

Research at Regent NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2-DECEMBER 2021

Welcome to the second Research at Regent newsletter!

We are excited to bring you this issue which celebrates research engagement, activities, and developments at Regent!

We are pleased to open this newsletter with a think piece by Regent College London's Provost, Peter Holliday, who looks forward to Regent's bright future and its continued focus on student satisfaction. We then hear from Dr Rula Alousi about recent research looking at the importance of formative feedback on student outcomes, how it can be perceived by students, and how to improve students' understanding of the feedback that they receive.

In this issue, we congratulate Dr Palto Datta and his student Nadezhda Angelova Vasileva for their joint publication on leadership styles in the automotive industry. We also recap two fascinating Research Roundtable presentations by Professor Oluwafemi Esan and Dr Xavier Matieni, and showcase Andreea Alexandra Poienar's excellent dissertation on the urgent need for sustainable packaging in the cosmetic industry.

Vanessa Lima, Regent's Academic Skills Advisor, discusses the impact of one-to-one tutorials on academic performance and Ian Moore, Regent's Digital Librarian, takes a look at the experiences of 'student parents' and ways to create inclusive spaces that support their studies.

In this issue, we are excited to introduce two new sections to support the ongoing development of teaching, learning, assessment, and the curriculum (TLAC). In the Research Toolbox we highlight useful digital tools or best practice techniques that

support the research process, whilst in Top Tips for Students, our experienced lecturers offer valuable advice to help students maximise their progress, learning, and achievements.

Reflecting on recent sector research, Careers and Employability Advisor, Stephen Roach, examines the potential impact of unconscious bias in careers guidance. Finally, we celebrate the publications and presentations of Regent staff, and update you on staff and professional development at Regent with a special look at the key benefits of Regent's subscription to Advance HE.

As the newsletter grows, we look forward to expanding its scope and continuing to include your contributions alongside more of the content you would like to see.

We hope that this newsletter will continue to inspire you and kindle your curiosity, and wish you a lovely holiday season when it arrives!



Dr Anna Wharton, Research Officer / Editor

Guest Think Piece

A Bright Future: Changes for the Better and Our Continued Focus on Student Satisfaction

By Peter Holliday, Provost





It is a privilege to be back at Regent College London (RCL). When I was last here in 2016-18, Regent was growing and had successfully passed institutional review by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). However, the extent of our Higher Education portfolio at that time was limited to Pearson business courses.

In the intervening years, the rate of change has been transformational. RCL has more than doubled the number of its students and staff, has forged three successful university partnerships, and is motoring towards New Degree Awarding Powers (NDAPs) with a formal application now submitted to the Office for Students. The first Hill Business School (HBS) business courses, including excellent and innovative programmes at the BBA (Hons) (including a Foundation option) and MBA levels, received resounding approval from the Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) on 14th November following external independent review.

More broadly, the Regent portfolio has continued to expand, with the Schools of Allied Health and Computing and Al joining the Business School, and exciting new partnerships, courses, and the application of new technologies all in development.

I am pleased to say that what has not changed is Regent's priority focus on its students. Digital synchronous delivery makes it easy for me to 'drop in' to classes and I have been struck by the care and understanding I see from teachers as they help our students engage with the material and progress their learning. As well as an excellent and growing team of academics, students have ready access to a wide range of support teams via HubX. Furthermore, the Research, Publications and Enrichment Team are providing a superb programme of SCOPE sessions to better equip students to achieve their academic, personal, and professional life goals.

As I write, students are largely working remotely, but with (bookable) options for attending campus for face-to-face support. We also continue to survey our students about how they wish to engage with their programmes. So far, the evidence is that our students (typically older than those of traditional university age), are wary of a premature return to campus whilst Covid-19 continues, preferring to use Regent technology to access learning at a time and place of their choosing. The evidence so far points to this technologically enabled mode of delivery not only resulting in high levels of satisfaction, but also a continued improvement in retention and achievement.

I have no doubt that if we continue to listen to our students, understand their aspirations, challenges, and preferences, and use this information to drive our offer and portfolio, the future will be very bright indeed.

