBL has a positive impact on everything from academic achievement to creative and critical thinking skills Additionally, students learn skills that are highly important to work-life including teamwork, decision making in uncertain environments, thinking outside the box and more.

Georgetown (International Business Diplomacy Program)

- *Eylem Senyuz's Investing in Emerging Markets course:* Students work on a project that develops incrementally each week, culminating in a final report. Each student is assigned an emerging market to analyze and becomes the "expert" on that market to the class. The final reports are compiled into an annual research journal which is used in industry, motivating students to produce high-quality work.

Columbia Business School (MBA Program)

- *Rachel Horton on an MBA at CBS*: Similar to Harvard Business School, CBS employs the case method where business cases are utilised to apply theory to practice. A unique take on case-based learning at CBS incorporates looking at one case from different perspectives in different courses (i.e. considering the strategy vs CSR perspective).

NYU Stern (MBA Program)

- *Deepak Hedge's Endless Frontier Labs course:* Hedge's MBA course pairs each MBA student with a technical startup. Students develop and execute business model plans for startups in real-time, applying theory to practical challenges.

MIT Sloan (MBA Program)

- *Sebastian Delisle on Action Learning*: Management students at MIT participate in action learning labs where each student is paired with an external company or governmental organization on a live project. A large focus of assessment is on a reflective component where students consider what they learned and whether they met their initial goals. They also have the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) which provides 'in-house' action learning.

The list above were some standout examples where action-learning comprised a majority of the course (and the final grade breakdown). However, all professors we spoke to integrated projects of some sort. A compiled list of all project ideas utilized by the professors we spoke to include:

Reports	Technological	Reflective assignments	Creative	Live projects
Research: economic reports, financial reports, etc Case studies: business case studies with recommendation	Digital simulations: simulating economic decisions, teamwork simulations Excel, R, Python: data-analysis driven reports	Reflection memos on development throughout the course, how learning will be beneficial in the future Autobiography project	Skits and roleplaying (trade, economic, contract negotiations) Podcast, tiktok videos, other multimedia formats	Live cases with established businesses, nonprofits, startups and universities

During the Focus Session, a key concern that was brought up regarding SSE's courses that involve experiential learning is that they **end up becoming quite time-consuming.** For instance, the BE1 mandatory course of Marketing was brought up as an example. The course involves several small presentations, a final project and a final exam. The small submissions are worth minimal points, yet take up considerable time. Students wish that the points awarded to a portion of the grade accurately reflects the time commitment spent on it. A similar focus on projects can be seen in many of the retail management courses, for example the Management Organisation course under which period, students neglected the Finance course almost completely.

In the RM program, it is common for students to receive 1 or 0.5 points for submitting an assignment and an additional 0.5 or 1 point for attending the seminar. However, in some cases, the total points awarded do not always reflect the workload required - for example, in the Marketing Research course, where the total amounts to 3 points, or in the Retail Accounting project, where the effort needed exceeds the credits given. Essentially, if a course features time-consuming projects, the final exam should be worth relatively fewer percentage points of the total grade. More specifically, some students mentioned that they would appreciate smaller, low-effort assignments that make up a small portion of the grade with clear guidelines on the requirements to earn those percentage points.

Solution and implementation: Pedagogy

One of the key takeaways from the EBT was the importance of fostering student engagement and active participation through unique pedagogical activities. This section primarily applies to the 18 mandatory BE courses, which represent SSE's largest program with a class size of about 300 students. In these courses, the lectures can become quite passive where content is essentially being 'fed' to the students by the professor, without discussion or questioning.

We recognize the importance of these lectures in learning the groundwork of course material, but at the same time we believe in the importance of discussion and active learning, questioning and involvement in generating knowledge. Therefore, this section places the focus on seminars which can be leveraged to create a unique, engaging learning experience.

We propose two different approaches for the mandatory qualitative vs quantitative course seminars. We define the mandatory courses as follows:

- Qualitative courses (Management 1 and 2, Marketing, Global challenges 1 and 2, Innovation, Strategy, Business Law)
- Quantitative courses (Accounting 1 and 2, Data analytics 1-3, Economics 1 and 2, Finance 1 and 2)

Here, many of the ideas directly mentioned by faculty members we spoke with on the EBT are directly addressable and make sense to implement. Many ideas have also already been implemented and tested at the retail management program, which is a somewhat smaller and more hands-on program than the large BE program.

One principle that applies to all seminars, regardless of the course, is the establishment of psychological safety. For people to feel comfortable speaking up, psychological safety needs to be established by the seminar teacher. This can be done in the first session by establishing a set of norms (i.e. respect, not shutting down peers, open mindedness, etc), and making an effort to genuinely embody those norms throughout the course. If the seminar teacher plans to randomly call on students, they should establish that not knowing the answer is acceptable, and that being confused and making mistakes are part of the learning process.

This practice helps students familiarize themselves with their peers, promoting a more connected and cohesive classroom community; ultimately, psychological safety is a requirement for student engagement and active participation.

Engagement and pedagogical innovation in the qualitative courses

For the more qualitative courses, the ideal seminar would be discussion oriented and engaging through its pedagogical activities. In this type of seminar, the power dynamic is very even and the professor does not dominate the classroom by 'teaching' but facilitates the learning process through discussion. The goal is for knowledge to be created through participation and pedagogical activities rather than simply bestowed upon students.

- Establishing psychological safety [mentioned above]
- **Small class sizes**: to enable discussion, seminars should ideally have fewer than 30 students to ensure that there is room for genuine conversation to build and people feel more comfortable speaking up.
- **Name cards**: name cards should be brought by the students / seminar teacher and the seminar teacher should make some effort to know students by name. This further helps establish psychological safety.
- **Minimal professor speaking**: ideally, the seminar teacher will not speak more than 20% of the time, and the rest of the time will involve students discussing in smaller groups, sharing out or performing other pedagogical activities.
- **Assigned seats**: students should be randomly assigned to seats to ensure that all students have an even playing field during discussions, rather than just interacting with their friends.
- **Incorporating creative pedagogical approaches**: guest speakers, multimedia content, real time clickers and polls, etc…
- **Rewarding participation, attendance and preparation**: As seen in our research, many of the professors in the U.S. offer a large portion of the grade to active participate in seminars, and others mandate attendance. However, we have seen that students at SSE do not like this approach, potentially due to cultural differences between the U.S. and Sweden.
    - A way around this could be to mandate a fixed number of seminars (i.e. students must attend 7/10 seminars). By incorporating attendance into the overall assessment, students are recognized and rewarded for their continuous engagement throughout the course, rather than just during the final weeks of exams and projects.
    - Another way to reward participation is through pre-seminar preparatory assignments, which are short assignments that encourage students to review the material relevant for the seminar. When students are familiar with the material, they are much more likely to speak up in discussion.
    - Although it may only be worth a small percentage of the total grade, it's important to have a way for students to make up credit. For example, there should be some form of make-up assignment for missed mandatory attendance and reflection-memos as an option for students who don't feel comfortable speaking up. This is essential to offer the possibility for students to continue to combine the SSE degree with outside opportunities like internships and part time work, which is a huge strength of the BE program.

