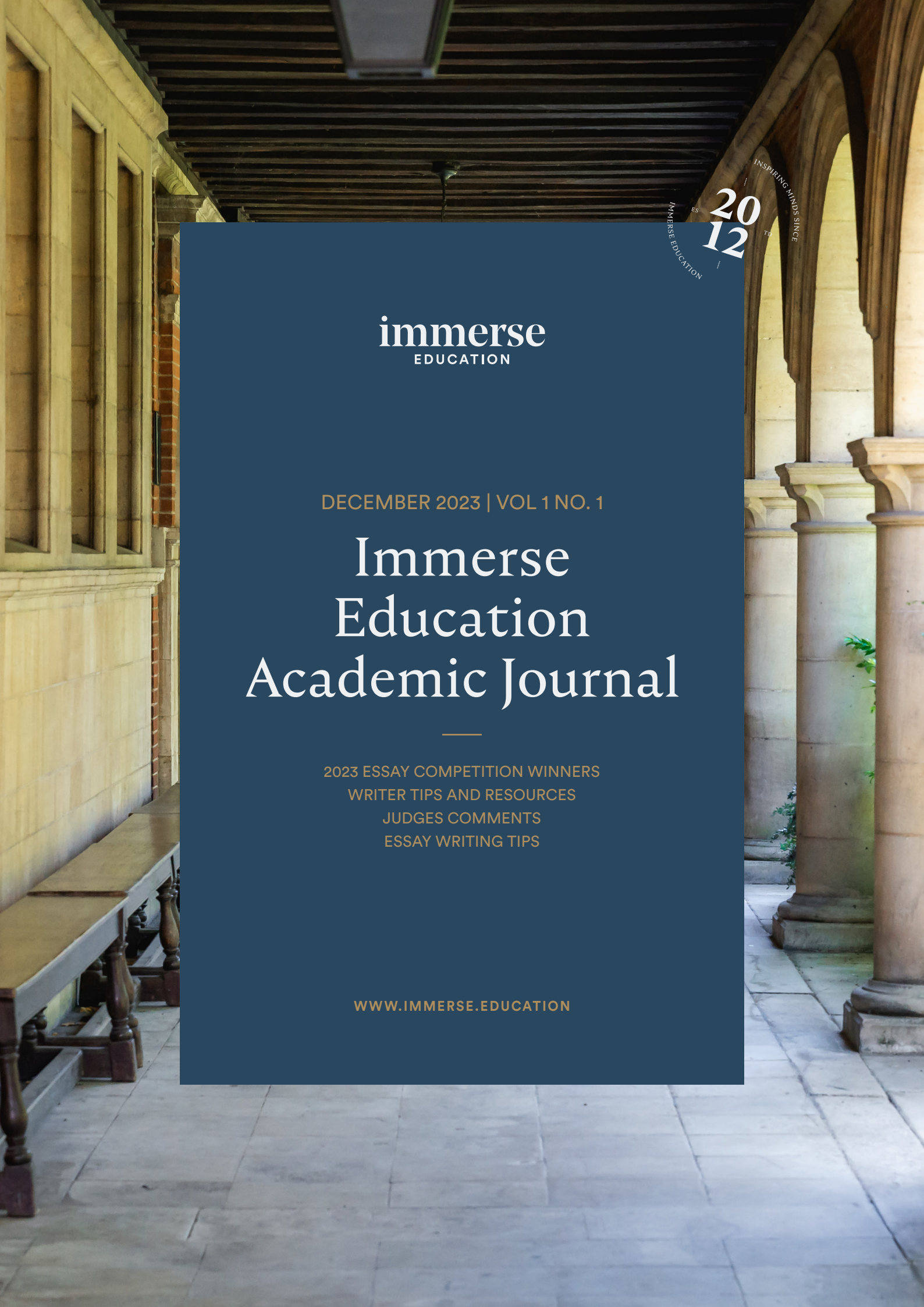




immerse
EDUCATION

DECEMBER 2023 | VOL 1 NO. 1

Immerse Education Academic Journal

2023 ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS
WRITER TIPS AND RESOURCES
JUDGES COMMENTS
ESSAY WRITING TIPS

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Contents

ABOUT THE COMPETITION AND THE JUDGING PANEL	PAGE 03
HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO HAVE STRONG FEMALE LEADERSHIP? (GUO LU)	PAGE 06
THE PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF COMPUTER PROGRAMMING IN EVERYDAY LIFE (MOHAMMAD SIA)	PAGE 09
WHAT IS BIAS, AND HOW CAN IT AFFECT PATIENT CARE? (MINA HUELSEWIES)	PAGE 12
WHAT DO ALL GREAT LEADERS HAVE IN COMMON? (MARIANNA MOSSONIDIS)	PAGE 15
HOW DID THE SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT OF EUGENICS DEVELOP IN BRAZIL? (LUIZA CALEIA)	PAGE 18



About the Competition



Immerse Education's Essay Competition allows participants to showcase their subject knowledge and essay writing skills, with the opportunity to win a full scholarship to one of our 2024 programmes in Oxford, Cambridge, London, San Francisco, New York, Toronto or Sydney. Participants are supported with a full suite of resources, including our comprehensive Essay Competition Participant Guide.



Oxford



Cambridge



London



San Francisco



New York



Toronto



Sydney

The Awarding Panel

Our markers are an esteemed group of teachers and educational specialists from around the world, with expertise across our wide range of academic subjects. They have qualifications from world-leading institutions including Oxbridge and Ivy League, and many have been working with us on the Essay Competition for many years, allowing them to recognise the level of quality and hard work that goes into each round of entries.

Our 2024 Guest Judges