Student Perceptions of Formative Feedback

While formative feedback plays a critical role in the maintenance of quality teaching, learning, and assessment in HE, students' perceptions of, and preferences for, said feedback are often overlooked. The perception of feedback can vary based on students' attitudes, cognitive style, gender, and other factors.

A 2016 study argued that constructive feedback can be used to close the gap between the current and desired performances of students, as well as enhance their learning and satisfaction. Considerable research has gone into finding an answer to the question of 'what formative feedback should be like' and has suggested that feedback should:



By Dr Rula Alousi, Programme Leader in School of Business and Enterprise



Another study investigated students' perceptions of what they would consider to be helpful feedback and what could support them to be better learners. It found that students saw assessments as a way to help them learn since feedback was given on the whole rather than on their performance on one aspect of an assignment or exam.

Research findings also show that students' sensitivities to formative feedback significantly impact their approaches to learning and studying and some students view feedback as criticism. Some students also see formative feedback as demeaning a student's work while others see it as justifying a particular mark given for an assessment, a topic that was explored in these video interviews conducted by the Higher Education Academy.

In summary, having early interaction with the students and working on constructive feedback through tutorials and seminars will provide students with better insight into an assessment, and improve their confidence and understanding of the benefits of formative feedback.

'The Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Motivation in the Automotive Industry: A British Perspective'

Summary of a recent research study conducted by Nadezhda Angelova Vasileva and Dr Palto Datta



Dr Palto Datta

In October, Regent's own Dr Palto Datta (School of Business and Enterprise) published a paper co-authored with his student Nadezhda Angelova Vasileva on the impact of leadership styles on employee motivation, using the British automotive industry as its case study.

The study assesses to what extent 100 survey participants agreed with assertions made about six leadership styles.

The approaches to leadership examined through this quantitative research method included Democratic, Autocratic, Laissezfaire, Situational, Transformational, and Charismatic leadership styles.

Using the data gathered from their survey, the co-authors performed correlation and regression analysis to better understand the relationship between leadership and employee motivation. Their research concluded by acknowledging a 'strong link' between the two, with the authoritarian Autocratic style having the least positive correlation.

From their results, the co-authors also determined that a Democratic leadership style can produce positive results, with employees favouring and responding well to this style. They additionally discovered that despite being identified as a particularly

passive leadership method, Laissez-faire leadership can benefit employee performance. Thus, the evidence suggests that the relationship between leadership style and employee output in general is not entirely linear, supporting Datta and Vasileva's view that any monopolisation of a particular leadership style would not be fruitful – rather that different styles favour different inputs to employee engagement and performance.

Ultimately, when discussing employee motivation, however, it was a Transformational leadership style that came out on top, a conclusion that Vasileva and Datta hope to see manifest in the future activities of business leaders. Click here to view the paper.



We are pleased to share that we had two excellent and very well-attended Research Roundtable presentations from Professor Oluwafemi Esan and Dr Xavier Matieni.

New Teachers' Coaching Skills



With Professor Oluwafemi Esan, School of Allied Health

In October, Professor Esan shared his doctoral research study on how newly qualified lecturers develop coaching skills, as shown in Figure 1.

In education, coaching seeks to go beyond 'just' teaching and empowers learners to employ a mindset of self-belief and problem-solving. Coaching aims to enrich a student's educational experience by providing more time with experts and designing a plan of study.

Click here to view the recording of Professor Esan's talk.

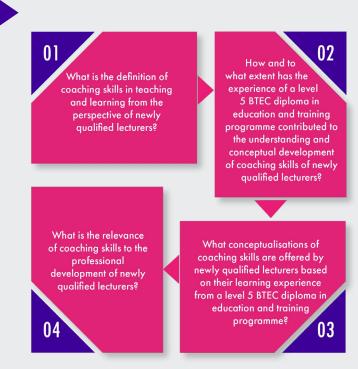


Figure 1. Research study questions

Supporting Health & Student Discourse Cognitive Social Presence Presence Engagement will lead to educational experience Content Environment, Selection Tools Teacher Presence

Figure 2. Model of interconnected learning

Interconnected Learning



With Dr Xavier Matieni, School of Computing and Al

In November, Dr Matieni spoke about interconnected learning and the feedback process in the classroom as means of building community.

