



SLAIHEE Newsletter

Sri Lanka Association for Improving
Higher Education Effectiveness

ISSN 2950-6956

BARCODE 9772950695001

2026 MAY

Newsletter Outline

Adaptive learning in
higher education:
promise, practice, and
pragmatic challenges

Redefining the role of
university language
instructor

Feedback that fuels
learning

Enhancing student
success through
assessment for learning

The role of self-efficacy
in learning

Promoting “student
agency” in higher
education (HE)

Transparency in
assessment: moving
beyond the ‘by-law’
shield

EDITORIAL

by R.M.Nadeeka Rathnabahu

GENERATION Z AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS

Today's higher education landscape is shaped by Generation Z (Gen Z), individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who make up most students aged 14 to 29. This generation faces a complex environment with emotional, academic, technological, and economic pressures. Research shows that many of their challenges come from anxious expectations that personal needs should be quickly met and positively (Haidt, 2024), which have led them to re-value of traditional degrees, introducing a growing gap between what universities teach and the skills needed in today's fast-changing job market.

A key reason tied to this shift is the rising cost of higher education. Many Gen Z students are questioning whether a traditional degree is worth the investment, given high tuition fees, student debt, and concerns about how immediately relevant courses are to real careers. This has led to declining enrollment, with more students choosing alternative paths such as entrepreneurship, freelancing, and influencer marketing, which they see as faster and more practical routes to economic success.

At the same time, many students feel that universities are not fully preparing them for the workforce. Graduates often report a lack of hands-on experience, limited networking opportunities, and an overemphasis on theory rather than practical skills.

Although Gen Z is highly familiar with everyday use of technology, there are still gaps in how effectively institutions use digital tools. Many universities struggle to meet students' expectations, particularly when faculty lack advanced digital skills. This, however, should be viewed with countries (like USA) having recently banned smart phones from schools as well as last month's medical advisory that screen time should be cut down, including in schools (<https://edition.cnn.com/2026/05/20/health/surgeon-general-advisory-screen-time-wellness>).

In addition, Gen Z faces a growing mental health crisis, with higher levels of anxiety, depression, and burnout than previous generations. These challenges have been linked mainly to excessive time on social networking, academic pressure, the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and financial stress, including the cost of essential resources like internet access and study materials.

Overall, because Gen Z often seeks quick and visible results, the slower pace of traditional education can feel misaligned with their expectations. This highlights the need for higher education institutions to rethink their approaches and better adapt to the needs of today's students as well as introducing awareness on self-harm from overuse of smartphones and screen time.

Reference

Haidt, J. (2024). *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*. Allen Lane.

SUMMARY OF KEYNOTE ADDRESS

by

Professor Hemamalie Gunatilaka, SLAIHEE-IIT HE Conference, 25 July 2025

CONFERENCE THEME: “Helping educators and students reduce and manage performance anxieties”

The Competency Imperative: Managing Performance Anxiety to Empower Student Voice

Sri Lankan higher education stands at a critical juncture where the focus must shift from mere knowledge transmission to the holistic development of the graduate. As we navigate the 21st century, Professor Hemamalie Gunathilaka’s 2025 keynote address highlights a vital dimension of this challenge: the management of performance anxieties among both educators and students. Anxiety is frequently viewed as a negative emotion experienced when we worry about failure or feel unable to achieve our intentions, yet we must recognize the existence of "productive anxiety" a healthy, optimal level of stress where productivity increases and performance is maximized. If left unmanaged, stress and anxiety interfere with daily life, negatively affecting mental and physical health; crucially, an anxious teacher directly impacts their students. To manage these anxieties and move toward an Outcomes-Based Approach, we must prioritize student-centered pedagogy, transforming the classroom from a traditional "content-first" model to one that prioritizes student experiences and their voices. Key strategies include being Reflective & Inclusive: educators must reflect before and after lectures to handle challenges effectively and remain mindful of the immense diversity—including linguistic backgrounds and neuro-abilities within their classes. Furthermore, by Equalizing Power and treating students as unique knowledge bases, facilitators can maintain an equal power distance, treating learners as equals rather than subordinates. This fosters Ownership of Learning, where students relate theory to their own lives, significantly lowering resistance and distress. History shows that national anxieties can lead to transformative quality enhancement; just as youth frustrations previously catalyzed shifts in teaching methods, the current reconvening of the Standing Committee on Staff Development marks a vital step forward. Improving teacher training across all state universities is not a luxury; it is the most important aspect of improving higher education in Sri Lanka. Ultimately, the goal is to develop self-regulated learners and an accountable citizenry, providing the highest Return on Investment (ROI): a resilient, future-ready workforce capable of thriving in a dynamic global economy.

