TeachBetter

Professional Development Insights for Teachers in China

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Message from the Editor

Carenza Gibson,
Membership Manager at Venture Education

As of earlier this month, it has finally snowed in Beijing, proving to us all that Christmas is finally here! As excited as I know we all are for mulled wine, presents and stockings, I know I'm not in the minority in not being quite as excited for those cold winter days that seem to last much longer than 24 hours. These long days are breeding grounds for seasonal affective disorder, depression and more. This is on top of the pressure and emotions that come with the holiday season, which, for many, may not be all that jolly.

As Jack Frost nips at our doors, we, at Venture, thought sharing some pointers and research about supporting our students' mental health and wellbeing, was a timely need. Though support for mental health is more accessible than ever in China (see p5), understanding root causes and how to support wellbeing before it develops into something more serious, still remains an area many lack understanding or confidence in.

Thus, we were thrilled to have such excellent speakers this season, sharing with us everything from how to spot those students that may be struggling, frequent causes of mental health issues in students, and coping mechanisms to employ both in the classroom and to take home yourself.

This season we really looked at the practical, how we can help our students and how can we help ourselves as teachers! This meant workshops from leaders in the field who I'd like to give a huge thank you to now: to Berenice Gibson of the NHS, Amritesh Singh of St Andrews University, Doran Lamb, Garrett Durkee, Virginia Parker and Peter Beech of Nottingham Ningbo University and Paola Diaz of Beijing Normal University. They have all provided a session overview page for this guide so that we have material to refer back to and remember their expert advice, do check out their pages!

I'd also like to thank Eduardo Gonzalez, a member of the Teachers in China community, for submitting a fantastic Chalkface article. I thoroughly enjoyed reading every word.

Our Teachers in China community continues to grow and I'd like to thank each of you who has shared what we do to colleagues of yours – we love seeing a thriving community of educators! From free professional development, to opportunities and even quizzes, this is the year we're going to make our Teachers in China group the best ever so thank you for your help building it up so far! Your input and support is invaluable to the upkeep of the community so lets look forward to even more in the future.

In the meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this edition of the TeachBetter newsletter, the biggest ever, showing just how much there is to say and do to help our kids' wellbeing. Let's support our students together.

TeachBetter: In Review

November 2023, Venture hosted the seventh TeachBetter series, free online workshops for teachers in China.

This series we examined the trends and support in place for students' mental health and wellbeing.

Since the first series in October 2021, TeachBetter has featured topics such as Embedding Employability, Early Years, Confident Communication and now Mental Health and Wellbeing. With a total community of over 2,000 educators in China, we know that good quality professional development is in high demand. This series, we received great feedback for all four webinars, led by:

- Paola Diaz Montenegro: PhD student at Beijing Normal University
- Berenice Gibson: Arts and Health Manager at the National Health Service, UK
- Dr Amritesh Singh: Associate Lecturer in Academic English and TESOL at St Andrews University
- Doran Lamb, Garrett Durkee, Virginia Parker and Peter Beech, academics at Nottingham Ningbo University

**Paola Diaz,
Educational Psychologist**

Psychological needs of children in their adaptation to culturally diverse contexts: what is our role as teachers?

By recognizing the cultural differences in children and adapting our strategies accordingly, teachers can better support their unique needs throughout their developmental stages. This session focuses on tailoring approaches to each child's specific context and provide them with the tools they need to thrive.

**Berenice Gibson,
Project Support Manager, Arts & Wellbeing**

The Arts in Mental Health and Wellbeing

The place of creativity and the arts in wider health outcomes is increasingly being recognised in both physical and mental health. We are living in a world where we are seeing an explosion of poor mental health, particularly since the pandemic, and including amongst our children and young people. Berenice will share her experience of working in Arts in Health and discuss the benefits of arts, in its widest sense, and ways we can use it to support wellbeing.

**Amritesh Singh,
Associate Lecturer in Academic English and TESOL**

Representations of Race & Gender: Materials and Pedagogy in ELT

This session gives an overview of the academic literature on EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity) with respect to the learning materials used in ELT (and corresponding pedagogical approaches) to consider the modes of engagement with the identity markers of race and gender in the field. The session includes space for discussion and reflection for participants to arrive at interventions/inventions in pedagogy that are particular to (and viable in) the contexts in which they operate.

**Peter Beech, Doran Lamb, Virginia Parker and Garrett Durkee,
Education department academic tutors**

Promoting Student Wellbeing

This panel discussion will cover some of the theories that underpin wellbeing in education, and how they can be used to develop an inclusive and supportive classroom environment. A discussion of the impact of culture on student wellbeing and how this can translate into commonly challenging classroom experiences in China will also be explored. We will also focus on practical ideas for feedback and classroom management that can generate a more positive learning environment.

History of mental health in China:

Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD)
- Official documented management of the mentally ill in China.
- Homeless widows, orphans, and the mentally ill cared for in Bei Tian Fang charity facility administrated by monks.

1898
- First western-style psychiatric hospital for the homeless mentally ill established by American missionary John Kerr in Guangzhou.

1949 (founding of the People's Republic of China)
- Gradual establishment of psychiatric hospitals in every province, focusing on social security and stability.

1958
- First *National Mental Health Meeting* held, start of community mental health work in major provinces, with facilities established for professional training and treatment.

Since 1978 (Economic Reform Era)
- Encouragement for hospitals to operate in the market economy.
- Closure or transformation of financially dependent mental health rehabilitation facilities into small-scale psychiatric hospitals.

2002
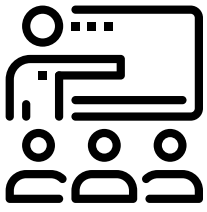- First *National Mental Health Plan* (2002-2010) signed.

2004
- Proposal on *Further Strengthening Mental Health Work* approved, providing explicit instructions on various aspects of mental health intervention.

2012
- *Mental Health Law of the People's Republic of China* promulgated, marking China's first law on mental health.