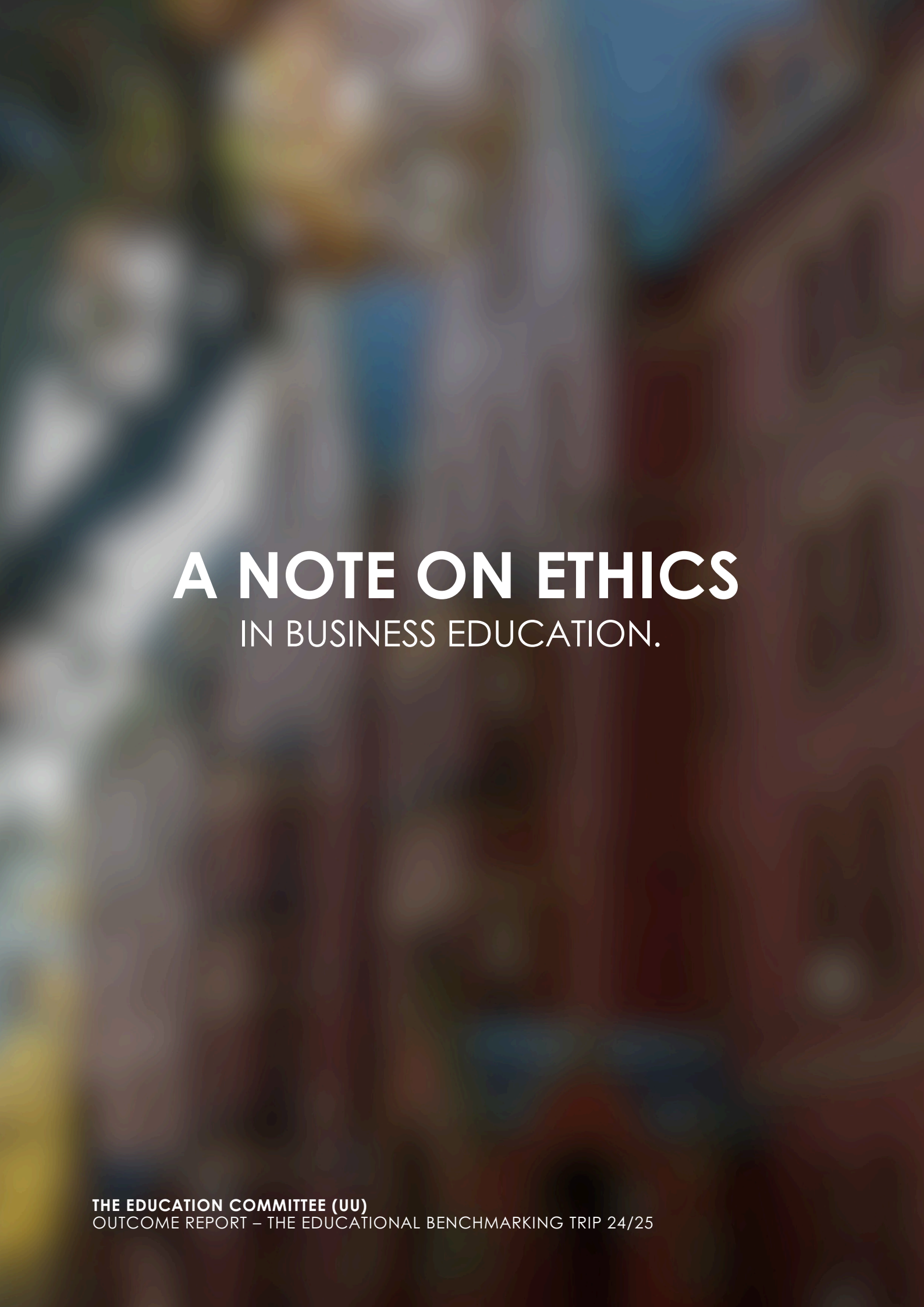
Engagement and pedagogical innovation in the quantitative courses

We understand that quantitative courses have seminars for a different purpose of focussing on problem-solving and live examples of the theory that was covered in the lecture. We do not believe that a discussion-based seminar would be effective, however we believe a focus on enabling students to engage through questions is important. In order to promote this, we propose:

- **Establishing psychological safety** [mentioned above]
- **Anonymous question submission**: using a platform where students can submit questions live through an online platform rather than ask questions by raising their hands could be effective as well. This is a great option for students who do not feel comfortable speaking up to be able to share their thoughts. This platform could also allow for up-votes / down-votes on various questions to ensure that the most asked questions get responses from the professor.
- **Rewarding pre-seminar preparation**: Pre-seminar preparation by attempting the seminar assignments beforehand significantly contributes to increased engagement during the seminar and students feeling like they have a better grip of what is covered in the seminar. Even if they are worth a minimal percentage of the final grade, rewarding pre-seminar preparation can be a great way to encourage students to ask questions and come prepared.

Don'ts: things to avoid

- Mandatory participation and attendance that makes up a large part of the grade (Supported by professor experiences and brought up during the EBT focus session)
- Long readings and preparatory assignments that are difficult to comprehend beforehand (Business law I)
- Dismissing student's questions or concerns; being rude to students; etc
- Cold calling individual students, if Psychological safety does not exist.



A NOTE ON ETHICS
IN BUSINESS EDUCATION.

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4.3 Innovation and inspiring institutional change

Clay Shirky and Larry Jackson shared ideas on how they work to inspire academic innovation between departments at their respective institutions.

Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration (Osmosis in Academia)

- Shirky discussed the idea of 'osmosis' in academia where professors from different departments engage with each other to exchange ideas and pedagogical approaches; this method is something he actively facilitates at NYU.
- Cross-pollination of ideas helps bridge the gap between "good" and "bad" teaching (a gap that can be quite wide at SSE, with some courses being really well liked and others strongly disliked).

Faculty Platforms for Osmosis

- At the Columbia Core Curriculum, Jackson encourages debate and discussion among professors in a round table discussion setting (the syllabus review committee of Columbia's Core Curriculum is set up in this style).
- He is a firm believer that discourse is necessary for progress and faculty should not shy away from it. Through discourse over time, an institution can challenge current methods and raise the quality of education.

4.4 Continual importance of ethics in business education

At Columbia and NYU Stern, students take courses that are comparable to SSE's Reflection series and Global Challenges courses. We spoke to the program leaders for NYU and Columbia respectively and gained insights on these more innovative courses beyond the traditional business accounting, economics, finance courses.

In the journal article "Introducing Practical Wisdom in Business Schools," [which was shared in the latest version of the Global Challenges 2 course as a mandatory reading], Roca argues that current business education ends up creating students who are more unethical than when they began their studies. She discusses the importance of practical wisdom and moral imagination, which can generate business leaders who question the current way of doing things. In a world with increasingly relevant global challenges that are forcing us to change the way we do things, the importance of a business education in effectively facilitating such critical thinking is essential.

Matthew Statler on NYU Stern's Social Impact Core Curriculum

Courses in the Social Impact Core at NYU Stern include: (1) Business and society, (2) Organizational communications, (3) Law business and society and (4) Professional responsibility and leadership. These courses mirror some of SSE's mandatory courses such as global challenges and business law.

In designing these courses, Statler prioritizes three of the ideals brought up earlier: (1) a focus on experiential learning, (2) prioritizing engagement and active participation and (3) a shift away from final exams. More specifically, to promote a discussion-based environment, a large part of the final grade is participation; it is not possible to get an A if you are not present and actively participating. Exams are less prioritized. Statler personally believes that exams induce learning by fear, however genuine interest ensures that knowledge is retained. Smaller assignments and fractions of the grade breakdown are used to reward diligence over time.

Larry Jackson on Columbia's Core Curriculum

Jackson heads the core curriculum at Columbia University, which includes 5 courses: literature humanities, frontiers of science, contemporary civilization, art humanities, music humanities. In SSE terms, these courses can be seen to mimic our reflection series and global challenges courses; similarly, the focus of these courses is to broaden students' worldview and develop intellectual humility.

Jackson's pedagogical approach to the core curriculum is very similar to Statler and NYU Stern's approach. It involves establishing a comfortable, egalitarian environment where students lead the learning by putting their ideas together and the professor guides the discussion. To encourage discussion, class sizes are no larger than 25. Assessment is incremental, spread out over the course and includes participation; there is also a similar shift away from a final exam to more project-based assessment.

Solution and implementation: ethics and innovation

Another key conclusion from our research through the EBT is the importance of the inclusion of various perspectives, subjects and interdisciplinary ideas into any education. A business education can become particularly unifaceted, with a pure focus on increasing shareholder value and perpetuating the current way of doing business. However, in a world that is increasingly changing, an essential way to develop business leaders is to integrate intellectual humility, multidisciplinarity and challenging the norm.

While in the U.S. we spoke with program directors of Columbia's Core Curriculum and NYU Stern's Social Impact Curriculum, two programs which reflect the values and ideas of the Reflection Series and Global Challenges course at SSE.

Although the importance of courses like Global Challenges and the Reflection Series is clear, these courses are some of the least appreciated among the BE program students who take them.

The Reflection Series

One of the primary concerns with the Reflection Series program is that the quality of seminar teachers varies significantly, and each set of students receives a completely different reflection series experience. This is further exacerbated by the fact that there is no set curriculum for seminar teachers to cover.

To address these issues, we propose a rotational program where faculty members rotate between groups of students for each seminar. Each faculty member is responsible for teaching one seminar representative of their department's knowledge and area of expertise (i.e. faculty from the Management department could teach about how to communicate effectively, and another from the Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Technology department could teach about cutting edge technology). Rather than that faculty member teaching seven different seminars to the same group of students, they specialize in one seminar and teach it to seven different groups of students. This way, each group of studetns will get to experience seven unique faculty members and different departments and styles of thinking.

To enhance the innovativeness of this, we propose an inter-faculty review meeting where each member of faculty proposes the curriculum they will teach briefly and receives ideas, input and feedback from other faculty members. This reflects the idea of 'osmosis' shared with us by Professors Shirky and Jackson. This ensures that any member of faculty who may be unsure of how to structure the seminar, what topics to discuss, etc receives the support that they need and that good ideas that work effectively are shared among the team. Perhaps most importantly, it ensures that the quality of experience is somewhat more equal among the various student groups.