For our 2024 Essay Competition, Immerse are excited to announce a select number of guest judges will be joining our team of academic markers. Essay entries for Biology, Creative Writing, and Female Future Leaders will have their essays marked by high-profile judges. Each subject will see a 100% scholarship awarded by them.

Meet the Panel



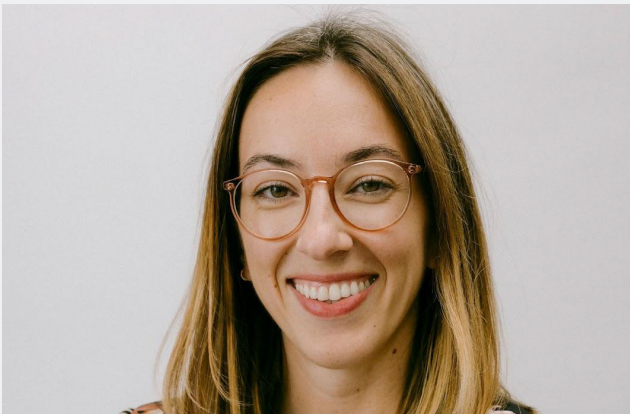
Tom Ireland

Editor of *The Biologist*



Biology

“As a magazine editor I am always looking for writing that can communicate important or complex topics in a clear, engaging and very readable way. I’m excited to judge the entries in Immerse Education’s essay competition this year, which I hope will unearth some talented writers and science communicators.”



Amelia Suda-Gosch

Co-CEO of *Female Founders*



Female Future Leaders

“I am very excited about the opportunity to be a judge, as I want to help foster the next generation of female leaders and I personally used to love entering essay contests as a kid!”



Arnold “Arnie” Longboy

Executive Director in Student Recruitment and Admissions at London Business School (LBS)



Business Management

“Any application to business school requires engaging, concise and comprehensive essay writing. I am delighted to be invited to judge Immerse Education’s essay competition this year, and look forward to reading the entries from our future global leaders.”



Mike Oram

Academy Lead at iO Academy



Software Development/ Computer Science

“I love being a part of training the next generation of software developers, judging competitions like this is a great way to really have an impact on people’s lives and support the industry I love (tech). I am excited to read the thoughts and opinions of the next generation of technical talent and support them on their journeys with advice and guidance.”