Session 1: Psychological needs of children in their adaptation to culturally diverse contexts: what is our role as teachers?

Speaker: Paola Diaz Montenegro, PhD Candidate at Beijing Normal University

We must be aware of mental health in educational settings because "Mental health is an integral component of health and well-being and influences academic, social, and economic outcomes across the lifespan. Having good mental health means being better able to interact with others, function, cope and thrive. It is a basic human right" (WHO, 2022).

Why is mental health and psychosocial support in schools and learning environments so essential?

1. Schools have more influence on children's development than any other social institution besides their family.
2. Its fundamental to good health and well-being and is critical to children's learning, development, and ability to thrive.
3. Schools are an essential element of community-based mental health support. They can offer a robust platform for promotion, prevention, and early detection, and to facilitate access to mental health treatment.

Addressing children's psychological needs is a responsibility we share in society. Likewise, we must establish environments that stimulate the feeling of belonging and love, intimate relations, and friendships. After addressing the physiological needs of children, this layer of the Maslow pyramid of needs becomes the most important and the base that supports the needs of self-fulfillment, which is fundamental for the development of people.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
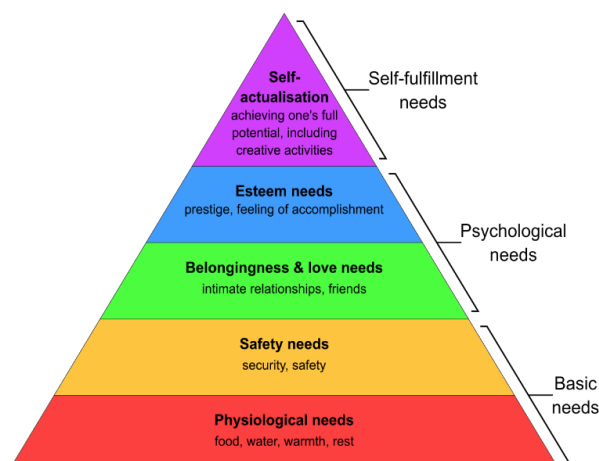
It is equally important to recognise that children gradually develop their learning through social interaction: they acquire new and better skills and the logical process of their immersion in a routine and familiar way of life. This specific framework comes from the cultural-historical activity theory formulated by Lev Vygotsky a Soviet psychologist.

It focuses on how adults and peers, through collaborative work, influence individual learning and how cultural beliefs and attitudes impact teaching.

Situations may alter children's perception of their sense of belonging and security.

- Moving to a new house, neighborhood, school, or/and country.
- Losing or being separated from loved ones in their immediate social environment (family).
- Changes in the regulatory framework, language, food, and caring environment.
- Experiencing violence, physical injuries, and illnesses.
- Lack of access to essential healthcare, education, and social care services.

How can we (as teachers) help them (children) to cope with these situations:

- Recognizing Cultural Factors:
  It's essential to understand that cultural factors play a significant role in education and child development.
  Implementing Culturally Responsive Strategies can help support young children with challenging behavior. This involves learning about children and families, developing and teaching expectations, taking the child's perspective, teaching and modeling empathy, and using group times to discuss conflict.
- Understanding Cultural Influences:
  Understanding how culture influences children's development is crucial.
  As the world is increasingly globalised, knowledge regarding cultural differences in children's thinking, memory, and how they interact with adults has important practical implications in many areas.

For full academic references or further reading, please email carenza@ventureeducation.org

Mental health stats:

In 2019, neuropsychiatric and substance use disorders accounted for **11.36%** of China's total disease burden, ranking first globally at **16.82%**.

Prevalence of mental disorders in China in 2019 was estimated at **9.3%**, with a lifetime prevalence of 16.6%, contributing to **7.4%** of the total disease burden.

By **2030**, depression is projected to become the mental disorder with the highest disease burden in China.

Recent youth-centred mental health policies:

1. *Notice on Strengthening Student Mental Health Management (July 2021)* — advocated having specific staff ratios for mental health teachers in schools and emphasised training and equal treatment for mental health teachers.

2. *Opinions on Comprehensive Strengthening and Improvement of School Hygiene and Health Education in the New Era (September 2021)* — mandated a high percentage of schools with psychological health workers, and setting goals for increasing this percentage by 2030.

3. *Notice on the Establishment of the First Group of National Wellbeing School (2023)* — listing 1075 schools as National Wellbeing Schools, with key focuses such as myopia, obesity and mental illnesses.

Psychology Training in China:

There are around **141** Psychology Bachelor degree programmes provided across all universities in China, and **89** Postgraduate degree programmes (including both Masters and PhD degrees) in Psychology.

Quirky facts:

"Sleeping desks"
Foldable chairs that can be transformed into small beds, providing students with comfortable 30-minute nap experiences (not an ad!). This is in response to the Notice on Further Strengthening Sleep Management for Elementary and Secondary School Students released in 2021 by the MoE.
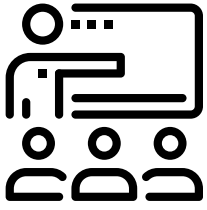
"Crispy college students"
Describes university students with poor health and physically weak. This expression emerged due to the declining physical fitness and health of Chinese university students in recent years.

Mental health organisations in China

北京心理危机研究与干预中心
北京市心理援助热线

Lifeline
Confidential support across China

SIMHA

Session 2: "Arts in Health or Arts for Health"

Speaker: Berenice M Gibson, National Health Service of the UK

Having spent my life working in the National Health Service and more specifically the last 13 years in a role which uses arts, culture and creativity to support and improve wellbeing I have had the joy of seeing first hand the benefits of arts in health. Both scientific research and my own experience shows that we can all feel better and cope better with stress if we include creativity in our lives, whether that be art, music, dance, yoga, gardening, photography etc. In a sense it doesn't really matter what that activity is, the important thing is finding what it is for you.