Additionally, some topics that make for particularly relevant and interesting topics of discussion at the Reflection Series include:

- Discussion on latest global technology, news or scientific developments
- Learning core skills like effective reading, note taking, argumentation, public speaking, creativity
- A focus on art including poetry, photography, classic novels, sculptures, paintings and even other art around SSE
- International awareness including learning about being sensitive to the backgrounds, histories or cultures of different countries, even including Sweden
- Understanding our own psychology and mental health: topics including self-compassion, intellectual humility, dealing with failure, strategies to improve mental health

To incorporate these elements effectively into SSE's reflection series, it could be relevant to bring in members of SSE's Art Initiative, Micael Dahlén and other members of the Center for Wellbeing, Welfare and Happiness and any other relevant guest speakers.

Many of the ideals mentioned in Solution section on *pedagogy* about engaging pedagogical methods are also applicable to the Reflection Series. Some examples of relevant methods include: the incorporation of guest speakers, hands-on activities, discussions, trips to off-campus locations, designing classrooms to encourage discussion, etc.

Lastly, a final constraint to keep in mind when designing Reflection Series seminars is that students appreciate when the seminars have less prior 'homework' and more in-class activities. This is because the Reflection Series is not worth any points, so students do not feel rewarded for large assignments or time-commitments that they may need to put in beforehand. At the same time, we recognize the importance of short pre-assignments to allow students to reflect beforehand on the topic of discussion.

Global Challenges

The Global Challenges courses have consistently improved in their administration year over year. Due to their nature of forcing students to expand their mindsets and knowledge, potentially into uncomfortable or uncharted areas, they can receive harsh criticism. However, several lessons from the EBT are still relevant in terms of implementation in the Global Challenges course.

First of all, from a pedagogical perspective, we firmly believe that it makes most sense for the Global Challenges courses specifically to spearhead the initiative to move toward less exam-based grading. This is a pillar that has been discussed in section x.x of findings, but is a science-backed, SSE student-backed approach to learning.

Particularly for an innovative course like Global Challenges, testing students on their ability to be creative critical thinkers outside of a traditional exam environment could be particularly effective. Thus, unique pedagogical approaches and project-based learning can be employed.

We understand that a major roadblock to project-based learning is now students' use of artificial intelligence in writing final papers. To address this issue, we propose using creative projects alongside traditional final papers. Projects that involve the use of multimedia platforms (videos, podcasts, etc), slideshows, excel and data analysis, teamwork, etc require more effort and are difficult to achieve a good quality with AI. As mentioned previously through our research, a focus on low-stakes assignments and formative assessments could be relevant to encourage incremental improvements in reflective capacity, understanding of course concepts and analysis over time.

Some alternative creative project ideas we found on the EBT include (but are not limited to) those in table x.x in the findings section x.x.

A continued focus on participation and discussion is appreciated for the Global Challenges courses. Some principles that could be particularly relevant for this course include these from list x.x in section x.x of findings.

- Discussion-based learning: Courses are discussion based, knowledge is created and the professor only speaks 20% of the time
- Frequent changes of in-class activities to ensure engagement: Statler attempts to never do the same thing for more than 10 minutes to ensure students are engaged
- Name tags: students bring name tags and the professor refers to everyone by name
- Options for students who don't want to speak up: an option of submitting reflection journals for students who don't want to speak up in class to still get points is offered

PILLAR 2 | ASSESSMENT

During the academic year 23/24, **81.44% and 78.15% of course examinations in the BE- and RM Programs** respectively relied on final exams, compared to an average of **30%** in researched courses.

To address this, the Education Committee proposes a shift toward diversified assessment methods, including **forecasting-based evaluations** and **real-life case problem solving**.

To be implemented by **individual course- and program directors**, these changes aim to enhance long-term retention rather than bulimic memorisation, and address generative AI's impact on learning.

An assessment reform is **not about eliminating exams** at SSE – it is about **ensuring they accurately measure what matters.**

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4.5 Shift away from high-stakes final exam for assessment

This is an area of our findings where all members we spoke to unanimously agreed that a shift away from a single high-stakes final exam is favoured for assessment of student performance. Not only is this supported by a majority of students at SSE – evident but it is also a science-backed approach to learning: The psychological phenomenon known as the 'testing effect' shows that examination helps learning and retention, *if* learning to grow from mistakes made (Source, 20XX). However, this is not the case when examination is done in a **one-sitting, high stakes, memorisation assessment**, argues the study.

According to the perspective of our respondents-Professors, some of the primary reasons hihglighting the importance of shifting away from final exams include:

- Exam-based grading is not an accurate representation of real-world examination in a job, academic or professional setting and does not prepare students well for post-grad opportunities (Gilligan)
- "*The worst way to teach is through a single high-stakes, memorisation final exam with minimal feedback. Such an examination encourages more cheating and less learning. Instead, incorporating smaller assignments throughout the course, which each individually have low impact, but are collectively significant, rewards continuous improvement and learning over time.*" (Shirky, 2024)
- Mathew Statler at NYU personally believes that exams induce "Learning by fear" and instead a focus on happiness and genuine interest ensures that knowledge is actually retained – "Learning by happiness". Small assignments and incremental portions of the final grade can reward commitment over time.
- At Columbia, the courses offered in the Core Corriculum focuses on improvement over time rather than getting everything 'right': Assessment is done through several, low-stakes assignments. rather than one final exam, to "*reward diligence and improvement*" over time. (Jackson, 2025)
- Similarly, The McCallister model – invented- and thought by Chyntia McCallister herself – places less priority on final exams as they limit space for true learning. Once the exam is completed, there is minimal room for feedback and improvement; final exams limit the space for making mistakes and learning from them.
- Lastly, final exams **may be more effective for mathematical courses,** but less effective for reflection- and discussion-based courses: In subjective courses, the final exam should constitute a smaller fraction of the total grade, according to Myers Mullinix at Georgetown.

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF FINAL EXAM OF THE **COURSES RESEARCHED**:

30%*

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF FINAL EXAM IN THE MANDATORY **BE-COURSES**:

81%*

AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF FINAL EXAM IN THE **RM-COURSES**:

78%*

During the academic year 2023/2024, approximately **81.44%** of course examinations in the Bachelor of Economics (BE) program at SSE were reliant on final exams – where the equivalent figure for the Retail Management program was **78.15%**, as seen in the figures above. Comparing these to the average exam-weight of **30%** placed at the schools visited in our study, these numbers highlight **SSE's strong reliance on single, high-stakes assessments**, that – when combined with the student-concerns brought up earlier –, raise questions about their effectiveness in fostering deep learning and *meaningful* engagement.

In our interview, Dr. Shirky pointed out that one of the main concerns about moving away from a "*one-hundred percent final exam"* – especially with the rise of generative AI, is the risk of students using AI to cheat, which could undermine the credibility of alternative assessments: a concern that has been repeatedly raised to the Education Committee by SSE-faculty.

To address this challenge, Shirky emphasized the need to design assessments that focus on forecasting and analytical reasoning, thereby limiting the effectiveness of generative AI in completing tasks on behalf of students. He explained that while *"***AI is the future and cannot be stopped**, unfortunately or not. AI is good at analyzing historical data but less great at forecasting or making predictions about the future*"* (Shirky, 2024).

A similar perspective was shared by Eylem Senyuz, Adjunct Professor at the Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy (IBD), who highlighted that, while students may use generative tools like ChatGPT as an editor, the structure of his course "Investing in Emerging Markets" is designed to minimize AI's misuse. His assessments – comprising a 35% final exam, one-third weekly reports, and one-third final report – are inherently forward-looking: By requiring students to make future predictions by analyzing current market trends rather than simply summarizing existing data, the course ensures that assessments prioritize critical thinking and original analysis, **making AI-driven shortcuts less viable**.

Solution and implementation: Assessment & Examinations

Having laid the groundwork, the fundamental question remains: How can assessment be redesigned specifically at SSE to align with these insights, while maintaining academic rigor?

A clear takeaway from the interviews was the importance of moving away from the singular, high-stakes final exam model, as multiple smaller assessments throughout the course create a more continuous learning process. In practice, this can be done through – for instance – incorporating elements from Columbia's *Core Curriculum* model, employing a system of **reflective essays,** group discussions, and **practical projects instead of a single exam –** similar to how the Management-Master Program and Specialisation in the BE-Program incorporates the **'Live Projects'**

Here, we can also talk about reduction of AI misuse: Deepak Hegde at NYU Stern structures his MBA course on Science and Technology Entrepreneurship around individual startup projects rather than group work. This ensures accountability and eliminates opportunities for free-riding while making AI-generated answers less viable due to the specificity of real-world data and unique startup conditions. Nuno Limão at Georgetown similarly integrates interactive methods such as digital simulations, trade-policy-negotiation roleplays, and real-time polling to ensure student engagement. By requiring students to cite and discuss their sources extensively, he limits AI's ability to generate fully formed responses without critical engagement.