Dr Neal Russell

Paediatric Advisor



Medicine

Médecins Sans Frontières



Eric Stobbaerts

International Development Director



Medicine

DNDi

100% Scholarship Winner, Guo Lu, judged by
Amelia Suda-Gosch, Co-CEO of Female Founders

How Important Is it to Have Strong Female Leadership?



Amelia Suda-Gosch

Has over 10 years of marketing tech experience within the US and in Europe. She moved to Vienna in 2018 and has worked for multiple startups managing marketing teams. She has always been passionate about personal development and workplace inclusion. In 2021, she was able to blend her passions and expertise into her career at Female Founders. She currently serves as Co-CEO at Female Founders.

Amelia's Comments:

This essay has truly impressed me, and I am delighted to extend a 100% scholarship offer to the author. The essay's strength particularly shines through in its opening, addressing the issue of gender stereotypes. This theme deeply resonates with our work at Female Founders, where we frequently observe disparities in the questions asked of female founders compared to their male counterparts during fundraising discussions.

Furthermore, the essay's reference to the Harvard Business Review article on effective leadership is noteworthy. Often, organizational structures tend to favor the embodiment of "masculine" leadership traits, neglecting the fact that leadership excellence transcends gender and involves the cultivation of diverse leadership qualities. This insightful observation underscores the need for a more inclusive and balanced approach to leadership qualities.

The Essay:

Why is it that when people think of leaders more people have images of men in their minds? When we talk about workplace dilemmas, patriarchal societies seem to be very good at and accustomed to using a kind of occupational gender segregation to stereotype men and women. This has led to the perception that many 'high-paying occupations' are out of reach for women solely because of their biological gender identity. With the continuous emergence of women breaking through stereotypical thinking there are more and more female leaders with significant social impact. As Alice Eagly and Linda Carli argued¹, the idea that women are effective leaders jumped from the authors of feminist management business books into mainstream media and popular culture. The importance of elite female leadership has gradually become a major social focus. This paper states that female leaders play a crucial role in providing emotional value to subordinates and balancing the gender structure of the company.

What makes a good leader? It's not just about having strict rules and regulations to manage employees and make profits but also about having enough vision; open active minds and empathy. In other words good leaders need to be rational and sensible and these two traits can coexist. Therefore empathy awareness and other stereotypical feminine traits are good qualities for leaders and can better highlight the advantages of flexible management. McKinsey & Company concluded based on a survey that measures managers' supportive actions by manager's gender that 'women are doing the lion's share of the emotional labor at work' from the perspective of the relationship between superiors and subordinates in the company. The humanistic experience generally created by female leaders can better provide emotional value to colleagues and subordinates and stabilize a company structure.

Everything in the world is not black or white and having an emotional side does not mean that you cannot have a rational management ability. In fact according to the Harvard Business Review article 'Are Women Better Leaders than Men', out of 16 core leadership skills women outperform men in 12 aspects including taking initiative and building partnerships which are two skills that have been stereotyped as leadership qualities for men only.

At the same time female leaders can balance the gender imbalance in the company. The fact that women experience workplace difficulties as female leaders of sexual minorities led them to be aware of the potential bias derived from patriarchal society or the hegemonic masculinity of male leaders. Also females do better adopting the 'transformational leadership' style with a supportive attitude to find more female employees' potential and provide guidance that helps them better develop their careers and reduce gender imbalance. To be clear this does not place too much of a focus on female empowerment or excessive female privilege but rather demonstrates that a successful individual can be a leader regardless of their gender.

Last but not least it can be seen that in the future it is very important to focus on and support the recognition and growth of female leadership in a world that increasingly emphasizes inclusion and elimination of binary opposition. Therefore women with strong and flexible management abilities will inevitably occupy an important position in the future of open caring, efficient and flexible work mode.



Students Comments:

I have noticed that there are still stereotypes about femininity in today's society. Although unable to single-handedly alter the present state of affairs, as a student, I aspire to contribute to the advancement of female empowerment and gender equality.

Immerse provided detailed writing guidance, and as a first-time entrant, I have read the requirements which are very clearly provided and have been able to... appreciate and immerse myself in... previous winning essays. At the time, I struggled with the citation format as it was my first encounter with it, but the detailed guidance provided enabled my successful completion of the essay.