The 5 ways to wellbeing are evidence-based actions aimed at improving wellbeing – "connect, be active, take notice, keep learning & give" – a subsequent report commissioned by a Mental Health organisation called "Out of the Blue" proposed the addition of "be creative" which led to the UK government setting up the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health & Wellbeing. Their Inquiry Report July 2017 also displayed case studies demonstrating the benefits of cultural & creative activities on the wellbeing of people of all ages.

Societies and cultures have for centuries left evidence of "the arts" – does this suggest that "art" is something which humans need to maintain wellbeing? Both the research and literature support the view that engagement with the arts through attendance at events or participation in creative activities can have a positive effect upon individuals keeps them learning, achieving, interacting with other people and accessing those things which just give us joy in our lives.

So this is that question you need to ask yourself and your pupils – What brings you joy, calmness, wellbeing?

We are individuals so it is different for different people, what we need to discover, and support our children to discover, is that activity which engrosses us where we are in the flow, not worrying about anything else, just enjoying the moment.

I have included an example of a wellbeing activity in the subsequent page but if you would like access to more material or activity ideas to open up the creative world to your students, do email carenza@ventureeducation.org for more.

The Stress Bucket

The Stress Bucket is a tool you could use to help children think about their wellbeing. In the top boxes children write/draw the things which are worrying them or making them unhappy, (rather than stressed for younger children) and then in the bottom those things which make them happy or feel better. The idea being that when the bucket is filling up, we can use positive activities to turn the tap on and empty the bucket a little.

If they are younger children, you could demonstrate this using disposable paper cups/coffee cups where you or the children fill the cups with water using something smaller (egg cup or measuring spoon, something like that) and keep filling it until it over flows with the things that can make them sad. Then using a pen or pencil you pierce the cup for each of the things which make them happy and see the water start to flow away (obviously a slightly messier version).

This is making me feel stressed...
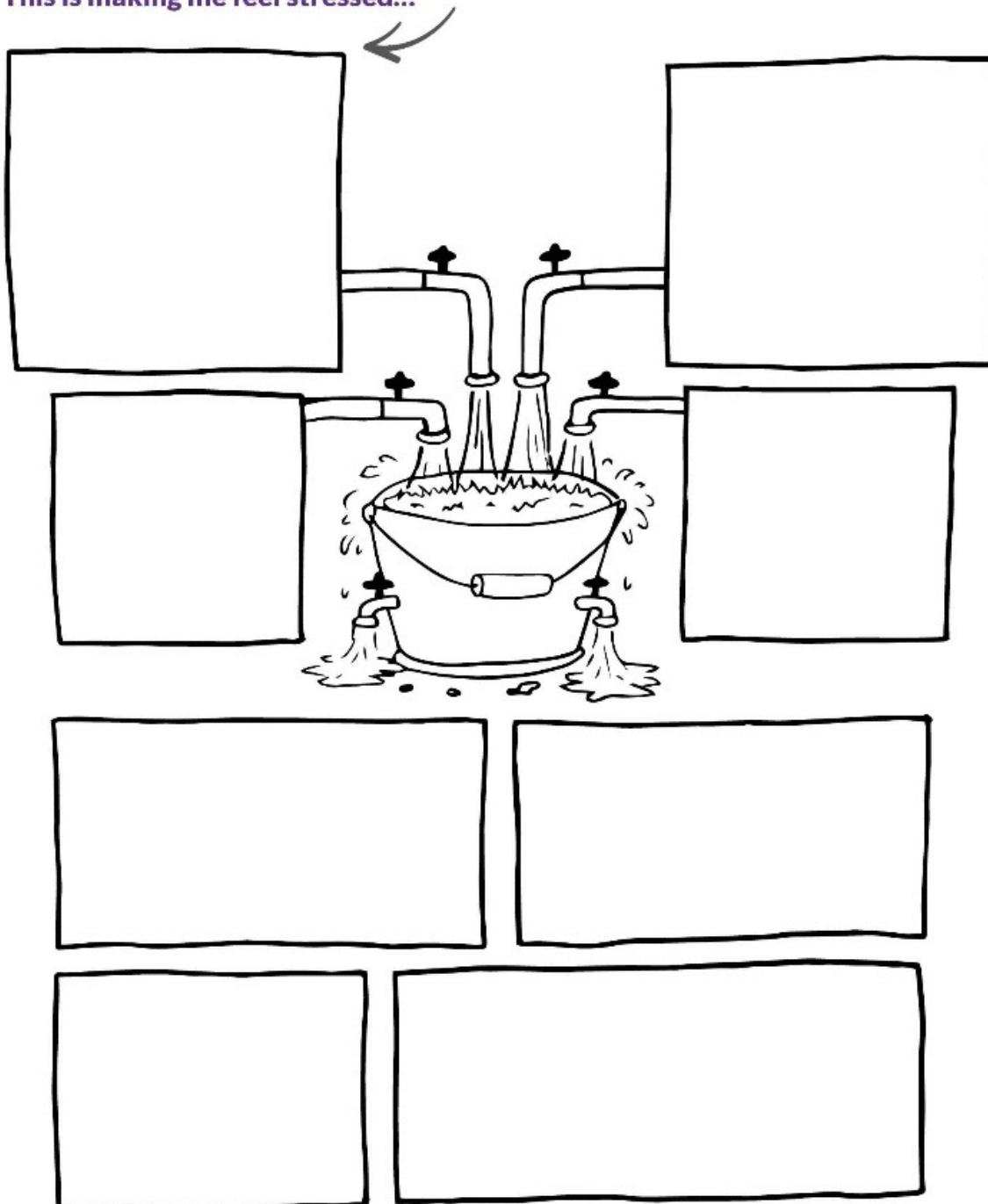
But this is what helps me...   **YOUNGMiNDS**

Students' wellbeing in a time of uncertainty

By Andrea Kis, Doctoral researcher in social anthropology at the University of Sussex.