Drawing on his background in engineering and an understanding of interconnectedness in life, Dr Matieni conceptualises a closed-loop process that continually feeds back into the student experience to promote engagement. This model of interconnected learning, as shown in Figure 2, envisions the growth of a dynamic learning community.

Click here to view the recording of Dr Matieni's talk





Sustainability of Eye Creams Packaging in the Cosmetic Industry

By Andreea Alexandra Poienar, MSc International Management

Sustainability is a well-known issue these days. My dissertation focuses on the sustainability practices that the cosmetic industry might consider when it comes to their packaging. As consumerism increases so does the level of associated waste. Packaging in the cosmetic industry is a complex part of the product itself – it needs to maintain the quality of the product and protect it from external factors that might affect its properties and value.

The overall objectives of my dissertation were: to determine the relationship between sustainability practices and packaging materials; to find a gap between packaging sustainability and the purchasing decision; and to offer a recommendation to the cosmetic company L'Occitane, which could support them to become more sustainable in their packaging. This article will briefly discuss the findings around the relationship between sustainability practices packaging materials.

My dissertation focused on the three main cosmetic packaging materials - glass, paper, and plastic - and highlights the three levels of sustainability - economic,

social, and environmental - that should all be taken into consideration by companies when created. The research found that typically economic and environmental sustainability are given priority over social sustainability.

Using statistical methods of analysis, my research also identified that paper is the preferred material among people when it comes to sustainability, whilst plastic is perceived as the cheapest material used. The most important aspect that concerns people when it comes to packaging is economic sustainability, followed by environmental, and then social sustainability.

Whilst the social aspect is not wholly ignored, the limited concern given to it shows that people may need to further develop a culture of concern for social sustainability. Although paper came across as people's preferred packaging material in this research, it is not actually the primary type of packaging used. Further research is recommended to improve understanding and practice around sustainable packaging in the cosmetic industry.

Academic and Study Skills Update

Keeping you up to date with research around academic skills support



One-to-one Tutorials: Supporting Students through their **Academic Journey**



By Vanessa Lima, Academic Skills Advisor

Regent College offers a range of focused student support services aimed at improving students' academic and study skills, one of which is one-to-one tutorials.

A recent study by Campitelli, Page, and Quach (2019) demonstrates that this type of individual academic skills support has a clear and positive impact on students' academic performance. In the study, first-semester masters students wrote assignments before and after two mandatory tutorials with the academic skills advisor, and their marks for the two assignments were compared. Data analysis revealed the positive effect that the tutorials had on students' written performance as all students' marks increased.

The study also included a questionnaire for students to offer feedback on the impact of the academic skills support received. All

students strongly agreed that one-to-one tutorials improved their understanding of the requirements of their assignment. Most of them felt more confident to approach the written assignment and felt that their grammar and referencing skills had improved. Some students even mentioned a reduction in their stress levels. The positive effects on students' marks, confidence, and even wellbeing confirm that one-to-one academic skills tutorials have an important role to play in higher education.

Our Academic Skills Advisor, Vanessa Lima, is available to support students with one-to-one tutorials and can also support staff who may wish to book her for a guest lecture. To access these services, book here.



Digital Library News

Where research and your academic library meet



Student Parents: The Need for Inclusive Spaces



By Ian Moore, Academic Resources Manager and Digital Librarian

At Regent we are privileged to serve a diverse student population. More so than many other educational establishments, Regent has a high proportion of mature students, including those who have caring responsibilities for children. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) defines this demographic of 'student parents', as those students who are 'responsible for the care and wellbeing of a child aged 17 or under'

Student parents often face unique challenges during their academic journey.

As with all students, a high level of engagement with their studies is necessary, but those with parental responsibilities must also juggle childcare, and in many cases, work commitments. A 2013 study found that the extra pressures experienced by student parents can lead to a significant difference in retention rates, completion times, and final outcomes. The same 2013 study also found that only a third of student parents attained their degrees within six years, compared with over half of non-student parents.