100% Scholarship Winner, Mohammad Sia, judged by
Mike Oram, Academy Lead at iO Academy

The Practical Applications of Computer Programming in Everyday Life



Mike Oram

Since 2015, Mike Oram has been training students at iO to become software developers, leveraging his prior experience as a software developer for Mayden and other companies in fintech and digital sectors, including iO Academy partners Hargreaves Lansdown and Future Plc. Mike is self-taught and earned his first paid contract whilst still in school. He has since tutored aspiring developers, who have all progressed to careers in established tech firms.

Mike's Comments:

I am honoured to award this essay a 100% scholarship. The story that is woven throughout the essay combined with fantastic explanations of technologies, how they affect us while sometimes being seamlessly present in our everyday lives clearly comes from someone with a real passion for technology.

The writer has taken a holistic approach to their essay while providing great examples that demonstrate a fantastic depth of understanding.

The Essay:

Computer programming, a fascinating field that has transformed the modern world, holds immense practical value in our daily lives. From the moment we wake up to the time we rest our heads on the pillow, computer programming silently shapes and enhances our experiences.

In the morning, as sunlight peeks through the curtains, our smartphones come alive with a symphony of notifications. It is through computer programming that these devices, with their intricate operating systems, seamlessly connect us to the digital realm. From social media updates to weather forecasts, our phones serve as personal gateways to the world, all made possible by programming languages like Java and Swift.

As we step outside, we encounter an array of technological marvels propelled by computer programming. Traffic lights hum in unison, orchestrating the smooth flow of vehicles. Embedded in their circuitry lies the intelligence of programming, enabling us to commute safely. Moreover, public transportation relies on computer programs to coordinate schedules, optimize routes, and provide real-time updates to commuters. Programming transforms mere machines into efficient systems that keep cities moving.

Arriving at work, we find ourselves surrounded by computers, a testament to the ubiquitous presence of programming. These machines, powered by sophisticated algorithms, assist us in complex tasks and streamline productivity. Whether it is analyzing data sets, creating intricate visual designs, or managing inventories, computer programming simplifies and accelerates the way we work.

In the healthcare sector, programming has brought about significant breakthroughs. From diagnostic software that aids in identifying diseases to robotic surgical systems that enhance precision, computer programming revolutionizes medical practices. Life-saving equipment, such as pacemakers and artificial organs, relies on complex algorithms to ensure optimal functionality and patient well-being.