In China, mental health issues have traditionally been regarded as an imbalance between yin and yang energies in the body needing holistic treatment through traditional Chinese medicine. More recently, particularly since the pandemic, mental wellbeing methods provided by new books and apps have boomed in what Kleinman calls a "psycho-boom": a rapid rise of "psychology books, psychometric terms and training in counselling, with an increasing use of psychology in governing social life" (Kleinman, 2010).

WeChat and the Little Red Book, two of the most popular social media platforms in China, both feature several fora on mental well-being, many of them translated into Chinese, from Jungian to Carl Rogers' theories.

This 'boom' has also spread to public services and business. A variety of state and private services have emerged, offering well-being evaluations, therapy and self-help programs. Beijing Good Mood Internet Hospital (好心情一心理医疗健康服务平台), for example, combines both online and offline mental health support, using AI and a medical expertise system together on its digital platform.

However, while the range of services and their accessibility is fast developing, in-person and specialised mental health care services are still difficult to access in China. It is still common practice, for example, to seek mental health support in large hospitals instead of community or private health care, which may deter some from pursuing treatment. Also, there have been reported shortages of child and adolescent psychiatrists, due to lower salary and longer working hours compared to adult psychiatrists (Wang, Ungvari and Xiang, 2023). These concerns require a more institutional uphaul, and significant attention from the state, and therefore, a solution does not seem likely to appear anytime very soon.

Nevertheless, reducing stigma and providing more open access resources to support mental health and wellbeing is a great step forward for China and its students. These students will grow up with much greater access to support than ever before.

For full academic references or further reading, please email carenza@ventureeducation.org
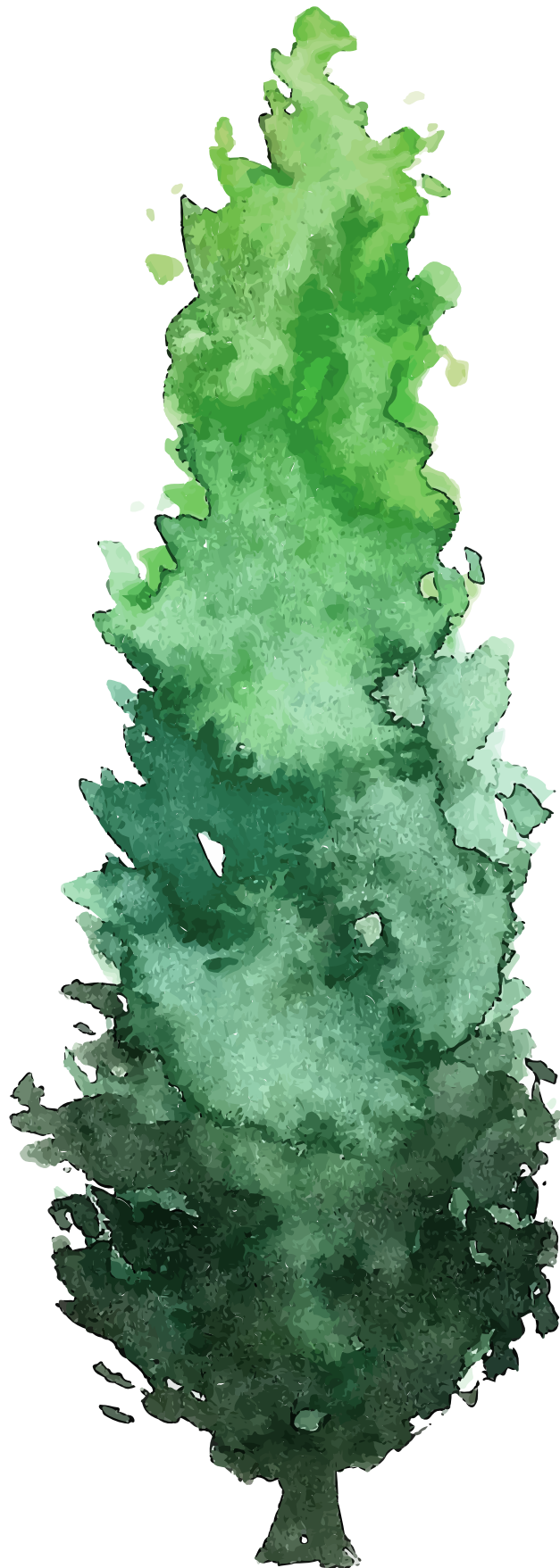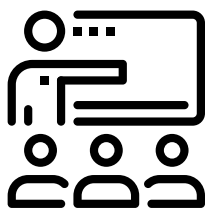
Session 3: Representations of Race and Gender: Materials and Pedagogy in ELT

Speaker: Amritesh Singh, Associate Lecturer at St Andrews University

1. Gender Constructs in Language Education

How gender is socially represented in language learning and usage is hugely significant to our students' futures. Despite evidence that social practices, power relations, and discourses all have an impact on language learning, gendered interpretations continue in research. Language teaching often discretely reinforce sexism by objectifying female performers and reinforcing stereotypes. For example, it is always the male character that starts the conversation and the female character that responds. These dynamics subconsciously submit into young minds that the power imbalance between men and women in their language use. This, in turn, supports a power imbalance in their mindset and actions too.

2. Ethnicity Intersections in Language

Languages are fluid and a tool for to adapt to our own needs. This means when teaching languages, once again identity plays a huge role. Dr Singh shared the story of a teacher once telling him to use English names when teaching English to provide real context. Similarly the activity vocabulary taught should be 'playing football or cricket' not anything from the learners own culture. Dr Singh raised the point that there are numerous places in the world that speak English as their first language but they have names local to their country, and do activities from their culture. Does this determine their language use as lower? Where does their identity fit in 'English-language speakers'? Dr Singh suggested there is not one 'English speaker' just as there is not one 'English-learner'. By teaching English as a language of just one culture and context, so much is lost, and the place of and right to English, of other ethnic groups is undermined.

How can we open up our language teaching?