ADAPTIVE LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PROMISE, PRACTICE AND PRAGMATIC CHALLENGES

Adaptive Learning (AL) offers a powerful alternative to the traditional “one-size-fits-all” lecture model in higher education. AL systems use real-time learner data to adjust content, pacing, and difficulty to meet individual needs a data-driven approach shown to enhance learner engagement and performance (Dahlmann, 2021).

One of AL’s major strengths is its learner analytics and dashboards. These tools enable educators to track student progress, highlight misunderstandings, and spot those who need extra support. This visibility allows institutions to convert precious face-to-face time into targeted problem-solving sessions, peer collaboration, or personalised interventions rather than basic content delivery (Dahlmann, 2021).

However, scaling AL across institutions comes with serious challenges. A recent study found that technological, pedagogical, and organisational barriers frequently derail AL implementation (Perez-Molho et al., 2020). Technological hurdles include integrating adaptive platforms with existing Learning Management Systems (LMS), ensuring system usability, and supporting robust data infrastructure (Perez-Molho et al., 2020). In several cases, a poorly functioning system increased cognitive load on students, countering the benefits it was meant to provide.

Implementation also demands high institutional commitment. Financial resources, time, staff expertise, and sustained leadership support are essential. Many faculty members resist the change due to fears over increased workload, loss of control over course design, or uncertainty about their role in an AL-driven course (Perez-Molho et al., 2020; Tyton Partners, 2015). Without a clear strategy, AL pilots may stall or fail.

Adaptive Learning holds promise for transforming higher education through personalised, data-informed instruction potentially boosting student success and institutional efficiency. However, realising this promise requires more than technology: it needs thoughtful planning, adequate resources, skilled staff, and strong institutional support. For AL to work at scale, universities must commit to change, build capacity, and adapt carefully to their context.

References

- Dahlmann, J. C. (2021). Guidelines for effective adaptive learning: A meta-analysis. *Instructional Design Capstones Collection*. Paper 73. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.umb.edu/instruction_capstone/73
- Pérez-Molho, L., Hirt, F. S., Bergamin, P., & Van Der Westhuizen, C. P. (2020). Challenges and contexts in establishing adaptive learning in higher education: Findings from a Delphi study. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 17(1), Article 32. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-020-00209-Y>
- Newman, A., Stokes, P., & Bryant, G. (2013). Learning to adapt: A case for accelerating adaptive learning in higher education. Tyton Partners. https://tytonpartners.com/app/uploads/2015/01/Learning-to-Adapt_Case-for-Accelerating-AL-in-Higher-Education.pdf

Article by
Sapna Kumarapathirage
Informatics Institute of Technology

REDEFINING THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITY LANGUAGE INSTRUCTOR

In the dynamic landscape of the Sri Lankan higher education sector, the role of the university language instructor is evolving. Once confined to teaching grammar, writing conventions, and improving language proficiency, the language instructor role now demands catering to areas such as critical communication skills and informed use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. Thus, these advancing roles necessitate pedagogical modifications in perceiving language education as a tool to enhance these skills.

Facilitating critical communication involves creative thinking and effective interpersonal relationships. As Gond & Mishra (2025) state, in an era dominated by digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, most communications are virtual and may be consumed passively. This can lead to misinformation, as opposed to reliable information. This highlights the emphasis on identifying reliable source evidence as foundational academic writing guidance. Furthermore, digital communication, vastly characterised by brevity, informality, and visual communication via emojis, memes, and videos, influences the learners' language use in their daily personal and academic communications (Singh, 2022). This asserts the need for continuous and multiple writing engagements for students to familiarise themselves better with the academic style and conventions.

Another aspect that redefines the university language instructor's role is AI, which has introduced tools for the education sector, providing grammar checks to writing tools and content creation. According to Avsheniuk et al. (2025), these slice down the essential stages of writing, such as drafting, revising, and analytical thinking, with key processing skills needed for effective language learning and academic integrity. Consequently, a passive learning atmosphere and active involvement with the course material are inevitable.