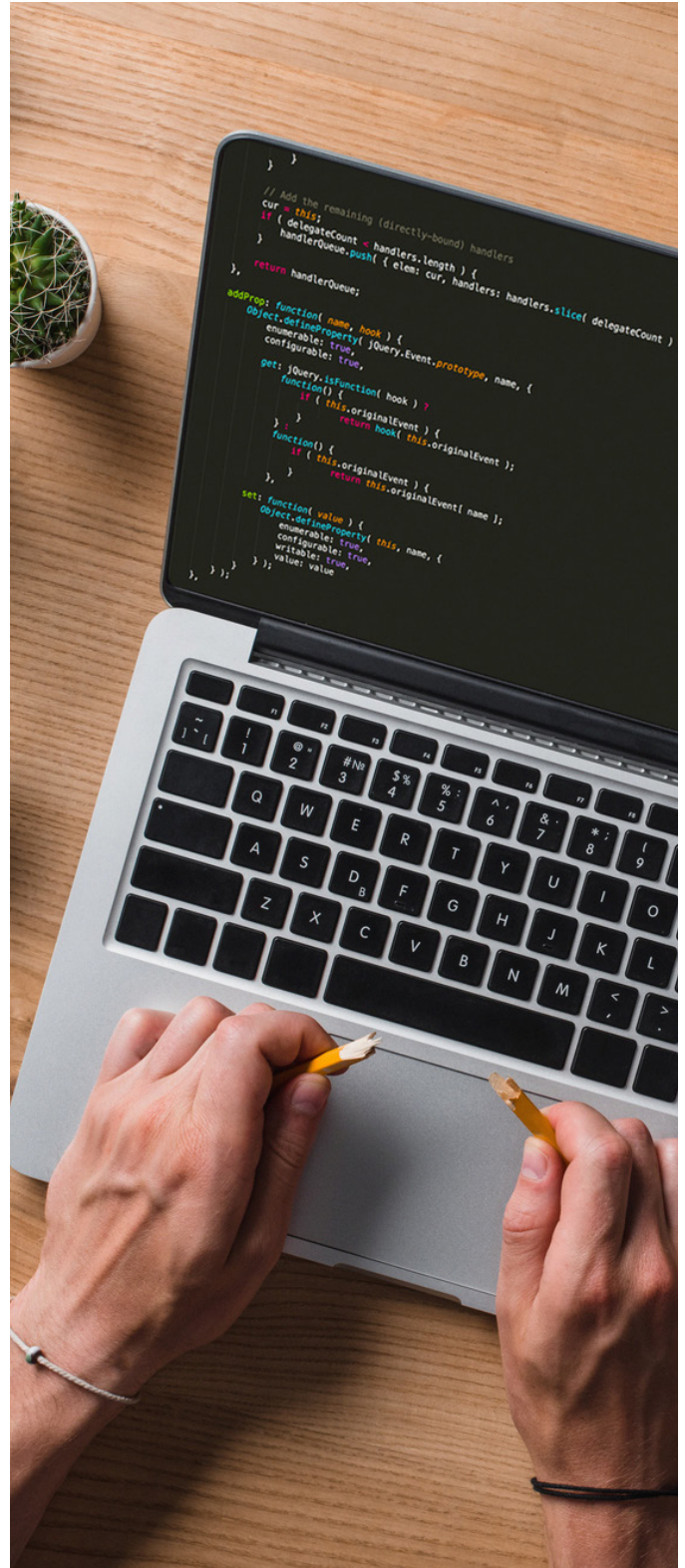
Education, too, has undergone a remarkable transformation with the advent of programming. Interactive learning platforms, educational apps, and online tutorials leverage programming to engage students, making learning accessible and enjoyable. Programming has become a vital skill in the digital age, empowering individuals to navigate an increasingly technology-driven world.

In the realm of entertainment, computer programming serves as the invisible hand behind captivating video games, immersive virtual reality experiences, and stunning visual effects in movies. The intricate coding that brings characters to life, renders breathtaking landscapes and simulates realistic physics captivates audiences worldwide. Programming melds art and technology, creating immersive entertainment that transports us to new realms.

As the day draws to a close, we unwind by streaming our favourite shows and movies. Recommendation algorithms, driven by machine learning and programming, analyze our viewing patterns and curate personalized suggestions. We enjoy a seamless streaming experience, thanks to the sophisticated programming that optimizes video playback, adjusts quality based on internet speeds, and synchronizes audio and visuals.

Computer programming extends beyond our personal lives and permeates broader societal aspects. Governments leverage programming to enhance public services, manage resources efficiently, and promote sustainable development. Financial institutions rely on secure programming techniques to protect sensitive data and facilitate seamless transactions. Furthermore, scientific research harnesses programming to model complex phenomena, analyze vast datasets, and simulate experiments that push the boundaries of knowledge.

In a world increasingly shaped by computer programming, its practical applications are innumerable. From the devices we rely on to the systems that govern our lives, programming is the backbone of modern society. By adopting a montage structure, we glimpse the interconnectedness of programming in various facets of our existence. It is a testament to the remarkable ingenuity of human beings and their ability to wield technology to improve and transform the world we live in.



100% Scholarship Winner, Mina Huelsewies, judged by
Dr Neal Russel and Eric Stobbaerts from Médecins Sans Frontières

What Is Bias, and How Can it Affect Patient Care?



Dr Neal Russell, Paediatric Advisor, Médecins Sans Frontières

Neal is a paediatrician. He has been working with MSF for the last ten years, as well as in the NHS, and in research into antibiotic resistance in newborn infections.