Providing space for students from all different backgrounds and genders can be as easy as changing the passive and dominant voices' pronouns, or subverting stereotypes in material used. Consistent questioning of the role of each gender, the strengths of diversity and being exposed to cultures beyond our own support the education of children into becoming respectful and considerate adults. Diversity and inclusion doesn't stop at social class; it is our duty as teachers to ensure space for more identities and open children's minds in all aspects of their education.

Our sincerest thanks to Dr Amritesh Singh for his insightful talk, and to Katherine Ramos for sharing with us the key takeaways from the workshop.

For full academic references or further reading, please email carenza@ventureeducation.org

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Teaching on Time: Mastering Workload Management

By Shane Leaning, Organisational Coach

As educators, we're no strangers to the tidal wave of tasks that constantly threaten to overwhelm us. From lesson planning and marking to differentiation and admin, the list seems endless. I have walked this tightrope too, grappling with a workload so demanding it recently led to a month off work due to stress. It's a path many of us tread, often silently, our passion for teaching shadowed by the weight of responsibility.

For me there is one technique that has helped me more than any: mastering the art of prioritisation. It's not just about doing more; it's about doing what's meaningful. And the key lies in distinguishing the urgent from the important – a concept I found in the Eisenhower Matrix, a super-practical tool for workload management.

Picture your tasks as a matrix with four quadrants: Urgent and Important, Not Urgent but Important, Urgent but Not Important, and Not Urgent and Not Important (you can see an example of the next page). This visual framework empowers us to categorise tasks, helping us focus on what truly impacts our teaching and personal well-being.

Urgent and important tasks demand immediate attention, like addressing a student's urgent needs or meeting deadlines. Not urgent but important tasks are where we find value, like curriculum development or professional learning – these deserve our time and energy.

The real challenge? Identifying tasks that are urgent but not important. These are the distractions, the demands that consume time without adding to ours or our students' growth. Learning to share these tasks or even to say no can be liberating.

And finally, the not urgent and not important – the clutter that we can eliminate or postpone.

It's not a one-size-fits-all solution, but a starting point for reclaiming control over our work and, crucially, our mental health. By prioritising effectively, we find space to breathe, to teach with passion, and to live without the shadow of overwhelming stress. So, let's have a go. Take 10 minutes to complete the matrix on the next page.

About the Author

Shane Leaning is an Organisational Coach for international schools, where he empowers educational leaders to foster meaningful change and sustainable impact. With a background in leading professional development and organisational development, Shane supports schools with leadership strategy and learning. His work, rooted in evidence-based practices, is delivered through various channels, including the International School Leadership Academy, the Global Ed Leaders Podcast, and his consultancy practice. Learn more about Shane at shaneleaning.com.

Eisenhower Matrix Activity

You've read about the Eisenhower Matrix in the article. Now, it's time to put this powerful tool into practice. This activity will guide you through categorising your tasks, helping you to identify what truly matters and what can be delegated or postponed.

Think about your typical week. List out all the tasks you usually handle. Now, place each task in one of the four quadrants. Once you have written in your tasks, use the 'REFLECT' boxes to think about how you might move forward.
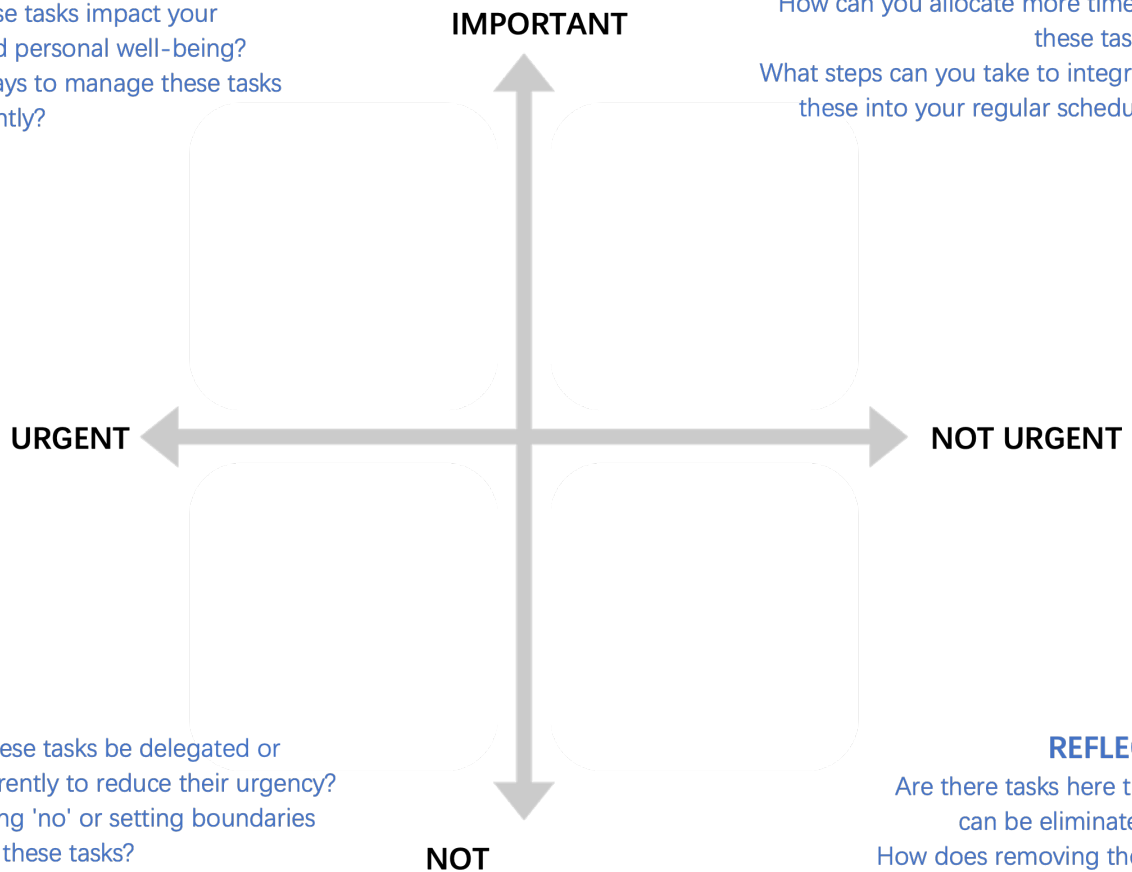
IMPORTANT

How do these tasks impact your teaching and personal well-being? Are there ways to manage these tasks more efficiently?