Thus, Li (2023) observes that educators need to guide students not only in the constructive use of AI but also in identifying the difference between machine-generated accuracy and human creativity. This also highlights the need to emphasize academic integrity by ensuring that AI is used as a support system without challenging critical thought.

In this way, the current role of the higher education language instructor requires being multidimensional. They should not only provide the fundamental services of language instruction, but also navigate reflective practices of writing, making it an essential part of daily student life. This will enable students to keep up with the challenges posed by the highly digitalised communication media and ever-evolving artificial intelligence tools.

References

- Avsheniuk, N., Seminikhyna, N., Ruban, L., & Sviatiuk, Y. (2025). Exploring Overreliance on AI Tools in English for Specific Purposes Courses: Challenges and Implications for Learning and Academic Integrity. *Arab World English Journal*, 2025(Special Issue), 3–20. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/AI.1>
- Gond, S., Upadhyay, A., & Mishra, S. (2025). Critical Thinking and Creativity in the Digital Age: Impact of Mass Media on Cognitive Processes. *European Economic Letters (EEL)*, 15(3). <http://eelet.org.uk2156>
- Li, J. (2023). AI in second language education: Challenges and opportunities. *Frontiers in Education*, 8, 1202113.
- Singh, H. (2022). Impact of social media on interpersonal communication. *International Journal of Communication and Information Technology*, 3(2), pp.26–30. <https://doi.org/10.33545/2707661x.2022>.

Article by
Shalini Kaduwela
Asia Pacific Institute of Information Technology

FEEDBACK THAT FUELS LEARNING

Feedback is widely recognised as one of the strongest influences on student learning in higher education. While substantial attention is given to assessment structures and grading policies, it is mostly the quality, clarity, and timing of feedback that can shape students' ability to improve. Race (2014) emphasises that feedback is crucial to the learning process, guiding students toward deeper learning and improved academic performance.

A major challenge in many higher education settings is that feedback is delivered too late or is not easily usable. When comments are vague or disconnected from future tasks, students struggle to apply them. Effective feedback must therefore be:

- Timely – provided while the learning process is still fresh.
- Specific – focusing on particular strengths and areas for development.
- Forward-focused – giving students clear next steps

Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasise that feedback should help learners close the gap between their current performance and the desired learning outcomes. Short, immediate, and actionable comments often create far greater impact than lengthy notes delivered after assessment tasks have concluded, especially when feedback processing time is limited.

Feedback becomes more powerful when it shifts from a one-way transmission to a dialogic process. Strategies such as peer review, guided self-assessment and reflection activities encourage students to actively engage with feedback. Race (2010) notes that learning is strengthened when students participate in interpreting and applying feedback, transforming it into a tool for continuous improvement.

By fostering dialogic practices, feedback transforms from a one-directional message into an interactive process where students make sense of and apply insights to future work.

Digital tools can enhance feedback processes by offering speed, accessibility, and personalisation. Audio comments, short video explanations, and annotated digital rubrics allow educators to communicate in more engaging and empathetic ways. However, while technology adds flexibility, human connection remains essential. Tone, encouragement, and clarity continue to drive student motivation and confidence.

On a concluding note, feedback that fuels learning should be intentional, clear, and aligned with outcomes. When educators design feedback that allow students to improve and act upon, learning becomes sounder and more continuous. Ultimately, effective feedback strengthens student support, deepens comprehension, and supports higher educational quality across disciplines.

References

- Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university* (4th ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81–112.
- Race, P. (2010). *Making learning happen: A guide for post-compulsory education* (2nd ed.). SAGE.
- Race, P. (2014). *The lecturer's toolkit: A practical guide to assessment, learning and teaching* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Sadler, D. R. (1989). Formative assessment and the design of instructional systems. *Instructional Science*, 18(2), 119–144.

Article by
Sahdiya Hussain
Informatics Institute of Technology

ENHANCING STUDENT SUCCESS THROUGH ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Assessment for Learning (AfL) has emerged as a powerful pedagogical approach that emphasizes the role of assessment in actively supporting student learning through feedback rather than merely measuring it. Unlike traditional assessment practices that often focus on summative outcomes, AfL integrates assessment into the learning process itself, allowing teachers and students to make informed decisions that enhance learning (DeLuca et al., 2012).