Eric Stobbaerts, International Development Director, DNDi

Eric, an experienced global health leader, has spearheaded Latin American initiatives against neglected diseases, enhancing the region's public health impact. His 20-year tenure with Médecins Sans Frontières encompassed crisis management and organisational leadership, making significant contributions to global health and medical innovation.

Neal and Eric's Comments:

The essay on “Bias and how it affects patient care” excels in terms of relevance and interest, presenting engaging content. It maintains an impressive level of clarity and readability.

Notably, this essay stands out in patient-centeredness and consideration of societal issues, making it an essential contribution to healthcare ethics and patient care discussions. It introduces ethical questions and creative ideas, enhancing the depth of the conversation.

The Essay:

Bias – particularly cognitive bias – can be perceived as an algorithm of the mind¹. It's a systematic pattern of deviation from norm or rationality in judgment and implies an unreasoned and unfair distortion in favor of or against a person or thing. This essay provides an overview of bias, elucidates the different types of bias, and discusses the potential consequences – and opportunities – bias creates the medical field.

One can distinguish two categories of bias: conscious bias, where people hold explicit beliefs about other groups, manifesting in e.g. racism, sexism, Islamophobia – and unconscious bias. As a cognitive skill, based on a simplified information processing strategy called heuristics, unconscious bias is supposed to help us evaluate information according to how we perceive these through the lens of our values and beliefs, and enable swift judgments and decisions. It however can lead to perceptual distortion, inaccurate judgment, illogical interpretation, and irrationality. Cognitive biases, such as the availability and affective bias also often cause misdiagnoses, as they cause clinicians to focus on the patient's initial impressions.

There are numerous variations of cognitive bias – consequently - no individual is immune to the effects of it. In the realm of healthcare, this can lead to medical personnel unwittingly fueling healthcare disparities, which often leads to patient discomfort or even wrong treatment decisions. Dr. Lucille Perez, an alumna at the NYMC, was an attending physician at Gouverneur Hospital in Manhattan. She had to treat people with lots of dissimilar cultures and backgrounds. Through this, over time she noticed how she unconsciously practiced racism towards African American people. Dr. Perez worked on changing her behavior, as she felt that this way, she can become a better doctor.

A report from the National Academy of Medicine (NAM) demonstrates that “racial and ethnic minorities receive lower-quality health care than white people – even when insurance status, income, age, and severity of conditions are comparable”. Another study of 400 hospitals in the US indicates how certain patient groups acquire cheaper and more conservative treatments than others do. A good example for social bias is the fact that gendered norms are also often consolidated by hegemonic masculinity and andronormativity which results in men ending up getting more feeble pain treatments than they require, which basically manifests in the clichés humans create.



Students Quote:

I decided to submit an essay for the Immerse Competition because writing has always been one of my favorite activities. Moreover, I also saw an incredible opportunity to write about a relevant topic of my country which deserves global attention. In the beginning, I thought it was a distant goal and that I wasn't capable.

However, I felt motivated to write when my mother encouraged me, saying, 'To know the result, you have only to try'. The 'Referencing Guidance' was especially useful, teaching me how to use the Oxford referencing style effectively. Additionally, the 'Top Tips for Writing an Academic Essay' document proved to be a valuable tool throughout the writing process.

100% Scholarship Winner, Marianna Mossonidis, judged by
Arnold Longboy, Academy Lead at iO Academy

What Do All Great Leaders Have in Common?



Arnold “Arnie” Longboy

Executive Director in Student Recruitment and Admissions at London Business School (LBS).

He has worked among the top business schools in the world and is currently Executive Director of the Recruitment & Admissions Team at London Business School. He has served on multiple Business Education Boards and is currently Board Chair of the Executive MBA Council.

Amelia's Comments:

Many individuals and organisations have deliberated on the key traits of exceptional leaders for countless years. So the assignment was challenging given the multitude of traits that could have been discussed. I appreciated how the writer focused specifically on just three core traits: challenging dogmas, driving change, and committing to fairness. This essay stood out by how the writer incorporated a mix of a historically known innovator, the spouse of a former US president, and a literary reference to successfully illustrate the importance of these three leadership attributes.

