

Guest editorial: Leveraging the possibilities of “learning at scale”: future proofing business and management education

In this special issue of *The Journal of Work Applied Management*, we explore the theme “Leveraging the possibilities of ‘learning at scale’: Future proofing business and management education” through a collection of eleven insightful articles spanning the globe from Europe, North America, Asia and Australia. These articles are arranged into three thematic clusters that collectively address the complexities of scaling learning while ensuring quality and sustainability in business and management education.

The first cluster of articles explores the theme of work readiness and graduate skills. The research on placement learning sets the tone by assessing a large-scale unpaid business placement programme, emphasising reflective learning as a bridge to employment and how different forms of feedback can help to manage students’ realistic placement expectations, as mentioned in “Improving placement learning at scale: a case study evaluation” (Hains-Wesson and Ji, 2024). The next article, “Striking Gold: Navigating the Education Massification Maze for Work Readiness” (Enstroem and Schmaltz, 2024), advocates for aligning large-scale teaching with labour market demands and equipping students with transversal skills necessary for workplace success. The article “Citizen Scholars: Cultivating 21st Century Graduate Competencies in Business Education” (Gao and Huber, 2024) reinforces this theme by illustrating how these graduate competencies can be cultivated through teaching practices using the Citizen Scholar framework. They also propose an updated Citizen Scholar framework that includes digital literacy. Lastly, “Problem-based learning and the integration of sustainable development goals” (Nguyen *et al.*, 2024) integrates the Sustainable Development Goals into problem-based learning and offers a forward-thinking approach to imbuing students with a mindset geared towards sustainability and global responsibility.

The second cluster covers innovative educational designs that challenge traditional pedagogies and embrace flexibility and creativity at scale. The article “Blended Learning at Scale: Co-Designing a Large Postgraduate Finance Course” (Cram *et al.*, 2024) presents a design-based approach to refining a large foundational finance course, while the article “Cross-Cultural Adaptation of Educational Design Patterns at Scale” (Vallis *et al.*, 2024) underscores the global applicability of adapting connected learning strategies across diverse educational landscapes and the value of using design patterns to assist educators in teaching skills critical for work and the future. Continuing the theme of large, multicultural classes, “Facilitating feedback generation and group skill development through assessment design” (Selvaretnam, 2024) outlines how group assessments can foster interaction and enhance learning, advocating for collaborative practices in large-scale higher education settings.



The next article, “Learning Design Ecosystems Thinking: Defying the Linear Imperative and Designing for Higher Education at-scale” (Bryant, 2024), further expands this discourse by proposing a non-linear, ecosystem-based approach to curriculum design that responds adaptively to the challenges of scale, offering pathways for students through the uncertainty of higher education. Complementing this, “Blocked Out: Reflections on the Potential of Intensive Modes of Teaching to Enhance post-COVID-19 Graduate Employability in Large-Scale Educational Settings” (Dixon and Makin, 2024) advocates for intensive modes of teaching that could scale up to address large-class challenges, offering a participatory and focused learning environment.

The final cluster addresses the role of technology in enriching education at scale. Here, we see learning analytics emerging as a tool to lighten administrative loads and provide tailored support to students in large classes in “Using Learning Analytics to Alleviate Course and Student Support Administrative Load for Large Classes: A Case Study” (Honson *et al.*, 2024). Another case study, “Exploring Student Response Systems for Large Group Teaching: A Tale of Engagement at Scale” (Barker and Gribble, 2024), highlights how technology, when pedagogically aligned, fosters interactivity and engagement in large group settings. These authors also consider how technology supports personalised learning to ensure students are supported and not left “lurking” unseen or unheard.

Together, these articles weave a rich narrative about the evolution of learning in large cohorts, underpinning the necessity for agility, foresight and innovation in business and management education. From grounding learning in real-world competencies to harnessing the power of design and technology, this special issue of *The Journal of Work Applied Management* presents a sustainable approach to reimagining education at scale for future generations.

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