Central to AfL is the key idea that assessment practices must directly support learning. This involves setting clear learning goals and criteria, which teachers must communicate effectively to students to guide their progress (Swaffield, 2011; Florez & Sammons, 2013). When students get to know what is expected and how their learning will be evaluated, they are better able to monitor and regulate their own learning, fostering deeper engagement and motivation.

A distinctive feature of AfL is the active role of students in the assessment process. Students are encouraged to assess their own work as well as that of their peers, promoting reflection, critical thinking, and autonomy (Heitink et al., 2016). By learning how to learn, students develop lifelong skills that extend beyond the classroom.

For AfL to be effective, it must be seamlessly integrated into all stages of the learning process. Teachers need to design learning activities and assessments in coordination and must ensure that feedback is timely, constructive, and actionable (Florez & Sammons, 2013). AfL will not only improve student outcomes but also will encourage a more collaborative and reflective classroom culture, where learning becomes a shared responsibility between teachers and students.

Assessment for Learning can transform assessment from a tool of judgment into a catalyst for learning, promoting student autonomy, engagement, and achievement when thoughtfully integrated into classroom practice.

References

- DeLuca, C., Luu, K., Sun, Y., & Klinger, D. A. (2012). Assessment for learning in the classroom: Barriers to implementation and possibilities for teacher professional learning. *Assessment Matters*, 4, 5.
- Florez, M., & Sammons, P. (2013). *Assessment for learning: Effects and impacts*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.
- Heitink, M. C., Van der Kleij, F. M., Veldkamp, B. P., Schildkamp, K., & Kippers, W. B. (2016). A systematic review of prerequisites for implementing assessment for learning in classroom practice. *Educational Research Review*, 17, 50–62.
- Swaffield, S. (2011). Getting to the heart of authentic assessment for learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 18(4), 433–449.

Article by
Abarnah Kirupananda
Informatics Institute of Technology

THE ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY IN LEARNING

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to organize and execute actions required to accomplish a specific task. It is not a general personality trait but a task-specific judgment that develops through experience and learning (Jackson, 2002). These beliefs influence how students approach academic challenges, regulate their effort, and respond emotionally to success or failure.

As learners engage in academic tasks, they interpret various cues that shape their judgments about competence. These cues include performance outcomes, patterns of success and failure, feedback from teachers, rewards, observations of peers or role models, and physiological or emotional states such as anxiety and confidence (Schunk, 1996). Through this process, students evaluate their progress and decide whether to persist, modify their strategies, or withdraw from a task. Positive learning experiences strengthen self-efficacy, while repeated difficulties without appropriate support may weaken their belief in their own abilities.

Research has shown that self-efficacy plays a critical role in motivation and achieving of learning outcomes. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities, utilize greater effort, and persist longer when they encounter difficulties. In contrast, learners who doubt their capabilities often avoid challenging tasks and give up more easily. High self-efficacy is therefore associated with higher levels of academic achievement and improved performance across subject areas (Schunk, 1995).

Instructional practices are essential in fostering students' self-efficacy beliefs. Teachers can promote self-efficacy by encouraging students to set clear, specific, and challenging short-term goals that are attainable through effort. Providing honest and constructive feedback helps learners understand their progress and develop realistic confidence.

Facilitating accurate self-assessment enables students to align their perceived abilities with actual performance. Additionally, peer modelling allows students to observe others successfully completing tasks, thereby reinforcing the belief that success is achievable through practice and persistence (Artino, 2012).

Self-efficacy can be considered a fundamental determinant of effective learning. It shapes student motivation, persistence, and academic achievement. By adopting instructional strategies that strengthen self-efficacy, teachers can create supportive learning environments that empower students to take responsibility for their learning and overcome academic challenges. Enhancing self-efficacy not only improves immediate educational outcomes but can also contribute to the development of confident, independent, and lifelong learners.

References

- Artino, A. R., Jr. (2012). Academic self-efficacy: From educational theory to instructional practice. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 1(2), 76–85
- Jackson, J. W. (2002). Enhancing self-efficacy and learning performance. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 70(3), 243–254.
- Schunk, D. H. (1995). Self-efficacy, motivation, and performance. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 7(2), 112–137.
- Schunk, D. H. (1996). *Self-efficacy for learning and performance*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.

