Evidence-based pedagogical approaches for supporting the "always-on generation" of Chinese students

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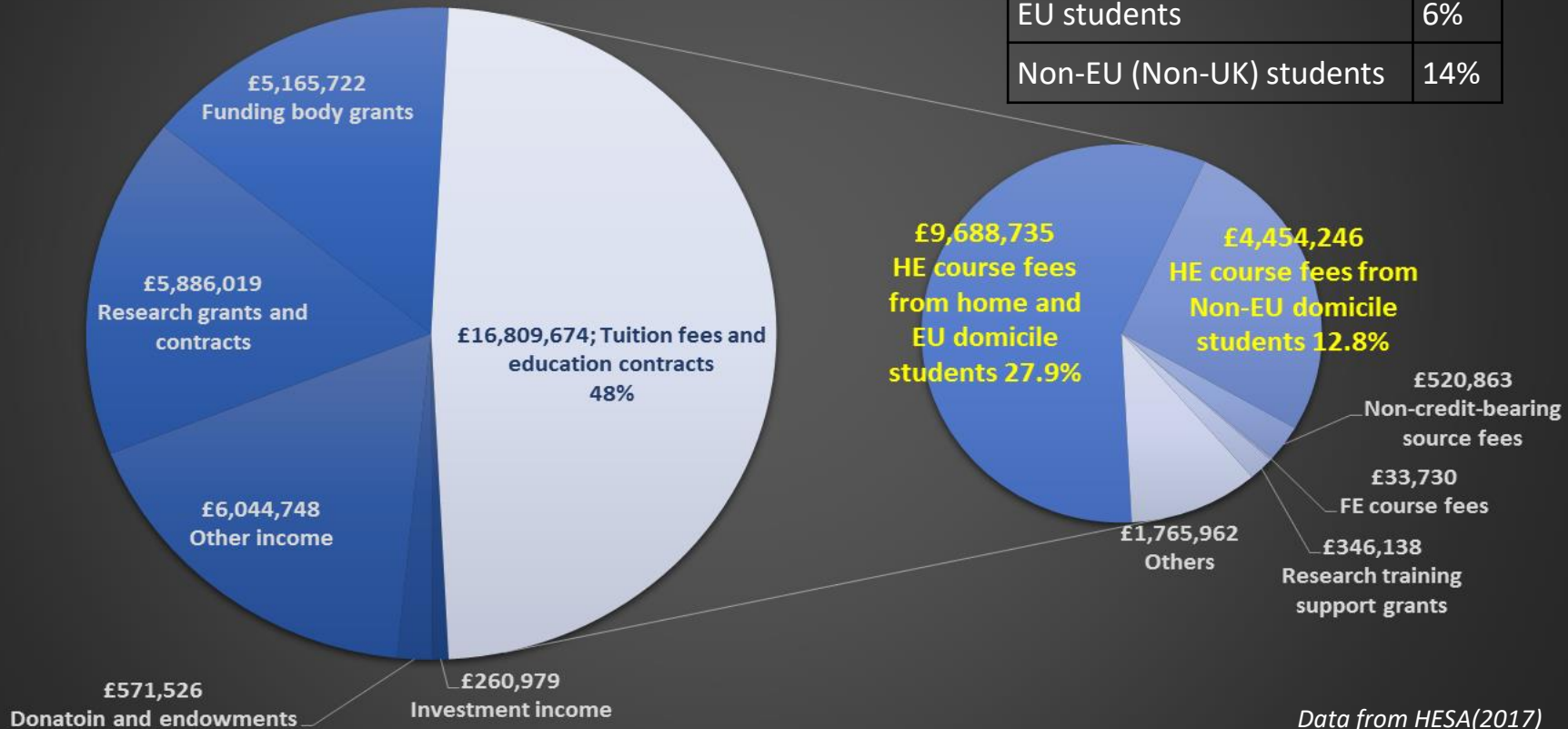University of Bolton Business School

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Introduction

- Non-EU (Non-UK) students – one of the main source for income

Incomes of HE providers in the UK

UK students	80%
EU students	6%
Non-EU (Non-UK) students	14%

£5,165,722
Funding body grants

£5,886,019
Research grants and contracts

£16,809,674; Tuition fees and education contracts 48%

£6,044,748
Other income

£571,526
Donatoin and endowments

£260,979
Investment income

£9,688,735
HE course fees from home and EU domicile students 27.9%

£4,454,246
HE course fees from Non-EU domicile students 12.8%

£520,863
Non-credit-bearing source fees

£33,730
FE course fees

£346,138
Research training support grants

£1,765,962
Others

Data from HESA(2017)

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Introduction

- Chinese students are the main contributor for the incomes generated from non-EU students

Non-EU student sender countries	Number of students (2015-16)	Percentage
China (PRC)	**91,215**	**44.8%**
Malaysia	17,405	8.6%
United States of America	17,115	8.4%
India	16,745	8.2%
Hong Kong (Special Administrative Region)	16,745	8.2%
Nigeria	16,100	7.9%
Saudi Arabia	8,570	4.2%
Singapore	7,540	3.7%
Thailand	6,095	3.0%
Canada	5,980	2.9%

Data from HESA(2017)

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Introduction

- We have approximately 32 Chinese students (5.8% of total) in the Business School (2016-17) **from HE5-HE7**.