Similarly, Matthew Statler at NYU **incorporates a grading model where participation and ongoing engagement are crucial.** His courses include creative assignments such as philosophical dialogues, podcast creation, and role-playing exercises – methods that make AI-generated responses less useful while promoting critical discussion and analysis.

Lastly, multiple professors **highlighted the importance of embedding formative assessments** in terms of quizzes and mini-assignments early in the course. This allows students to test their understanding without high stakes while enabling faculty to track progress. Margaret Myers Mullinix at Georgetown has developed a system where early-course assignments focus on refining analytical skills, incorporating data-heavy exercises, and written reflections that require deep engagement with limited sources. The structured progression of these tasks ensures that students build knowledge incrementally rather than relying on last-minute preparation. Frequent, low-impact assignments also encourage student participation. At MIT Sloan, *action learning labs* use ongoing reflective assignments, allowing students to adapt and improve based on continuous feedback.

Inside the Scope of Our Proposal

How do we wish our proposed solutions to be interpreted, and then implemented?

As should be clear by now, we **advocate for a significant reduction in the reliance on heavy-weight exams**, and do want to see that our suggestion is taken seriously, as well as that a serious effort is made to design the assignments so that the arguments "Students can use AI" or "Students can easily cheat" are limited. For context, please refer to sections above, where Professors' Senyuz and Shirky discuss how assignments that are forward-looking make it difficult for students to rely on generative-tools, since these are based on historical input data.

The Education Committee extends empathy for courses where this is not feasible, but have found that this is especially possible in courses like – but not limited to – Macro- and Microeconomics, Finance, Accounting, and Data Analytics, where significant data-collection to make predictions about future economic- or financial conditions often is a part of financial- or economical modeling; making the forecasting-approach suggested by Shirky and Senyuz natural.

Outside the Scope of Our Proposal

What do we no wish to see as a consequence of the implementation of our proposed solutions?

During the Focus Session after the EBT, a respondent raised a concern about introducing smaller graded tasks in response to student feedback on the heavy emphasis on final exams. While the intention might be to distribute assessments more evenly, this approach could inadvertently increase the overall workload rather than alleviate stress. The respondent noted that despite these additional tasks, the final exam remained equally demanding, leaving students with less time to prepare.

When it comes to the outside scope of our proposed solution, the Education Committee **does not advocate for such a shift.** The core objective behind dispersing assessments throughout the semester is to reduce stress and **promote learning-oriented academic performance**, rather than simply increasing the number of assignments. Any changes should aim to support students' understanding and well-being – not add unnecessary pressure.

Another student highlighted an important nuance in grading smaller tasks, particularly regarding their impact on stress levels and learning outcomes. They argued that pass-or-fail assignments, where students receive full points for demonstrated effort, could be less stressful and more beneficial for learning than assignments graded on quality, which introduce uncertainty.

The student referenced their experience in "BE201: Marketing," where assignments were awarded 1 or 2 points, but earning the full 2 points was not guaranteed – even with significant effort. They felt that while both grading methods encouraged learning, the pass-or-fail approach reduced stress by eliminating concerns over marginal point differences.

The Education Committee believes that the **choice between graded and pass-or-fail assignments should remain at the discretion of the Course Director**. However, it is essential to consider how grading structures impact learning experiences. Is the workload substantial enough that grading should prioritise effort over precision? Would a pass-or-fail approach help students focus on understanding rather than chasing marginal points? Or should assignments reflect the quality expectations of the Course Director?

These are key questions to consider when determining the most effective grading approach.

| SUMMARY

Shifting away from high-stakes final exams is widely supported by students at SSE and aligns with research on effective learning. Instead of a single test, continuous assessment through smaller assignments, projects, and discussions fosters deeper understanding and long-term retention.

In this model, inspired by leading universities, flexibility is needed for different subjects, but the goal is clear: **to create a balanced, learning-focused assessment system that prepares students for real-world challenges without increasing unnecessary workload.**

PILLAR 3 | TECHNOLOGY

Our research across U.S. universities **found no centralized AI policies** - professors set their own guidelines, creating confusion. Experts emphasized AI's role in shifting education from memorization to critical thinking and problem-solving.

SSE faces similar challenges: unclear policies, low AI literacy, and minimal AI integration. To be one step ahead, we must proactively integrate AI effectively into coursework, and **equip both students and faculty with the skills to use it responsibly and strategically.**

By promoting AI Literacy at SSE through a crash course and **the adoption of generalised AI policies**, we can **prepare the next generation of leaders and educators of them** to use technology not as a crutch, but as a *catalyst for change*.

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4.6 Lack of clarity on artificial intelligence on an institutional level

We hoped to find a clear AI policy at each of the respective schools, but our research highlighted that none of the universities we visited have an institutional- level AI policy that governs all courses. Instead, individual professors appeared to have their own AI policies, similar to how it is at SSE.

Clay Shirky, the vice provost of AI at NYU:

- AI is a transformational component to education in the sense that it creates a need for changing current, outdated educational practices. Teachers can no longer use memorization based learning, since that will easily be replaced by AI.
- Instead, the importance of working on real projects and learning skills that require human traits becomes of importance (i.e. group work bringing together diverse perspectives, or forecasting and analysis based assignments).

Larry Jackson on AI at Columbia's *Core curriculum:*

- Jackson sees AI as a call for the need to shift the focus from examining how much information students can regurgitate on an exam to instead learning core skills like communication, teamwork, etc.

Sarah Newman on AI at Harvard:

- Harvard does not have a universal rule on AI use; it allows professors flexibility with their individual AI policy.
- Harvard believes AI use should align with course goals (Newman metaphorically compared it to how spell-check should not be used in a course on spelling).
- Although AI use should not be fully banned, ethical and responsible use must be encouraged.
- Newman believes that faculty need additional training to reduce fear and resistance around AI use. Students should also be taught about critique AI's biases, questioning its applications and how to use it effectively to derive propper results.

Most other individual professors share a sentiment of confusion around AI use. Many highlighted the importance of allowing AI conditionally, often for research or refinement but not idea generation (Bhui, Jackson, Limao, Murthy). There was a general agreement on a lack of information and guidance of AI use; ethical AI use should be explicitly taught to both students and faculty to reduce misuse and bias. It is also clear that AI is not being used to the best of its ability and not effectively being integrated as a tool to support education.

Solution and implementation: AI

Given SSE's strong emphasis on preparing students for the future working environment, it is important that AI is integrated into coursework to teach students how to use it effectively as a tool to improve the efficiency and quality of work. After all, AI is being used everywhere in the business world and is helping companies achieve efficiency. Many companies have their own internal chatbots and other AI tools to support employees with their work.

Therefore, it is essential that students learn how to use AI effectively to support their studies and improve efficiency, rather than replacing critical thinking. Ultimately, AI is only good at reproducing what already exists, so it is essential that students learn how to form unique and creative thoughts regardless of AI use.

At SSE, some primary concerns around AI include:

- A lack of management-level clarity on AI guidelines
- Lack of AI literacy among students and staff
- Minimal AI integration into our coursework (as a supporting tool)

How much AI should be used?: Institutional-level direction

The first point is a concern shared by every university visited on the EBT; no institution has much top-down clarity on how individual professors should integrate AI into their courses. It is difficult to enforce such rules at any institution because each course and professor has their unique AI requirements. Newman at Harvard shared an interesting analogy - "you wouldn't use spell-checkers in a spelling class" - which highlights how the level of AI use is highly dependent on the level of education, and the students. It is up to each individual professor to consider what reasonable AI guidelines exist for their course, and the reasoning behind them.

As a general rule, from those we spoke to, we have found that it makes sense that for introductory level courses, AI should be somewhat regulated when it comes to students' core foundational skills (metaphorically 'how to spell'). However, for Specialization-, Elective-, and Masters level courses, AI use can be used more freely, – especially since the curriculum is complex enough that AI may not even be fruitful.

We **propose a 'tiered' approach that could provide some level of structure for students and faculty on AI use in various courses**. This setup would include 3 'tiers' of AI use on assessments, assignments or hand-ins: tier 1 would freely allow AI use, tier 2 would be somewhat regulated (requiring citing the of AI use) and tier 3 would limit AI use heavily. The tier that each assignment or course falls into and what that entails for students needs to be clearly communicated at the beginning of each SSE course by all professors. Such an approach could be established as a baseline for all courses to provide some level of clarity for students to know what to expect.

Regardless of whether such a tiered approach is taken not, it is highly important that each professor works to ensure clarity on AI use in their individual course. Professors should indicate student *do's* and *don't* when it comes to AI, if they require students to cite it, and other best practices. This is helpful so students can understand how they should structure their study approaches most effectively to support long term growth and alignment with industry or academia standards.