Article by
H.I.U. Caldera, PhD
University of Colombo

PROMOTING “STUDENT AGENCY” IN HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

In an era defined by rapid technology change and complex global challenges, universities must move beyond passive knowledge transmission and empower students as "active agents" in their own learning. Student agency in HE is the "student's experience of having access to or being empowered to act through personal, relational, and participatory resources, which allow him/her to engage in purposeful, intentional, and meaningful action and learning in study contexts (Jääskelä et al., 2017). According to Starkey (2017), student agency is recognized as one of the three key dimensions (learner's cognitive development, empowerment and unique personal preferences) to be fostered in student-centred education (Jääskelä et al., 2017). Both educators and students have specific roles to play in fostering student agency. As co-creators of their own learning, student set personal goals, choose learning pathways, and reflect on their progress, while educators create safe environments, offer choices, and feedback. Stenalt and Lassesen (2021) find that student agency is strongly linked to positive learning outcomes. There are many benefits of student agency including increased student engagement, motivation, enhanced metacognitive competencies, improved self-efficacy beliefs, development of transferable life skills, and self-reflection (Radhakrishna, 2024).

Further, emphasis on content coverage, standards and test scores, accountability pressures limiting new approaches, lack of educator preparation and buy-in, inadequate access to supportive resources in disadvantaged communities, difficulty sustaining family and community partnerships, tendency for superficial rather than meaningful integration, uneven effects due to differences in student backgrounds are among the obstacles constraining systemic adoption of student agency in HE (Radhakrishna, 2024).

Studies have proven various strategies that educators can adopt to foster student agency, namely, collaborative group work, allowing choices in tasks, exploration, and encouraging questions and feedback (Radhakrishna, 2024). In order to facilitate educators' transition to this new pedagogical approach, they need support in designing lessons, accessing training and coaching, and creating teacher communities (Wedajo & Light, 2025).

References:

- Jääskelä, P., Poikkeus, A., Häkkinen, P., Vasalampi, K., Rasku-Puttonen, H., & Tolvanen, A. (2020). Students' agency profiles in relation to student-perceived teaching practices in university courses. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 103, 101- 604. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2020.101604>
- Stenalt, M. H., & Lassesen, B. (2021). Does student agency benefit student learning? A systematic review of higher education research. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47(5), 653–669. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2021.1967874>
- Radhakrishna, Ng (2024). From passive to proactive: Exploring the role of student agency in educational transformation. *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 14 (1), 40-44. <https://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jrme/papers/Vol-14%20Issue-1/Ser-2/F1401024044.pdf>
- Wedajo, H. & Light, D. (2025). Supporting teachers to foster student agency in play-based learning: Lessons from the Tech & Play initiative. In *INTED2025 Proceedings* (pp. 7372–7377).

Article by

Jinendra Dissanayake, PhD
University of Colombo

TRANSPARENCY IN ASSESSMENT: MOVING BEYOND THE 'BY-LAW' SHIELD

The 'By-Law' Shield and Institutional Silence

In the Sri Lankan Higher Education landscape, the final examination often marks an abrupt end to a student's engagement with a subject. However, a critical question remains: Does a student have a right to identify, analyse and correct their own errors, and do we, as educators, have a moral obligation to reveal them?

Currently, many university by-laws are cited to deny students the opportunity to review their evaluated scripts. This creates a "black box" where students receive a grade but remain blind to the specific lacunae in their learning. Frequently, these restrictive practices are maintained through traditional interpretations of long-standing by-laws, which can leave junior academics hesitant to seek clarifications or propose more transparent alternatives.

This environment of "institutional silence" stands in direct opposition to modern pedagogical research. Black and William (2018) emphasize that assessment is not a mere measurement tool but a central component of pedagogy; for learning to be effective, the "feedback loop" must be closed. When students are denied the right to see their errors, that loop is broken, and the opportunity for growth is minimised.