As a qualified librarian, and former mature student myself, I passionately believe that access to education and help with lifelong learning is a human right. In a 2020 article, authors Scott and Brannen analysed the types of research services and library spaces student parents need to succeed in higher education. They used qualitative research garnered from focus groups of student parents at the University of Memphis. I found several of the participant responses very moving as they highlighted the kind of problems student parents face. As one respondent said, 'I've definitely felt like I've had to keep my family life and my school life completely separate... to the point where [my child] asks, "Where do you go all day?"'

This article spotlights the importance of supporting student parents to feel included in academic life at Regent. This can take the form of increasing our digital support, e-resources, and webinars so that student parents can study from home at hours that suit them, or even take the form of onsite child-friendly facilities. As we navigate our way through the NDAPs process, blended learning will be the order of the day, involving technology-enabled off-site learning with more traditional, instructor-led classroom activities.

If you are interested in reading more about research around student parents, you can find additional resources on EBSCO. To access EBSCO, just go to Regent Digital and click on 'EBSCO' in the left-hand column. A search for 'student parents' will return many full-text items, including academic journals, magazine articles, and government reports.

For further information or additional support accessing Regent's e-library services, please contact our Digital Librarian, Ian Moore, at ian.moore@rcl.ac.uk.

Research Toolbox

Learn more about best practice techniques and digital tools that can support your academic studies and research projects.



In this issue we look at Citethemright (CTR), an excellent referencing resource that supports you throughout the research and writing process.

Proper referencing requires attention to detail. CTR can help you correctly use different referencing styles, including the Harvard style we use at Regent, and shows you how to reference every type of source from a book, to a painting, to an interview.

Properly referencing will improve the quality of your academic work and ensure that you don't accidentally plagiarise or lose marks on your assessments.

CTR also provides you with expert advice on relevant topics such as avoiding plagiarism, setting out quotes, and successful ways to paraphrase and summarise.

You can access Citethemright for free through your Regent Digital dashboard.



Top Tips for Students

In this section we invite our experienced academic staff to share their top tips for students on a range of topics. In this issue we asked:

What is your Top Tip for students on how to choose a research topic?

'Think about your career aspirations and then choose your research or dissertation topic. For example, if you think digital marketing is your career, it's better to have a research topic in that area. If you think HR and recruitment are your area, then a research topic in that area will be good.'

– Sandhya Thirunagari

'Choose a research topic that you are passionate about and interested in. You will become more creative, innovative, and productive if you are dedicated to your research topic.'

- Dr Rula Alousi

'Think about a topic that resonates with you on a deeper level because motivation will be a critical factor in delivering the research study.' – Jamil Ahmed

'Considering the fact that students are well informed about their lives and industry, choosing a research topic will be largely determined by the areas in which they are passionate or interested. It takes a combination of elements for both teachers and learners to accomplish this. First, students must have clear goals and career paths in mind. Teachers have to connect the lessons to the lives of students on the other hand. These are critical factors when choosing a research topic.'

- Dr Xavier Matieni

'Think of areas that you feel passionate about or have an interest in (personal, family, or work). Is there something that you want to know more about or a problem that you wonder how to solve? This is normally the best starting point when looking for a research topic. The best research topic I supervised was for a parent who wanted to find a way to communicate with her deaf son using technology.'

Jabir Hassan

'Choose a research topic that greatly interests you and will contribute to existing knowledge, no matter how small or marginal. Think in advance of access issues and feasibility of the research project with the given timescale for the programme/course.' – Dr Rameses Manalang

Underpinning careers guidance with evidence-based research



Improving Careers Support by Combatting Unconscious Bias



By Stephen Roach, Careers & Employability Advisor

In an article by Emma Bolger and Uuganaa Ramsay, the two authors highlight the impact of unconscious bias and race in career guidance delivery and suggest positive approaches to address these issues.

While careers guidance professionals

maintain high levels of ethical and professional standards, such as challenging privilege in the workplace and committing to continuous professional development, there may be limited knowledge of/or training around unconscious bias. Unconscious bias can be understood as an automatic thought or opinion triggered by a quick and unconscious judgment or assessment of other people or situations.