The third trait in particular, commitment to fairness, especially resonated with me as it highlighted how responsible leadership and an inclusive culture can foster innovation and financial prosperity. This perspective again distinguishes this essay from others and showcases a quality that I believe all future leaders should embrace.

The Essay:

Leaders are responsible for wielding a substantial amount of power in guiding organisations and individuals to success. Exceptional leaders universally embody three core traits: the adeptness to challenge dogmas, the conviction to drive change, and an unequivocal commitment to fairness.

Analysing the potent influence of historical and modern leadership exemplified by eminent figures such as visionary Henry Ford¹, contemporary humanitarian Rosalynn Carter, and the allegorical wisdom of George Orwell's *Animal Farm* provides invaluable insights into the mastery of effective business management.

All great leaders challenge established beliefs to craft a compelling vision. This is epitomised by Ford's vision for Ford Motor Company, where his innovative acumen and deviation from the status quo, like streamlining production, revolutionised the automotive industry. It is essential to acknowledge that scepticism and criticism may arise when leaders challenge dogmas, potentially destabilising organisations. This necessitates instilling visions with values, behaviours, and objectives which galvanise collective efforts in achieving goals, driving businesses to success.

Ford conveyed these elements through leading by example, demonstrating the potential of his prospective vision. Effective leaders encourage innovation through prioritising autonomy over directives, enhancing morale, efficiency, and business competitiveness. This ethos resonates with Peter Senge's Learning Organisation theory, particularly the third discipline of 'shared vision', which dismantles myopic viewpoints fostering unified direction within organisations.

Initiating change is paramount for navigating dynamic work environments. A proactive stance enables leaders to leverage challenges and opportunities through preemptive planning and risk management. The complexities of implementing change, as astutely noted by former US First Lady Carter, manifest in the adage "a leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they do not necessarily want to go but ought to be." Exemplary leaders understand that adhering to a linear trajectory often breeds resistance against paradigm shifts.

This phenomenon, known as organisational inertia, intensifies as establishments mature, wherein the comfort of familiarity frequently clashes with the necessity of change. This resistance is overcome by ardently communicating changes in alignment with their overarching vision and incorporating feedback from stakeholders, yielding transformative outcomes for both businesses and individuals.

Paradoxically, the pursuit of fairness can undermine its own foundations. This complex interplay is depicted in Orwell's *Animal Farm*, wherein pseudo-transformational leader Napoleon illustrates the corrosive influence of leadership with malignant intent. This underscores the potential for fairness to be subverted for ulterior motives, resulting in unethical business practices. This can provoke legal liabilities, financial losses, and reputational damage. Research conducted by The Boston Consulting Group involving 1700 companies attests to equity catalysing sustained progress. It reveals that organisations with above-average diversity generated 45% of their revenue from recent innovations compared to 26% for those with below-average diversity.

Evidently, through responsible leadership and fostering an inclusive corporate culture, astute leaders create an environment that attracts diverse skills and perspectives, promoting innovation and financial prosperity.

Within business management, all great leaders, regardless of position, foster symbiotic relationships with their followers, recognising that success is underpinned by collaborative efforts. Astute leaders challenge conventional beliefs akin to Ford¹; implement change as articulated by Carter; and uphold fairness as underscored by Orwell's exploration of power misuse. Ultimately, as evident from past and present luminaries, these ubiquitous qualities not only shape the present but determine the state of the world that future generations will inherit."

Student Quote:

My passion for literature and the written word has been a constant in my life. I decided that regardless of whether or not I won a scholarship through the essay competition, putting my skills to the test would allow me to see what I am capable of - essentially a win-win situation. I received multiple booklets and was able to access video archives and essays written by past scholarship winners which allowed me to craft and perfect both my essay and my references.



100% Scholarship Winner, Luiza Caleia, judged by
Tom Ireland, Editor of The Biologist

How Did the Scientific Thought of Eugenics Develop in Brazil?