The Ripple Effect: From Academic Gaps to Administrative Burden

The consequences of this lack of transparency are not only pedagogical but deeply administrative. When students do not learn why they failed, they cannot correct their trajectory. This leads to several systemic issues:

- The 'Blind' Re-correction Cycle: Students submit re-correction applications without knowing if their errors were due to a lack of knowledge or a misunderstanding of the marking rubric.
- A Surge in Repeat Attempts: We see a rise in requests for second and third re-repeats, and even "grace chances," largely because the root cause of the initial failure was never addressed through proper guidance.
- Stakeholder Uncertainty: Parents and relevant parties are left without a clear understanding of the student's progress, leading to unnecessary social and financial strain.

As Hattie and Timperley (2007) demonstrated in their landmark study, *The Power of Feedback*, constructive feedback is the single most powerful tool for increasing achievement. Providing it can reduce the need for repeated attempts and clarifies the student's standing for all stakeholders.

A Proposal for Reform and Quality Assurance

To align with international course standardization guidelines, we must move away from a "minimalist" mindset where the teaching responsibility is seen as ending once marks are submitted. I propose that these issues become a central observation point for Program Reviews within the university system.

- The Moral Mandate of Feedback: Departments should be encouraged to conduct "Post-Exam Clinics" to discuss common pitfalls. This aligns with the UGC Sri Lanka Quality Assurance Manual (Standard 5), which advocates for constructive feedback on assessments.
- Developing Evaluative Judgement : Following the work of Boud and Dawson (2023), we should implement comprehensive mock examinations. This allows students to develop "evaluative judgement," giving them the chance to self-correct before the high-stakes final evaluation.

- An Open Dialogue for Improvement: We must foster an environment where all faculty members, regardless of seniority or administrative role, can collaborate on updating by-laws to be more student-centered.

Our role as university educators is to be mentors, not just evaluators. By making 2026 the year of assessment transparency, we can reduce the administrative burden of repeats and ensure our students move forward with proper understanding and professional guidance.

References

Black, P., & Wiliam, D. (2018). Classroom assessment and pedagogy. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 25(6), 551-575.

Boud, D., & Dawson, P. (2023). *What constitutes high-quality feedback?* (Focusing on evaluative judgement).

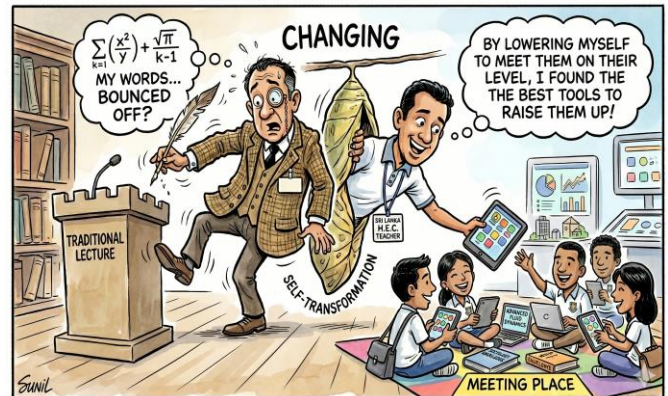
Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 81-112.

Quality Assurance Council (UGC Sri Lanka). *Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programs*.

Article by

Pushpa Kulanatha, MD (Ayu)
University of Colombo

CARTOON



2025 AWARDEES

“Dr Shrinika Weerakoon Memorial Award for the Best Paper in Changing Higher Education Student Skills”



Ms. Azmiya Yehiya Cassim

Lecturer,
School of Computing, Informatics
Institute of
Technology
azmiya.c@iit.ac.lk



Rashmi Nirodha Arangalla Abeysekera

Lecturer,
School of Computing, Informatics
Institute of Technology.
rashmi.abeysekera@gmail.com (Now
Lecturer at: Language Centre
International College (LCIC), International
College – Siam University, Thailand)

“Progressive Reduction of Speaking Anxiety Using Online Platforms, Gamified Tasks, and Targeted Feedback “