On banning the use of AI entirely: A key idea mentioned by Professor Shirky is that you can regulate AI use as much as you want, but ultimately it is up to students to decide how much and how they use it. Students will use AI whether professors are aware of its use or not. Shirky does not believe in banning the use of AI, but instead "*teaching students how to use it effectively*" to aid their learning.

How should AI be used?

It is essential that AI use does not replace critical thinking or questioning of the norm, but instead works as a *supporting tool* to assist learning. This is particularly useful in the Master programs', where students are at a high level of learning, and do not need to focus on memorisation of basic-level principles. Some interesting ways that AI could be used to support student learning at SSE (based on our research from the EBT include):

- Course-specific chatbots to help students answer basic questions (Horton)
- To help create flashcards, generate additional study material to quiz themself, etc. (Horton)
- Summarizing long texts when constrained by time
- Brainstorming ideas and supporting creativity

AI Literacy: Students

Since students are ultimately the ones dictating their own AI use, we believe that beyond professors regulating AI use, a more impactful shift would be to spend more time educating students on AI, its ethics and how to use it effectively. This idea of 'AI ethics' and understanding the drawbacks, strengths and biases of AI is highlighted by many of the professors we spoke to at various institutions on the EBT.

To promote AI literacy among students, we propose a mandatory attendance session on AI for all incoming students. Ideally, this session would cover topics like: a brief explanation of how does AI work, AI tools that students have access to through SSE, how to effectively prompt chatbots, how to cite work that comes out of generative AI, how to check the sources used by AI, how to use AI to help learn better, what are the drawbacks and biases of using AI, risks and benefits of AI use, etc. During the session, students could learn through hands-on activities rather than a lecture style explanation which may fail to capture the innovativeness and importance of the topic. An interesting activity to do could be to prompt the chatbot and demonstrate the fallacies of AI and how it can be wrong.

For the BE program, such a session could be integrated as a Reflection Series session early on. Another option could be to include it as a mandatory part of the intro week for all students. While for the RM programme, this can be implemented in the AntoniaAx:son Tutorial programme during the first year and can then be further explored in the Data Science for Retail Management Course in year 2.

AI Literacy: Faculty

A similar course or guidance session should be offered to faculty at SSE. On the EBT we found that faculty who use AI themselves are much more likely to allow their students to use AI, design assignments that are 'AI-proof', clearly see when AI has been used excessively and be able to clearly guide students on the topic of AI. It is difficult for a professor who has minimal exposure to AI to be able to teach or guide their students on the topic, so it is essential that professors learn how to teach in a world of AI. Additionally, professors who use AI will be more sensitive to AI's limitations, and teach students in ways that promote critical thinking and core skills that are not easily replaced by a machine.

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5. Limitations of Study

While the Education Committee remains confident that our benchmarking study provides valuable insights into educational practices across institutions, we acknowledge several limitations that should be considered when interpreting our findings and recommendations.

6.1 Sample Bias in Student- and Faculty Perspectives

Firstly, **cultural differences in Sweden may limit the direct implementation of participation-focused pedagogical approaches** observed. Differences in student expectations, faculty autonomy, and institutional structures create challenges in seamlessly adopting best practices from other institutions without contextual adaptation.

Secondly, our findings are inherently **influenced by sample bias**: The students who participated in our focus sessions were self-selecting and likely more engaged with pedagogical discussions than the broader student body. As a result, their perspectives may not reflect the experiences of the general student population – an important consideration when interpreting the representativeness of our findings.

Our methodological approach while at the Educational Benchmarking Trip relied on interviews with individual faculty members, whose insights – while valuable – do not necessarily reflect institutional policies or broader pedagogical trends. Our findings, therefore, cannot be generalized as "*At [Institution], they do X,*" but rather, "*This professor at [Institution] does X*." It is important to emphasize that the input data is based on the **experiences** of the faculty members we consulted, rather than on empirical research they have conducted regarding the most effective pedagogical approaches in the classroom. As a result, our study inherently reflects a bias toward the experiences of those interviewed.

6.2 Course Size and Grading Policy Variations

A further limitation arises from the course types represented in our interviews. Most of the faculty members we engaged with lead smaller, specialized courses ranging from 25 to 60 students; however, many of our proposed recommendations are intended to address challenges in larger introductory courses. The Education Committee humbly recognizes that comparisons between courses of different sizes – such as a seminar of 30 students versus a lecture of 300 – may lead to misleading conclusions when taking the teachings of one and translating it directly onto the other.

We also recognize **differences in faculty-support and grading-standards that might, by extension, affect how courses currently are conducted.** Many of the universities we visited operate under a grading system where no upper limit is placed on the number of students who can achieve the highest grad; meaning that, theoretically, all students in a year could receive the highest mark (Jackson, 2024) – contrary to SSE, who recommends the maximum level of 'Excellent' to be 30%.

If the practice of weighting the final exam at or near 100% serves as a mechanism to maintain strict control over grade distribution, then transitioning to a more diversified grading approach may reduce this control. We also acknowledge that such grading policies are often imposed from a top-down institutional level, meaning that placing the burden of change solely on individual course directors without recognising their constraints, respectively, might be barking up the wrong tree.

6.3 What does this imply for the "Ideas for Solution"?

Given these limitations, we have been mindful in formulating our recommendations, recognizing the constraints faced by faculty members in course design and assessment. Our aim is not to propose rigid solutions, but to **highlight promising practices that could inspire meaningful discussions and gradual adaptation** within SSE's unique context.

Despite these challenges, our study **consistently found positive outcomes associated with the integration of smaller, continuous assessments rather than reliance on high-stakes final exams,** we thus believe these insights remain valuable and hold the potential for incremental improvements in pedagogical strategies.

| SUMMARY

We remain mindful of potential limitations in our research: The **perspectives of individual professors,** while valuable, **do not represent entire institutions**, and comparisons between courses of different sizes may lead to misleading conclusion directly translating onto the other. Nevertheless, due to the constant positive outcomes associated with the integration of smaller, continuous assessments, promotion of AI Literacy and a "Learning with Happiness"-mindset, **we remain confident that our findings remain valuable** for an institution like SSE to consider.

6. A final word from us.

Writing a report is always difficult, and – although lengthy – never as all-comprehensive as one wishes it to be.

As the primary interlinkage between the student- and faculty opinion at SSE, the Education Committee aim at representing the vast majority of voices, and not necessarily only the ones screaming the loudest. And while we believe to have made a solid attempt at doing so by opening up the floor with Focus Sessions and faculty-meetings besides the Benchmarking trip itself, we also acknowledge that capturing every viewpoint is an impossible task. That is why we welcome open dialogue, critical discussions, and alternative perspectives: This report is not the final answer, but rather a contribution to an ongoing conversation – one that should continue long after this benchmarking trip, and our time on the board.

Educational benchmarking is – unfortunately, we have to say – an never-ending story (*our work would have so much easier otherwise).* As the world evolves, so too must SSE, and with internationalization now a central pillar of the school's strategy, grading standards, pedagogical approaches, and assessment methods are no longer shaped solely within Sweden's borders. We believe this report is a step toward embracing these shifts, thoughtfully and responsibly.

We deeply hope that the insights from this benchmarking trip are taken seriously and inspire constructive discussions, and ultimately action. Our blue door is always open, and we invite all stakeholders – students, faculty, and leadership alike – to engage in this crucial conversation.

The Education Committee Board 24/25,
Srilakshmi Varma, Nerea Aguado, Anne Zimmermann, Isolde Björnfot, Sophie Fotiadis, Gustav Jäger.

EBT APPENDIX 24/25

THE STUDENT ASSOCIATION

7. Appendix:

7.1 Interviewees

7.1.1 Georgetown University

Name	Position	Contact
Eylem Senyuz	Adjunct Professor - Master of Science in Foreign Service	
Andrew T Gilligan	Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy	
Nuno Limao	Wallenberg Chair in International Business and Finance	
Cathrine Novelli	Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy	
Dale D. Murphy	Teaching Professor in Commercial and Social Entrepreneurship	dale.murthy@georgetown.edu
Margaret Myers Mullinix	Adjunct Professor - Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy	
Linnea Sandin	Associate Director of the Landegger Program in International Business Diplomacy	

7.1.2 University of Pennsylvania - Wharton

Name	Position	Contact
Chase Kelley	American Student who studied in the Swedish Programme at SSE	
Emil Tallberg	Exchange Student	
Victor Byman	Exchange Student	

7.1.3 Columbia University

Name	Position	Contact
Larry Jackson	Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum	lj2504@columbia.edu
Aaron M. Pallas	Arthur I. Gates Professor of Sociology and Education	amp155@tc.columbia.edu
Rachel Horton	Director, Strategic Projects Dean's Office	rah2203@gsb.columbia.edu

7.1.4 New York University

Name	Position	Contact
Clay Shirky	Vice Provost for AI and Technology in Education	clay.shirky@nyu.edu
Deepak Hegde	Seymour Milstein Professor of Strategy	dh99@stern.nyu.edu
Matthew Statler	Clinical Professor of Business and Society	ms4412@stern.nyu.edu
Cynthia McCallister	Associate Professor of Literacy Education	cynthia.mccallister@nyu.edu

7.1.5 Harvard University

Name	Position	Contact
Sarah Newman	Director of Art & Education at metaLAB at Harvard	snewman@cyber.harvard.edu
Erik Guander	Student	

7.1.6 MIT

Name	Position	Contact
Rahul Bhui	Assistant Professor, Marketing	rbhui@mit.edu
Sebastien Delisle		

7.2 Interviews

7.2.1 Georgetown:

7.2.1.1 Eylem Senyuz

Who are they?