Tom Ireland

Editor of The Biologist (the award-winning magazine of the Royal Society of Biology). He is a regular contributor to the monthly magazine BBC Science Focus and has also written for The Guardian, New Scientist, and BBC News.

Tom's Comments:

This essay stood out to me for the way the student tackled an important yet under-discussed aspect of science. Although science is meant to be objective, it is influenced by many things, such as culture and politics, and the personalities of those who study it – something scientists don't think about often enough.

In this essay, a fascinating period in Brazilian history is explained with clarity, and the implications of this dangerous idea are explained thoughtfully. The work prompts us to wonder what elements of our current scientific thinking we will look back on with concern in future.

The Essay:

Brazil's 1934 Constitution (Article 138) determined that eugenics education should be promoted by the union, states, and cities. This exemplifies the Cultural History of Science, a study which recognizes that, when scientific ideas cross cultural boundaries, they undergo reconfigurations, creating new traditions and practices. Considering this, eugenics in Brazil can help us understand how Brazilian and Latin American science not only relates to international scientific endeavours but also asserts distinct identities.

Eugenics movements trace their origins back to ancient Greece, where philosophers Plato and Aristotle explored methods of preserving desirable qualities among Athenians. In the 19th century, however, Darwin's theory of evolution and Mendel's laws of genetics influenced Francis Galton to coin 'eugenics' from the Greek 'well-born'. Galton applied natural selection to humans to rationalise prejudices against marginalised groups of the time. Through the mid-20th century, countries like Sweden, Japan, the United States, and Brazil embraced his ideas.

As the largest nation in Latin America, Brazil led the initiation of an eugenics movement in the region. The country had undergone profound changes: it abolished slavery in 1888 and established its first republic in 1889. These advances brought both opportunities and challenges as urbanisation gave rise to metropolises and their issues of poverty, dirtiness, and disease. Although modern biology was not a topic of Brazilian research, eugenics emerged with a thesis by physician Miguel Couto, who regarded Japanese immigration as a problem. Thereafter, the movement evolved among medical professors, sociologists, and politicians.

The Brazilian elite viewed eugenics as a symbol of modernity for their developing nation. Different from Europe, they believed that by addressing the hereditary problem, they would also tackle the sanitary issues and elevate Brazil's global standing.

Their goal was a nation of white people. A vision contrary to the country's reality of a 17 million population primarily composed of mestizos (mixed), blacks, and indigenous inhabitants. João Batista de Lacerda, the Brazilian representative in the First Universal Races Congress, proposed a solution, "whitening". According to him, after a century of miscegenation, there would be no black people in Brazil because the "white blood" could dilute the "black blood". Hence, the evolution of the Brazilian population was a process open to social control.

In 1929, the Brazilian Eugenics Congress in Rio de Janeiro illustrated the popularity of eugenics among scientists in the country. Intellectuals debated eugenics' role in immigration, education, genetics, and marriage. The participants were divided into two groups: those who advocated invasive actions and the hygienists. The first group defended involuntary sterilisations and selective immigration, whilst the second group emphasised public health, suggesting measures such as mandatory prenatal and prenuptial tests. Following the congress, eugenicists Renato Kehl and Roquette Pinto established a commission to influence national laws, thus the 1934 Constitution.

After World War II, eugenics fell into disrepute due to its associations with the Holocaust. During this period, genetic studies proved that the concept of race is not scientifically accurate, leaving eugenicists with no credibility in the scientific community. Nonetheless, eugenic practices continued for decades and are still present in our societies. The fact that it was once considered a biology subject is a reminder that science can be biased when misapplied to justify social concerns, as seen in Brazil. Scientists will always be social, but their questions should never overpass human rights of liberty and dignity.



Students Quote:

I am unexplainably grateful for this extraordinary opportunity, as it brings various noble options for my future. I was always interested in participating in a summer school and this competition was the perfect way to challenge myself.

Immerse's help was amazing, as I had never written an essay in my life before. They had a well-thought-out and organised plan on how to start which motivated me even more.

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