How can you allocate more time to these tasks? What steps can you take to integrate these into your regular schedule?

URGENT ⟵──────────────⟶ **NOT URGENT**

REFLECT

Can any of these tasks be delegated or handled differently to reduce their urgency? How can saying 'no' or setting boundaries help manage these tasks?

REFLECT

Are there tasks here that can be eliminated? How does removing these tasks make you feel?

NOT

This exercise is more than just a one-off activity; it's a mindset shift. By regularly revisiting and updating your Eisenhower Matrix, you can maintain a focus on what's truly important, reduce stress, and enhance your effectiveness as an educator. Remember, managing your workload isn't just about efficiency; it's about making space for what fulfils you.
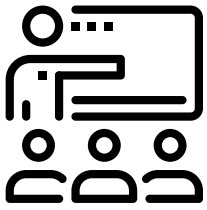
Session 4: Promoting Student Wellbeing

Speaker: Doran Lamb, Virginia Parker, Garrett Durkee and Peter Beech

While wellbeing and a focus on eudemonia, especially the feelings for accomplishment and meaning, are being identified as increasingly vital for education, the practical application of this research could still be improved. Society, social media, and the news tend to overemphasize the negative, training people to fixate on pessimism, criticism, and flaws (Baumeister et al., 2001). Unfortunately, the majority of teachers see their role as error hunters, contributing to this societal problem, and training this inclination to negativity in students (Mao & Lee, 2023) which leads to lower levels of productivity (Zenger & Folkman, 2013). In an effort to shift the balance of positive and negative, teachers should help students build habits of daily self-reflection and positive journaling after assignments, quizzes, and tests (Sarney, 2017). With guidance from teachers and practice, these habits can help retrain the brain towards a positive mindset (Achor, 2011), enabling students search for and recognize personal strengths and leverage these strengths to feed forward into increased productivity, feelings of accomplishment, and improved wellbeing.

Student wellbeing must always be age-appropriate, as it can be linked to what we know about how our brains work. If we focus just on adolescent learners (late middle school, through high school, and into college), then we can apply research into these developing minds to ensure a more positive learning environment for this age-group.

In an experiment using fMRI imaging, Harvard researcher Yurgelen-Todd showed images of facial expressions to both teens and adults. In all cases, adults correctly identified the correct mood, while teenagers consistently misinterpreted certain facial expressions. Fear, for example, was often misinterpreted by teenagers as anger, confusion or sadness (PBS, 2002). The fMRI imaging revealed that different parts of the adult and teen brain were being used, and emotional responses within the adolescent subjects correlated with their incorrect interpretation of the facial expressions. In an interview, Yurgelen-Todd posited that "when relating … to their teachers, they may be misperceiving … some of the feelings that we have as adults: that is, they see anger when there

isn't anger" (ibid, p 3). This helps account for the notion that adolescents are moody, or that they over-react emotionally (Packard, 2007; Wolfe, 2011).

In the classroom, then, teens can - and do - misinterpret their teacher's moods, leading students to react defensively. This can be offset in many different ways, regardless of the size of the class or the learning methodology in use. A few practical suggestions for teachers, administrators and teacher trainers include:

- Starting the lesson by explicitly telling your adolescent students that you are happy to see them, while smiling.
- Becoming more aware of what your neutral expression might be, and leaving outside worries and frustrations at the door.
- Keeping in mind that the use (or threat) of corporal punishment, an overly strict or severe teacher, and advice such as "Don't smile: Let them know who is in charge" will only result in adolescents being put on the defensive, and reacting as such, which will in turn make the whole classroom situation more difficult for the teacher.

During adolescence and into young adulthood, teens gain a new awareness of being judged externally by the so-called imaginary audience, described as "the phenomenon whereby adolescents believe that others are constantly observing and evaluating them, even if this is not the case" (Sebastien et al, 2008, p 3). This means that a seemingly simple classroom task, such as answering a question in front of everyone, can trigger "sickening unease" (Packard, 2007, p 20).

In the classroom, practical strategies that take these changes into consideration include:

- Arranging the classroom so that students are in pods or groups rather than rows of desks. The students who are closer to the front are immediately put into a state of anxiety as the classmates behind them take on the imaginary audience role.
- Maintaining cooperative, collaborative group work, especially for high-risk triggers such as presentations.

University of Nottingham

University of Nottingham
Ningbo China

UK | CHINA | MALAYSIA

The University of Nottingham Ningbo China (UNNC) was the first Sino-foreign university to open its doors in China in 2004. We are a top 100 university in the QS World Rankings. At UNNC, we have over 9,000 students, and our staff comprises over 900 members from about 70 countries and regions around the world. We have three faculties: Business, Science and Engineering, and Humanities and Social Sciences. We offer 29 undergraduate programmes and 18 postgraduate taught programmes, and PhD programmes.

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Cooperation & Enquiry

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REPUTATION
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EMPOWERMENT
Bespoke training courses with combination of learning and research to comprehensively improve practical ability of education and teaching

Special Education Needs in China

What is special education needs (SEN)?

SEN refers to students who have a variety of impairments that require specific attention, such as physical, emotional or behavioural problems, or learning difficulties.

Common learning problems / disorders

- Dyslexia — prevalence rate around 3.45-9.70% of school-aged children in China
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) — globally affecting 5% - 7.2% of youth population
- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) — around 1 in 100 children is affected by ASD according to WHO.