Motivated by the prevalent issue of speaking anxiety among English as a Second Language (ESL) students, our paper investigated a technology-mediated approach implemented within our English Communication Skills module. We had observed that numerous first-year students exhibited reluctance to engage in oral tasks, hindered by elevated stress levels and various learning obstacles that impeded effective practice. This behaviour, reflected through peak anxiety, clearly illustrated a common challenge students encounter in mastering a second language. Recognising the critical importance of strong communication skills for career success, this research explored transforming students into confident speakers by applying a structured Task-Based Language Approach (TBLA) alongside user-friendly digital tools. Platforms such as Padlet and Kahoot were utilised to establish a relaxed, collaborative environment for speaking tasks and interactive exercises. Throughout our sessions, students participated in a series of activities designed to enhance their skills and reduce the pressure of spontaneous speaking. By consistently repeating these activities throughout the semester, students received the practice needed to improve. The outcomes were highly positive: our final evaluations indicated a significant reduction in speaking anxiety, and students reported that these digital tools directly facilitated their progress. These findings demonstrate that integrating interactive digital tasks with collaborative teamwork can substantially reduce stress and enable students to articulate their thoughts more clearly. We are optimistic that this work will inspire both colleagues and students to incorporate technology into the classroom, and we intend to continue refining these methods to empower every learner to communicate their ideas effectively.

21st SLAIHEE Conference – 2025

“Helping educators and students reduce and manage performance anxieties”

IMPORTANT LINKS

Conference Proceedings:

https://www.slaihee.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/SLAIHEE-Proceedings-Book-2025_Final_V5.pdf

Keynote speech :

<https://www.slaihee.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/SLAIHEE-KEYNOTE-2025.pdf>

Winners of the Dr Shrinika Weerakoon Memorial Award:

<https://www.slaihee.org/2025-awardees/>

FUTURE EVENTS

22nd SLAIHEE Conference – 2026

“Changing myself as an effective teacher for improving student needs & meeting them”

Registration is open till:

20th July 2026

Conference:

24th July 2026

For more details, please visit the SLAIHEE Website

<https://www.slaihee.org/>



22nd Annual **Higher Education Conference** in Sri Lanka
On
***Changing myself as an effective teacher for
improving student needs & meeting them***

Organized by
Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness (SLAIHEE)
Supported by
Informatics Institute of Technology (IIT)

will be held on
Friday 24th July 2026 from 9:00 AM
at
**National Library of Sri Lanka Auditorium
No 14, Independence Avenue, Colombo 07**

Keynote Speaker

Dr. H. G. P. A. Ratnaweera
Past President SLAIHEE
Senior Lecturer (Grade I)
Civil Engineering, Faculty of Engineering Technology
The Open University of Sri Lanka

Conference Registration Fee

Registration Fee	Early Bird Registration (till 4 th Jul, 2026)	Normal Registration (between 5 th ~20 th Jul, 2026)
Members**	Rs. 3200	Rs. 3500
Non-members	Rs. 3700	Rs. 4000

* For registration and membership details please visit <http://www.slaihee.org>

<<<<< Conference registration will be **closed** on **July 20, 2026** >>>>>

Mode of payment

Direct deposit to "Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness (SLAIHEE)" at **Sampath Bank** A/C No. **003460001462**, Thimbirigasyaya Branch.
Please mention your **Name** during deposit as **reference**.
<Proof of payment is mandatory at the time of registration>

Contact us

URL : www.slaihee.org
Email: slaihee@gmail.com,
slaiheetreasurer@gmail.com,
slaihee.conf@gmail.com
Text/SMS inquiries:
0702107204 / 0768209677

Updated: 2026.05.14



SLAIHEE

- Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness -

PRESIDENT: Dr. Jinendra Dissanayake*
SECRETARY: Dr. Ruwani Mayakaduwa
PAST PRESIDENT : Dr. Iroja Caldera*
TREASURER: Ms. Sapna Kumarapathirage
PRESIDENT ELECT: Ms. Abarnah Kirupananda

OTHER ExCo MEMBERS (in alphabetical order)

Professor Suki Ekaratne*
Professor Sunethra Perera
Ms Sahdiya Hussain
Ms. Shalini Kaduwela
Dr. Pushpa Kulanatha
Ms. R.M Nadeeka Rathnabahu

*Article Reviewer

Join us at SLAIHEE

SLAIHEE has four membership categories:

- Ordinary Member (referred to as Member),
- Member accredited with having Continuing Professional Development (referred to as CPD Member)
- Associate (referred to as Associate Member),
- Associate Member accredited with having Continuing Professional Development (referred to as CPD Associate Member)

Contact Us

Sri Lanka Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness (SLAIHEE),
c/o Dr Jinendra Dissanayake
Department of Plant Sciences,
Faculty of Science,
University of Colombo,
Colombo 3, Sri Lanka.

E-Mail: slaihee@gmail.com