An individual may not be aware that they harbour an unconscious bias. To discover your own unconscious bias, you can take this Implicit Association Test.

Unconscious bias and race stereotyping within careers guidance may lead to the limiting of student aspirations and poor career decision-making, which in turn can produce inequality in the labour market and poor mental health and wellbeing. Thus, it is

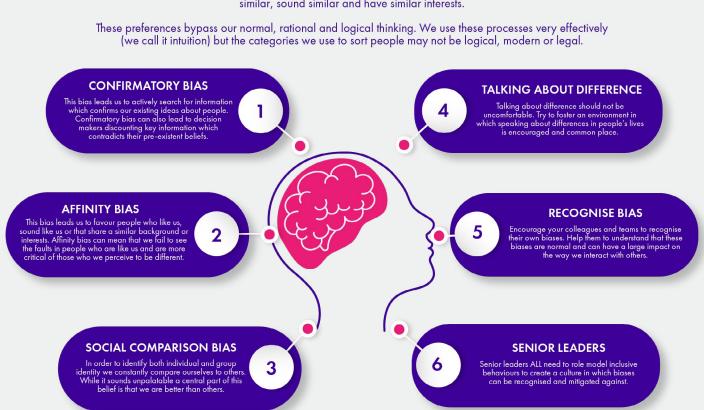
especially important to keep up to date with current research and understanding around careers guidance.

A 2017 report, 'Race in the workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review', spotlights better data collection as a way to combat unconscious bias and understand how race can impact the working environment. The report recommends that careers guidance professionals reflect on how students may see themselves and suggests that careers guidance interviews or group work sessions can be used to reflect on the development of professional practice.

Here at Regent College London, we strive to continually improve our approach to careers guidance. For support in this area, you can contact our Careers and Employability Advisor, Stephen Roach, at stephen.roach@rcl.ac.uk.



"Unconscious biases are our natural people preferences. We are hard-wired to prefer people who look similar, sound similar and have similar interests.



Publications, Presentations and Events

Dr Qudoos Yousuf has co-authored a forthcoming paper 'Design and fabrication of human skin by three-dimensional bioprinting' to be published in late 2021. We will share the link to this paper when it becomes available.

Dr Palto Datta has co-edited a book 'Belt and Road Initiative: China's global business footprint' which was published earlier this year.

Click here for further information.

Dr Datta has co-authored a forthcoming book 'The Art of Entrepreneurship: The path to success and wealth creation' to be published in late 2021. His co-author is Luiz Alberto Alves Dos Santos, a well-known Brazilian professor and economist who was nominated for a Nobel Prize in 2011. We will share the link to this book when it becomes available.

Dr Datta also conducted a masterclass workshop for researchers in India on 'Demystifying Research Paper Writing' on 23 October at the Navinchandra Mehta Institute of Technology and Development, in association with the University of Mumbai.

By Rajib Mustofa, Quality Enhancement Manager



Welcome to the second briefing of Academic Year 2021/22 on staff and professional development. In this issue, we bring you information about key staff development events happening at RCL and our partner institutions, as well as other external opportunities that you can access. Upcoming events that may be of interest include:



Upcoming events include:

INTERNAL

Fellowship workshop Session 1

6th December 2021, 13:00 – 14:00 via MS Teams
(Open to all academic staff wishing to apply for Fellowship in AY 2021/22)

Pellowship workshop Session 2

16th December 2021, 13:00 – 14:00 via MS Teams
(Open to all academic staff wishing to apply for Fellowship in AY 2021/22)

Assessment and Feedback on Postgraduate Business
Programmes
15th December 2021, 17:00 – 18:00 via MS Teams
(Open to all academic staff teaching on Business Masters
Programmes; details of how to book a space will be
emailed to respective staff)

EXTERNAL

Advance HE Webinar: An introduction to the Professional Standards Framework and Fellowship 2nd December 2021, 08:30 (GMT)

This free webinar will present and discuss how the Professional Standards Framework, Fellowship, and Accreditation are being adopted to support professionalism in learning and teaching in HE across the Central Asian region. This webinar will provide an introduction to the PSF and Fellowship with speakers from Advance HE, partner institutions, and fellows. It will explore the benefits Fellowship provides to institutions and individuals. Click here to book your free place.