SEN system in China

In the early 90s, China implemented laws, such as the Law on the Protection of the Disabled Persons, the Teachers' Law, and the Education Law, aimed at enhancing the education system for students with special needs. Later, the country adopted the Learning in the Regular Classroom (LRC) model from the West, promoting inclusive education for children with special needs within regular schools. This shift emphasised inclusivity in both urban and rural areas, although urban centres like Beijing and Shanghai possess superior facilities and resources compared to rural regions. Urban schools dedicated to special needs education offer diverse programs and specially trained teachers. Prospective parents are advised to thoroughly investigate a school's education system, teacher expertise in handling students with disabilities, and available facilities before enrolling their child with special needs.

In the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-2025), China aims to develop and enhance special education, with a focus on establishing a high-quality system by 2025. Enhancements involve improving infrastructure, recruiting professional teachers, and increasing funding, with a goal of raising the average subsidy to over 7,000 RMB ($1,106) per student annually for compulsory education by 2025.

If you would like to learn more around SEN and strategies for SEN teaching, here are some professional resources:

Academic articles

Akpan, J. P., & Beard, L. A. (2016). Using constructivist teaching strategies to enhance academic outcomes of students with special needs. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 4(2), 392-398.

Da Fonte, M. A., & Barton-Arwood, S. M. (2017). Collaboration of General and Special

Education Teachers: Perspectives and Strategies. Intervention in School and   Clinic, 53(2), 99-106.

Davis, P., Florian, L., & Ainscow, M. (2004). Teaching strategies and approaches for pupils with special educational needs: A scoping study. Nottingham: Department for   Education and Skills.

SEN Organisations

China Special Education Foundation

Learning Disabilities Association of America

ELG China

From the Chalkface

Eduardo Gonzalez, member of the Teachers in China community, explores how to encourage and support the wellbeing of students with ADHD.

Supporting Students with ADHD in Middle School: A Personal Experience

Working with students with attention deficit/hyperactive disorders (ADHD) has been extensively documented. It is considered a challenge by most teachers; I am no exception.

In order to achieve modifications in a student with ADHD's behavior there are two things to bear in mind. First, we should adopt an approach that includes; the student, the learning environment and home-school communication. Second, changing the situations that trigger disruptive behaviors is easier than changing the outcomes of the behavior.

We may begin by identifying which aspects of their behavior are more recurrent and affecting their concentration and that of their classmates the most. Once the target behaviors are determined, set clear and achievable goals. Thinking of an alternative to the target behavior becomes the replacement behavior.

Before implementing our intervention, we need to make sure it is discussed with the student in question. Thanking the student for his or her class contribution, clarifying expectations, and making him or her part of the decision-making process are areas to cover. We should inform all the stakeholders as well.

It is not possible to discuss changing certain ADHD behavioral manifestations if we do not reflect on the context where a child studies. Clear class expectations echoed in the classroom rule system provide a solid foundation for our changes.

In the case of teenagers, low-key strategies that do not affect the flow of the lesson are meant to be more effective. Our strategies should also create a sense of anticipation that allows the learner to foresee and self-correct his or her behavior. The use of positive reinforcement should redirect the student's attention to the replacement behavior. Meanwhile, we need to monitor the progress of the intervention. Subsequently, we consider whether the student continues to engage in the replacement behavior before removing those elements that are redirecting his or her behavior.

Caregivers should be involved from the beginning. They are our primary source of information therefore they should receive regular feedback. Home-school communication should continue even when the intervention stops.

Inclusion must serve as a compass for our daily teaching practice. This requires transforming our classrooms to accommodate the individual needs of our students. Making small changes in our classroom could bring about the desired miracle.
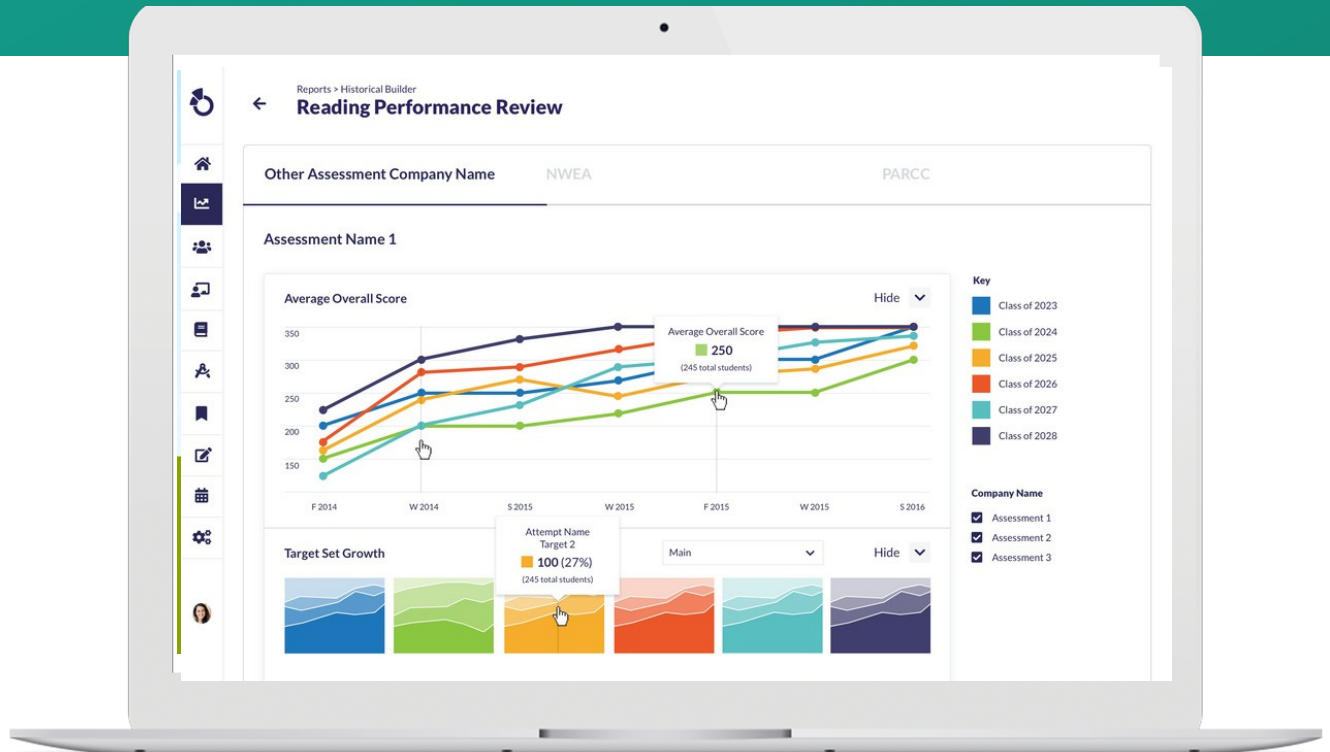
Eduardo Gonzalez
Subject Leader, Greentown Yuhua Middle School