Eylem Senyuz is an Adjunct Professor in the Master of Science in Foreign Service (MSFS) at Georgetown University, while also functioning as Senior Vice President, Investment Strategy, Truist Wealth. He teaches a highly popular course on emerging markets, renowned for his innovative teaching methods that integrate real-world applications and diverse approaches to both learning and assessment.

What did they say?

Professor Senyuz uses an application-based approach that focuses on student engagement and ownership of their work. In his course Investing in Emerging Markets, students work on a project that develops incrementally each week, culminating in a final report. Each student is assigned a country to analyze and becomes the "expert" on that country to the class, fostering accountability and ownership. The final reports are compiled into an annual research journal which is used in industry, motivating students to produce high-quality work. Test-based assessments are minimized, with the final exam making up only 33% of the total grade; the remaining grade is made up of 33% weekly assignments and 33% final projects. While GenAI tools are allowed, the forecasting nature of Senyuz' project reduces their usefulness, ensuring students rely on their own analysis and insights.

7.2.1.2 Andrew Gillian

Who are they?

Professor Andrew Gillian from Georgetown University is known for his dynamic teaching style and expertise in global business strategy. His courses emphasize practical, real-world applications, encouraging students to engage with complex economic and policy challenges through case studies and interactive discussions. His focus on innovative pedagogy and experiential learning makes him a strong candidate for the EBT, as he can provide valuable insights into modern assessment methods, technology integration in education, and strategies for fostering critical thinking in business education.

What did they say?

Being a professional himself, Gilligan employs an industry-oriented approach to teaching. He uses studies and scientific material in the same way that industry does, and students do not learn theoretical material until it becomes necessary for practice. Gilligan uses group projects (which make up 50% of the grade) instead of final exams, and argues that group work is much more representative of real life. Participation (25%) and final paper (25%) are also of importance, mimicking industry. Gilligan's current AI policy limits the use of AI in writing the final paper, but he recognizes the need to adapt his practices going forward.

.7.2.1.3 Dale Murthy

Who are they?

Dale Murphyis recognized for his expertise in technology and business analytics at Georgetown University. His teaching approach integrates digital tools and real-world data analysis, providing students with hands-on experience in solving complex business challenges. His focus on technological transformations in education makes him a valuable resource for the EBT, offering insights into how digital advancements, including AI and data-driven learning, can be effectively incorporated into business education.

What did they say?

Murthy sees AI as a useful tool in teaching students but believes in the importance of how students should be using AI. As with any academic tools, students need to be effectively taught on how to use AI, as this is a new tool and not implicit in how it should be used. Its important for students to come up with their own thoughts and outline for writing before using AI to refine their work. Murthy also employs a student-centric approach to teaching where the focus is on students facilitating the knowledge creation process. Students are assigned a class each where they are in charge of the topic and teaching; this sense of responsibility among peers encourages engagement and active learning. A shift from traditional lectures to discussion-based learning allows students to contribute actively, making classes more interactive and reflective of real-world decision-making.

To reward this focus on discussion, participation is weighted as 15% of the final grade. Murthy also employs short 30-min in-class assignments and activities to stimulate initial thinking, check preparedness and ensure participation.

7.2.1.4 Nuno Limao

Who are they?

Professor Nuno Limão specializes in international trade and economic policy, bringing a global perspective to his teaching at Georgetown University. He also functions as one of the Wallaenberg professors there, which creates a connection to the Wallaenberg programme offered at SSE. His courses emphasize critical analysis and policy-driven decision-making, encouraging students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world economic issues. His experience in designing interactive and discussion-based learning environments aligns well with the EBT, making him a great ressource on assessment innovation and fostering analytical thinking in education.

What did they say?

On AI usage, Limao allows students to use AI for projects with projects (with proper citation), but not for problem sets where students learn foundational skills. He also believes in the importance of ethical AI integration and teaching students to use AI responsibly and critically.

In order to improve engagement, pedagogical methods applied by Limao include: incorporating guest speakers aligned with students' career interests (and proving extra credit for attendance), real-time clickers and polls, roleplays to apply concepts (i.e. tariff and trade policy negotiations), group discussions, digital simulations, podcasts, group work, presentations, and more. These engaging assignments, participation and projects are then graded; thus, exams are only worth 30-35%.

7.2.1.5 Margaret Myers Mullinix

Who are they?

Margaret Myers Mullinix is known for her work in pedagogical development and curriculum innovation at Georgetown University. She is committed to enhancing teaching effectiveness and student engagement, focusing on active learning strategies and faculty development. Her expertise in modern assessment techniques and faculty training programs makes her a great fit for the EBT, as she can provide valuable insights into best practices for educator training, student-centered learning, and innovative assessment methods.

What did they say?

On assessment, Myers Mullinix has developed multiple ways to assess students in her course that limits the potential for AI usage. One midterm assessment is to write a small paper responding to a quote. The quote is very specific and only a few sources are given, so students really need to analyze, read and understand the content to make a good analysis.

The level of the work is also quite advanced, so the usage of generative AI is easily detectable. Sources and research are incorporated into the assignment, so students need to highlight where they got the information and can't just plagiarise via generative AI. The second midterm is data-heavy and involves making graphs and data analysis, which is also difficult to do via generative AI. Lastly, the final project involves writing a business or policy case study and making recommendations to a company; when a project involves forecasting or making recommendations for the future, AI usage is again easily detectable.

On the idea of whether courses should involve a final-exam or not, Myers Mullinix believes that final exams may be more effective for mathematical courses, but less effective for opinion and discussion based courses. In subjective courses, the final exam should constitute a smaller fraction of the total grade.

7.2.2 NYU:

7.2.2.1 Clay Shirky

Who are they?

Clay Shirky is named "Top 100 Global Thinkers" and is the Chair of University's Future of Technology-Enhanced Education Committee. In his function as Vice Provost for AI and technology in Education at NYU, he designs, develops, and enhances all academic aspects of technology-based teaching and learning. He also maintains an inventory of online education offerings; and helps schools use educational technology to recruit new students, help existing students learn and progress, and generate cost savings. Within the aspect of technological innovation and the implementation of AI into the courses and the learning process, he shared valuable insights with us.

What did they say?

Shirky believes that AI is a transformational component to education in the sense that it creates a need for changing current, outdated educational practices. Teachers can no longer use memorization based learning, since that will easily be replaced by AI. Instead, the importance of working on real projects and learning skills that require human traits becomes of importance (i.e. group work bringing together diverse perspectives, or forecasting and analysis based assignments).

Regarding innovation in pedagogy, Shirky discussed the idea of osmosis. In his work, he encourages professors to speak to other professors from various other departments in order to gain new insights into ways of teaching or structuring. This bridges the gap between 'good' and 'bad' teaching and helps increase overall educational quality.

Regarding assessment in the world of AI, Shirky says that the worst way to teach is through a single high-stakes, memorization-based final exam with minimal feedback. Such an examination encourages more cheating and less learning. Instead, incorporating smaller assignments throughout the course (which each individually have low impact, but are collectively significant) rewards continuous improvement and learning over time.

7.2.2.2 Deepak Hegde

Who are they?

Deepak Hegde is a Professor of Management and Economics and the Founder and Director of the Endless Frontier Labs. He has won the Innovation in Pedagogy Award and the Distinguished Teacher Award for Pedagogical Innovation at NYU Stern and was named World's best 40 under 40 business school professors. Professor Hegde's emphasis on integrating experiential learning with data-driven decision-making aligned with our interest in innovative teaching methods and we found similarities between the Endless Frontiers LAs and the SSE Business Lab. He developed and teaches an innovative MBA elective on science and technology entrepreneurship at NYU Stern, integrating experiential learning through work with startups and the Endless Frontier Labs alongside research on entrepreneurship and startup strategy. The meeting with him served as an example of including more hands-on experience with theoretical foundations.

What did they say?