2 <u>University of Bolton Lunchtime Webinar – Academic Misconduct: Processes and Strategies</u>

8th December 2021

This interactive Zoom webinar is aimed at academic staff, both new and experienced. There will be a specific emphasis on strategies to prevent and detect commissioning/contract cheating. Anyone who wishes to register themselves can get in touch with the Partnerships Officer, Shona Wallace at shona.wallace@rcl.ac.uk.

Advance HE: Student Retention and Success
Symposium

9th February 2022

This is a presenter-led, one-day event to learn, discuss, and share the latest practices in student retention and success under the theme 'Impact of flexibility in policies and practice on student retention'. Click here to book your place.

Please watch this space as we will periodically publicise further information about key events in this section of the newsletter.

Please note that staff will need to seek approval from their respective Heads of Schools / Line Managers before attending some events.

Also, if you know about events that you would like to circulate then please contact me on Teams or by email on Rajib.Mustofa@rcl.ac.uk.

Special Feature: Advance HE



By Rajib Mustofa, Quality **Enhancement Manager**

It gives me great pleasure to inform colleagues that Regent has recently reinstated its subscription to Advance HE for a period of three years. As an Affiliate Member, Regent can now:

- Access Advance HE's range of curated knowledge, research, and guidance
- Participate in facilitated networks and awards
- Benefit from discounted development and enhancement services

In addition to a 50% discount on all fees related to direct Fellowship applications for individual members of staff, our subscription also provides Regent with access to a wealth of exclusive reports, publications, and resources across key HE themes, and the latest thinking in leadership development, governance, and organisation development.

So, please feel free to explore the Knowledge Hub and immerse yourself in the wealth of available resources covering a wide range of topics and themes!

Academic and professional services staff at the college may also be interested in the following membership benefits, services, and events.

Advance HE Connect Benefit Series

This series focuses on monthly themes designed to help members develop resilience and help institutions adapt to a new way of 'business as usual' within the transformed environment. Click here to learn more about the series.

Upcoming themes are as follows:

- -December 2021 Engaging learners: Any time? Any place? Anyhow?
- -January 2022 Re-thinking delivery models for quality higher education for all
- -February 2022 How has Covid-19 impacted gender equality in HE?

Advance HE Connect

This is an online collaboration platform dedicated to HE that allows you to connect with colleagues globally and access specialist areas. This network has facilitated sector-wide engagement during the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing members to connect with more than 21,000 users from 100 countries around the globe. Click here to access the platform.

Mental Wellbeing in HE Conference: 3rd March 2022

Universities and colleges are fast-developing 'whole institution approaches' to mental health and wellbeing to improve academic outcomes and retention and provide a holistic and positive experience.

This one-day conference, organised by the Mental Wellbeing in Higher Education Expert Group in collaboration with Advance HE, will discuss new ideas and aims to provide a boost in motivation and a fresh vision for all delegates. Click here to book your place.

Advance HE International Conference: 4th - 8th April 2022

This festival-type conference spans a full week and focuses on current global challenges facing HE. It will feature invited speakers from around the world and will be accessible from all time zones. Click here to book your place.

Please note that attendance at these events is subject to a fee (discounted for member institutions). Should you wish to attend any of these events, please discuss with your line manager / Head of School.

Join the Research **Development Group**

Staff members, we would love for you to join our voluntary, monthly meeting of academic and professional staff championing research engagement at Regent.

The Group has already contributed brilliantly to the establishment of Research Roundtable and the Research at Regent newsletter and is currently engaged in discussions to progress research engagement at Regent.

If you would like to come along, please contact Dr Anna Wharton, Research Officer, at anna.wharton@rcl.ac.uk.

Call for contributions

We welcome ideas and research from everyone at Regent and are happy to support research engagement across all schools and teams. We also invite members of staff to support future newsletters as part of the editorial team and to recommend student contributions to the newsletter that are well done, original, or innovative.

If you would like to contribute to or support future issues of this newsletter, please contact Dr Anna Wharton, Research Officer, at anna.wharton@rcl.ac.uk.