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Celebrate
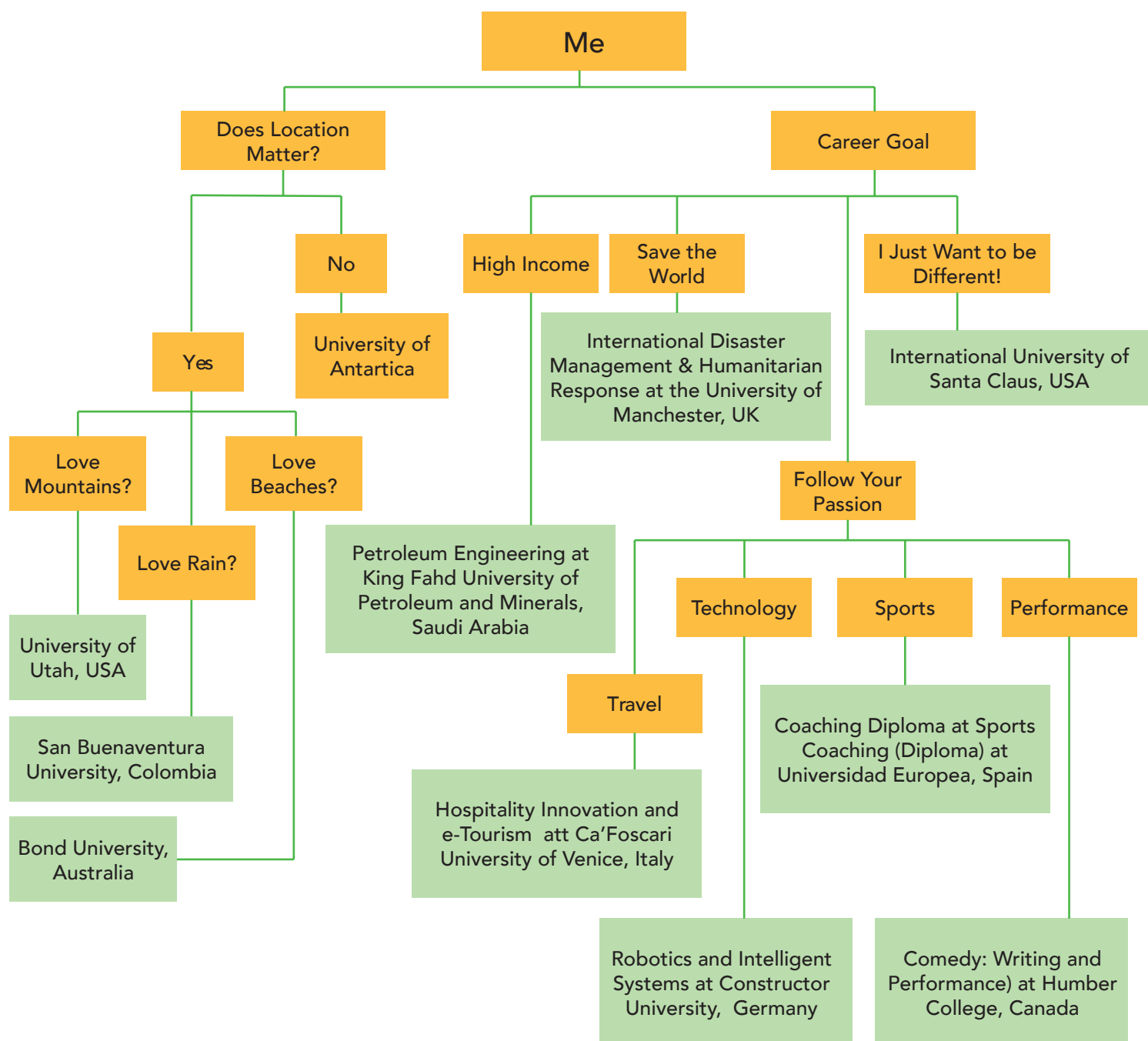
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Daniel Rosenberg

Otus China Head

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No
→ University of Antartica

Yes
- Love Mountains?
  - University of Utah, USA
  - Love Rain?
    - San Buenaventura University, Colombia
    - Bond University, Australia
- Love Beaches?

Career Goal

High Income → Petroleum Engineering at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Saudi Arabia

Save the World → International Disaster Management & Humanitarian Response at the University of Manchester, UK

I Just Want to be Different! → International University of Santa Claus, USA

Follow Your Passion
- Travel → Hospitality Innovation and e-Tourism att Ca'Foscari University of Venice, Italy
- Technology → Robotics and Intelligent Systems at Constructor University, Germany
- Sports → Coaching Diploma at Sports Coaching (Diploma) at Universidad Europea, Spain
- Performance → Comedy: Writing and Performance) at Humber College, Canada

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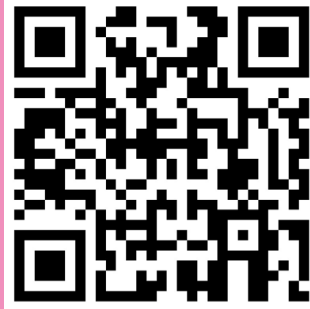
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