Hedge's MBA course focuses on experiential learning by connecting students with technical startups. Students develop and execute business model plans for startups in real-time, applying theory to practical challenges. In order to ensure fairness in grading, Hedge does not utilize group projects in order to prevent free-riding; instead, each student is assigned to a single startup, fostering accountability and ownership over their work. Additionally, he takes into account the particular circumstances of each individual startup and student project. Participation makes up a portion of students' final grades, with an alternative written reflection memo for those less inclined to speak up. He also encourages engagement by having students display name cards and addressing them by name.

7.2.2.3 Matthew Statler

Who are they?

Matthew Statler, a Clinical Professor of Business and Society, was awarded as Best Undergraduate Professor in 2021 and students highlight his class discussions. His creative classroom techniques that engage students in self-reflection, such as using exercises that help them explore personal values and connect with others' perspectives, transforming business ethics into an immersive, introspective experience. As Director of Business Ethics and Social Impact Programming, he integrates social responsibility and ethical considerations into business education, shaping students to become socially aware leaders with a holistic view of business's role in society. Drawing from his background in philosophy and experiences as a consultant and entrepreneur, he teaches with a philosophical and interdisciplinary approach and emphasises on lifelong learning, fostering a mindset in students to approach global challenges thoughtfully, creatively, and with resilience. With regards to innovative pedagogy the meeting helped to gain a deeper understanding of his used teaching methods to create an engaging atmosphere during his lectures.

What did they say?

Courses in the Social Impact Core at NYU Stern include: (1) Business and society, (2) Organizational communications, (3) Law business and society and (4) Professional responsibility and leadership. These courses mirror SSE's mandatory courses such as business law, global challenges, management and reflection series.

Although the content covered is relatively similar, Statler approaches the pedagogy of these courses differently to SSE. Some other unique elements considered by Statler in designing these courses include

- Student-centred learning: Courses are discussion based, knowledge is mutually created and the professor only speaks 20% of the time.
- Engagement: Statler attempts to never do the same thing for more than 10 minutes to ensure students are engaged.
- Room design: classrooms are set up as hollow squares to encourage students to engage and interact, rather than teachers 'feeding' students the required information.
- Neurodiveristy: students think and develop in different ways so learning occurs through various mediums including videos, physical movement, dialogue, performing skits, videotaped assignments, music and song, role-playing, etc.
- Getting to know students: students bring name tags and the professor refers to everyone by name.

To enable a discussion-based environment, a large part of the final grade is participation; it is not possible to get an A if you are not present and actively participating. Exams are less prioritized. Statler personally believes that exams induce learning by fear and instead a focus on happiness and genuine interest ensures that knowledge is actually retained. Additionally, small assignments and incremental portions of the final grade can reward commitment over time.

7.2.2.4 Cynthia McCallister

Who are they?

Cynthia McCallister is an Associate Professor of Literary education within the Department of Teaching and Learning at NYU and the developer of Learning Cultures, which is focused on the development of social-constructivist approaches to learning implemented in public schools on middle school and high school level. She has developed various educational methods, for example the McCallister Model, which offers insights into innovative pedagogy. The McCallister Model emphasises the importance of giving students access to varied and enriching experiences, which are essential for them to unlock their unique potentials and achieve educational equality. It stresses that students need freedom to guide their own learning and opportunities for meaningful collaboration, allowing them to shape their identities, skills, and social understanding.

What did they say?

Within McCallister's approach to pedagogy, there is a focus on fostering student agency rather than having teachers dictate the classroom environment. Students are encouraged to speak up and share diverse perspectives, and teachers are simply facilitators of a safe environment. The goal is to accomplish true learning and reflective practice ('interventions'), for instance through assignments like reflecting on the ideal self and how taking a particular course will help students with their future goals. McCallister's model places less priority on final exams, as they do not promote learning or reflection; she explained that once the final exam is completed, there is minimal room for feedback and improvement.

7.2.3 Columbia University:

7.2.3.1 Larry Jackson

Who are they?

Larry Jackson is the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Director of the Center for the Core Curriculum at Columbia College and teaches Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization. The Education Committee Board 23/24 first met him during the EBT 2023 and he shared valuable insights, since he has a great overview in his position. Recognizing the potential for meaningful collaboration, we saw an opportunity to further strengthen our relationship with Columbia University by arranging a follow-up meeting with him. By fostering deeper connections, we aim to explore new ways for cooperation, knowledge exchange, and long-term partnership opportunities that will benefit both institutions.

What did they say?

Jackson heads the core curriculum at Columbia University, which includes 5 courses: literature humanities, frontiers of science, contemporary civilization, art humanities, music humanities. In SSE terms, these courses can be seen to mimic our reflection series and global challenges courses. The focus of these courses is discussion-oriented and subjective; there is no 'right' answer, but instead students broaden their worldview and develop intellectual humility.

Jackson's pedagogical approach to the core curriculum involves establishing a comfortable, egalitarian environment. In practice, this involves small class sizes (no larger than 25), switching from the professor being the 'teacher' to a distributed model where students lead the learning by putting their ideas together and the professor guides the discussion and no devices during the courses.
In terms of examination, Jackson focuses on improvement over time rather than getting everything 'right.' Assessment is done through several, low-stakes assignments rather than one final exam to reward diligence and improvement over time. Examples of innovative assignments used in the core curricula include: readings (i.e. poetry, classic book, articles, etc), group projects, reflective and argumentative papers, autobiographies, creating podcasts or videos, drafting a contract, philosophical dialogue (skit), etc.

Jackson also promotes the idea of inter-faculty exchange; it is important for faculty to speak to one-another to exchange ideas and contradict / support each other. Debates and discussions strengthen pedagogy.

Very often, plagiarism using AI is an issue, and often a symptom of underlying issues. To prevent AI plagiarism, Jackson states that it is important to be clear and specific about AI guidelines. In such courses, the most important thing is to not use AI to generate the ideas; however, using it to assist with writing quality is more acceptable at Columbia (although the specific policy differs course to course).

Additionally, Jackson sees AI as a crisis opportunity to shift the focus from examining how much information students can regurgitate on an exam to instead learning core skills like communication, teamwork, etc.

7.2.3.2 Aaron Pallas

Who are they?

Professor Aaron Pallas is a faculty member at Columbia University, specializing in education policy and sociology. His research focuses on educational equity and the impact of institutional structures on student learning outcomes. Professor Pallas employs a range of research methods to highlight the significance and practical applications of educational research in shaping policy and practice. He works to educate stakeholders, including media representatives, on the complexities of accountability systems and the unintended consequences of resource distribution policies in public schools.

What did they say?

Pallas shared with us his three principles for college teachers: (1) targeting - recognizing that the average college student has way too much content to learn, (2) surfacing - bringing to light what students already know based on prior experiences, (3) navigating - helping students navigate the intersection of what they already know and what they are learning. Professors must understand these principles and by understanding their students, know how to teach particular courses and topics. Specifically, he said "what works in a chemistry classroom does not necessarily work for a psychology course."

7.2.3.3 Rachel Horton

Who are they?

Rachel Hornton works for the Director of Strategic Projects at Columbia Business School and leads data-driven initiatives that improve academic operations and enhance the student experience. We originally reached out to Paul Tetlock, who received an award in Teaching Excellence in 2021 for his teaching, but he referred us further to Rachel Horton. Columbia Business School has a digital casebook initiative for all EMBA and MBA and is giving students iPads/Apple Pencils/Cases with a set of applications for notetaking and classroom engagement, which we thought was interesting with regards to technological innovation. Furthemore Colombia heavily invests in AI and research in AI. Since Rachel recently finished her MBA at CBS herself, she also shared insights from a students perspective into innovative pedagogical approaches she had experienced, since the CBS curriculum is based on case-based lessons and collaborative learning methods.

What did they say?

On AI at CBS's (Columbia Business School) MBA program, Horton mentioned that the CBS has an internal GPT which aids students with CBS-related learning and has been trained on relevant material. Additionally, the Columbia Canvas page has an AI-add on. AI tools help both professors and students through reducing faculty load and provides students with additional practice resources.

Similar to Harvard Business School, CBS employs the case method here business cases are utilised to transform theory into practice. A unique take on case-based learning at CBS incorporates looking at one case from different perspectives in different courses (i.e. considering the strategy vs CSR perspective). AI is incorporated through writing teaching notes and summaries with AI or rejuvenating old cases with the use of AI. Another way CBS brings in real-world perspectives to theory-heavy courses is through the use of adjunct professors, co-teachers and guest speakers.

7.2.4 MIT:

7.2.4.1 Rahul Bhui

Who are they?

Rahul Bhui is named "Best 40-Under-40 Business School Professors" by Poets&Quants, received the Vernon L. Smith Excellence Award from the Society for Experimental Finance and is considered to be a "Rising Star" by the Association for Psychological Science. The Assistant Professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management tries to help students understand the deep unifying principles that capture both human rationality and irrationality, and its impact on various economic sectors and societal issues, while also researching. Due to his awarded teaching style, we hoped to learn more about innovative pedagogy from him.

What did they say?

On AI, Bhui believes AI should be allowed conditionally: students should disclose its use and take responsibility for its outputs. He also mentioned the importance of re-teaching faculty how to teach in a world of AI; faculty are often reluctant to change, but it remains essential for them to effectively integrate it into learning.

Similar to many other professors, Bhui employs an application-based approach to learning where classroom knowledge is tied to real-life applications. For instance, he employs methods like case studies, team projects (i.e. creating and presenting marketing plans) and more. Projects are divided into stages, with continuous feedback and faculty support throughout the process. Similar to SSE, Bhui also employs guest lecturers in many of his courses.

7.2.4.2 Sebastian Delisle

Who are they?

Sebastien Delisle is the Associate Director of Action Learning at MIT Sloan and a seasoned educator with over seven years of experience in product management, instructional design, and media & technology law. He is deeply committed to developing impactful tools that empower educators and reflect best practices in education, all in service of fostering a more just and equitable world. Prior to joining MIT, Sebastien worked as a product manager in Pearson's Innovative Learning Solutions group, where he played a key role in developing a classroom engagement tool designed to help instructors create meaningful, data-driven interactions with their students.

What did they say?

A hallmark of MIT Sloan's management education is the inclusion of action learning (in short, defined as 'learning by doing'). Management students at MIT participate in action learning labs where each student is paired with an external company or governmental organization on a live project. Given such variable projects, assessment can be difficult, and a large focus is placed on a reflective component where students consider what they learned and whether they met their initial goals. Delisle and the action learning team take into consideration each individual case and speak with companies to assess the quality of final deliverables. Delisle highlighted the importance of action learning; all other courses can be quite theoretical but integrating a practical component aids student learning. They also have the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program (UROP) which provides 'in-house' action learning.

When offering such action learning approaches, there are 3 approaches to blending theoretical and practical learning at MIT. The group entrepreneurship model includes only a live action learning case, the hybrid model involves the first half of the coursework being theoretical and the second half being a project and the blended model integrates theory and coursework together simultaneously.

Delisle also shared 6 best practices when it came to the pedagogy behind action learning:

1. **Establish clear goals:** what are students supposed to be able to do differently after performing the action learning?
2. **Utilize the syllabus effectively:** the syllabus needs to be detailed and clear, and should be used as a way to communicate expectations with students.
3. **Learning objectives:** match every standard to an academic activity that helps students accomplish that standard.
4. **Formative assessment:** formative assessments should be regular and low-stakes with the goal of students to improve their performance over time and have an opportunity to reflect and do better.

4. Intervention: modify the curriculum throughout the course if issues arise to ensure quality is improved.
5. Summative assessment: a final assessment method to summarize student learning and performance.

7.2.5 Harvard:

7.2.5.1 Sarah Newman

Who are they?

Sarah Newman is the Director of Art & Education at Metalab at Harvard and part of the Berkman Klein Center (for internet and society at Harvard University). She is also Co-Founder of the Data Nutrition Project, which designs tools and practices for responsible AI development. Meta Lab offers the so-called AI pedagogy project, which promotes collaboration between technical fields (like STEM) and non-technical ones (like the humanities) to explore AI's impact on society and ethics in education, helping close the gap between these areas. It also offers a free collection of classroom assignments and discussion prompts to help teachers, regardless of their technical background, guide students in understanding what AI can and can't do, as well as the ethical questions it raises. The project aims to equip teachers to help students think carefully about how AI affects their studies and lives, preparing them to make thoughtful decisions about AI in the future. When meeting her we therefore aimed to gain more insights into technological innovation and the use of AI.

What did they say?

Newman shared insights on artificial intelligence at Harvard University. Similar to all other schools we visited on this benchmarking trip, Harvard does not have a universal rule on AI use; it allows professors flexibility with their individual AI policy. Harvard believes AI use should align with course goals; Newman metaphorically compared it to how spell-check should not be used in a course on spelling. Although AI use should not be fully banned, ethical and responsible use must be encouraged. Newman believes that faculty need additional training to reduce fear and resistance around AI use. Students should also be taught about critique AI's biases, questioning its applications and how to use it effectively to derive propper results.

7.3. Focus Session

After the educational benchmarking trip, a focus session was conducted in which through student-to-student communication and exchange of ideas and opinions we got to observe many ways with which we can improve SSEs quality of education.

Starting off, regarding which courses seem to be more favorable to the students and why, many ways of teaching and learning were suggested. Marketing (NDH201) in the retail management course entailed a way of students teaching each other by getting assigned to boards around the classroom and each time presenting the topic they worked with previously. While this was considered a success by some, the lack of expertise of a teacher made some feel insecure, and balance would be beneficial. In the business and economics program, the microeconomics (BE501) course was considered beneficial due to its multifaceted approach of learning, offering assignments, textbooks, podcasts etc. as ways of learning. In Finance 2 (BE402), the book was extremely helpful, the same phenomenon occurred for management 1 (BE101). We can observe that students value a good book since it makes their learning process more seamless and easier. Sometimes though the issues are not stemmed from the book but the technique it requires, an introduction on how to read an academic work would be beneficial for students.

One of the main concerns of a student's everyday life is assignments and grading. To the question "what are your thoughts on SSEs grading system?" students gave much feedback. Some exams such as accounting 2 were worth 100% of the grade, Data 2(BE602) required skills such as excel and math that were not rewarded extra points, Data 1(BE601) did not provide any post-exam feedback these situations create an overall sense of unfairness and lack of incentives. Group projects also cause concerns at times, with them not being followed by enough feedback, being graded on time, or being worth very low scores such as 2 points, in these cases students would prefer a pass or fail assessment. In the Retail management program group assignments are an everyday practice demanding time and effort, taking that into account they should take up a larger percentage of the final grade otherwise they should be cut down in number to give the students time to prepare for the exam.

In terms of other ways of assessment, students value transparency and communication deeply, clarity of feedback and grading techniques. During the EBT and through conversations with professors we got introduced to a different, more spread out assessment system some examples of that are research papers, midterms and sometimes complete absence of a final exam. While many times this and SSEs assessment type intersected the points rewarded at SSE are significantly lower. Would it be beneficial for a final exam to be worth 50% for a grade for example?

Artificial Intelligence is an everyday practice for most students and as a result the faculty is concerned implementing projects and hand-ins because of the possibility of cheating which they are unable to control. The question "What would you suggest to the faculty when it comes to this?" was posed. Despite its challenging nature this issue seemed to be solved by the students easily. Students argued that AI cannot give them high grades, that it does not have the same reasoning capability. The current versions of AI are the weakest we will ever have access to, and they are used in every imaginable field, for example medicine, so it would not be reasonable to view them as a threat but rather as an assistant. AI should assist the students and make their studies easier not replace them and their capabilities and ideas. For this to be achieved professors must also learn how to use AI effectively and reinforce it in their teaching practices, an example of that is the BE201 marketing course, in which parts of the book and presentations are written using AI. Also, AI use in class aiming to show how to craft practice exercises would show students the assistance AI can offer them. Again, spreading the grading system would be beneficial, examine in ways in which AI cannot interfere (eg. using slide show as slide deck, assessment seminars, unit tests).

A better understanding of concepts and definitions derives from attendance, participation and engagement. "How can we increase those at SSE?", "In the US many professors utilize mandatory attendance, what is your opinion on that?". This is a multifaceted topic with many solutions and challenges attached to it. Realistically, mandatory attendance would be somewhat of a culture shock considering the background and also the not only student lifestyle of students. An effective solution would be rewarding attendance and participation, if we observe the retail management program after their lectures the students work on assignments which are followed up by seminars in which they are corrected, these seminars are rewarded and so are the assignments. Despite this not being mandatory the students are more motivated to attend. In other situations, and more specifically the management course for retail management attendance is mandatory with absolutely no exceptions and participation is the key to a high grade, this was not effective in practice with students skipping their other lectures due to exhaustion. In other cases, students were able to choose if they wanted to be graded on participation or not. In terms of participation, students' attitudes heavily rely on their introductory courses. While the order of them is good in terms of beginning knowledge, there is room for improvement. When the first courses are not interactive, fun, engaging or pedagogical students do not feel eager or welcome to participate. It is good that the knowledge covered in many cases was a high school topic for many students but there are cases in which it is their first time seeing them, due to this concept should not be approached by the professors as common sense but rather as concepts of equal importance to the ones coming up. Students must not feel unmotivated after their first exam period, which heavily relies on the first courses and the way they are brought to them.

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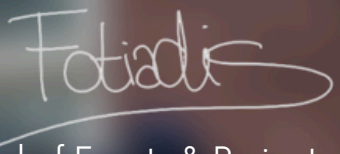

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