- The number of Chinese students has **increased by around 60%** from 2015-16 to 2016-17.

- They come from around **24 cities/provinces** in China

Chinese Student Welcome Event in China Buffet (2016)

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Introduction

- Chinese students are quiet - communication issues (Frambach et al., 2014; Wang, 2016)

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Introduction

- **Translanguaging**

"…a **deeper understanding** than just translating as it moves from finding parallel words to processing and replay meanings and understanding" (Williams, 1996, p.644) **differs from the notion of code-switching.**

" Translanguaging in that it refers **not simply to a shift or a shuttle** between two languages, but to the speakers' construction and use of original and complex **interrelated discursive practices** that cannot be easily assigned to one or another traditional definition of language, but that make up **the speakers' complete language repertoire**." (García & Wei, 2014, p.22).

WeChat Example -
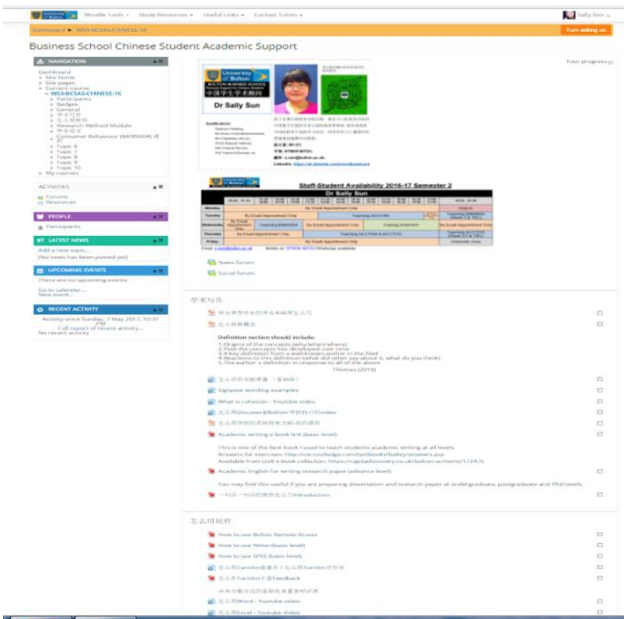Helping students to use discussion forum on Moodle

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Introduction

We have provided academic support for Chinese students since September 2016:

- **Moodle page** for Chinese students translanguaging support (**share material**)
- **24-7 WeChat*** translanguaging support (**information update/Q&A**)
- Translanguaging support in **meetings** if required by the lecturer (to avoid **communication barrier**)
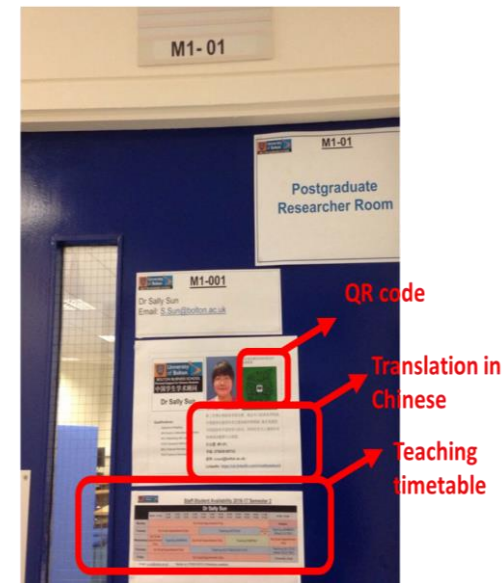
Moodle Page for Chinese Students

WeChat

Information on the office door

Information updates shared with all Chinese students

1-1 Q&A

* A phone and sim card were purchased and used especially for communicating with students. WeChat account was also set up for the purpose of communication with students, and it is separated from personal account.

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Methodology

- Research on:

  (1) the use of WeChat,

  (2) the use of translanguaging support,

  – Focus groups

  – Questionnaires (anonymously collected via SurveyMonkey)
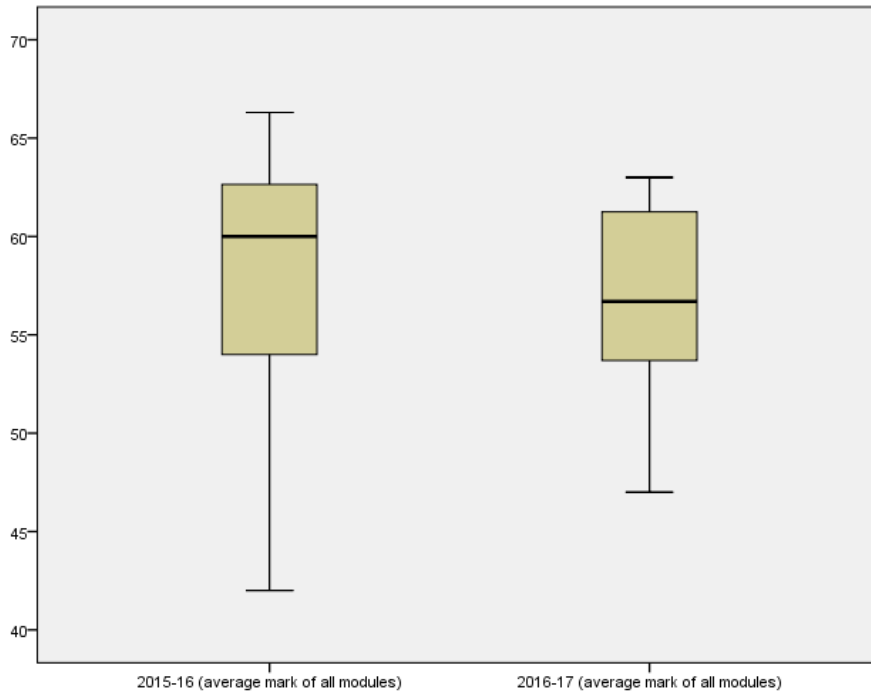
  – Attainments (before/after effect)

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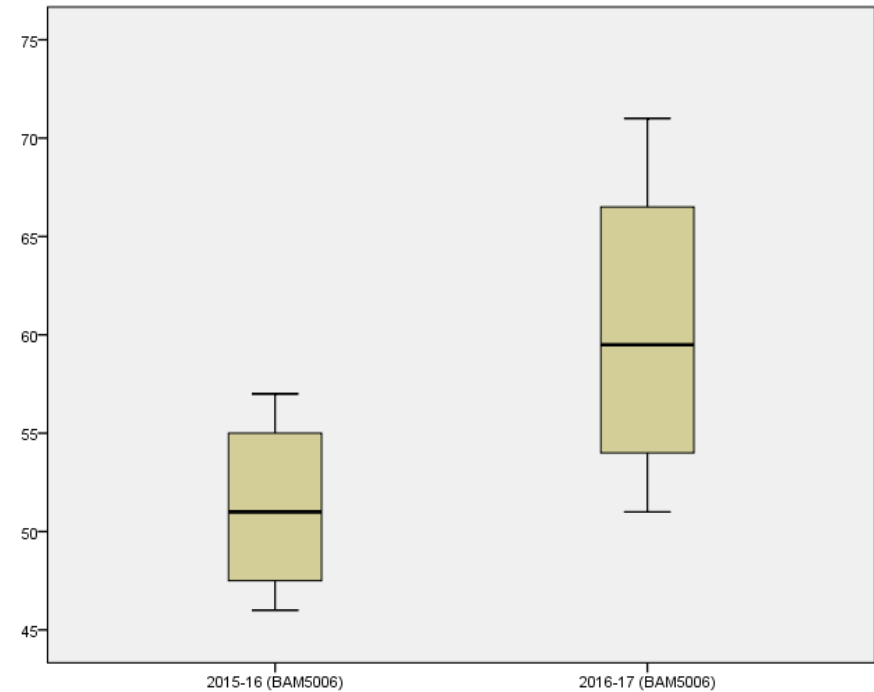
Results

- Attainments were improved in certain modules

Average marks

Research Method module

Results

- Selected quotes from focus groups
  - "…we **cannot remember everything** from the English foundation programme even though they may have already taught us everything. So I feel some kind of transition is needed here. We need **more support from the academic staff** who are not English lecturers".
  - "We do not know what to ask and how to ask, we **do not even know how to ask in Chinese sometimes**."
  - "if our own lecturers can solve the problem, we will ask them, however, when they cannot solve the problem. **We need someone who can understand us, understand the problem, has the knowledge…**"

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Results

- The use of WeChat improved students' motivation, engagement, performance, retention according to their perception.

	Entirely Agree	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Entirely Disagree
Improved Engagement	30.77%	38.46%	15.38%	15.38%	0	0	0
Improved Performance	46.15%	23.08%	15.38%	7.69%	7.69%	0	0
Improved Retention	30.77%	38.46%	15.38%	7.69%	7.69%	0	0
Improved Motivation	46.15%	15.38%	15.38%	7.69%	7.69%	0	7.69%
WeChat is Effectively Used	76.92%	0	7.69%	7.69%	0	0	7.69%

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Results

- Translanguaging support has positive impact on students' engagement, motivation, retention and performance according to their perception.

Translanguaging support has positive impact on	Percentage of students
Students' Engagement	84.6%
Motivation	76.1%
Retention	84.6%
Performance	84.6%

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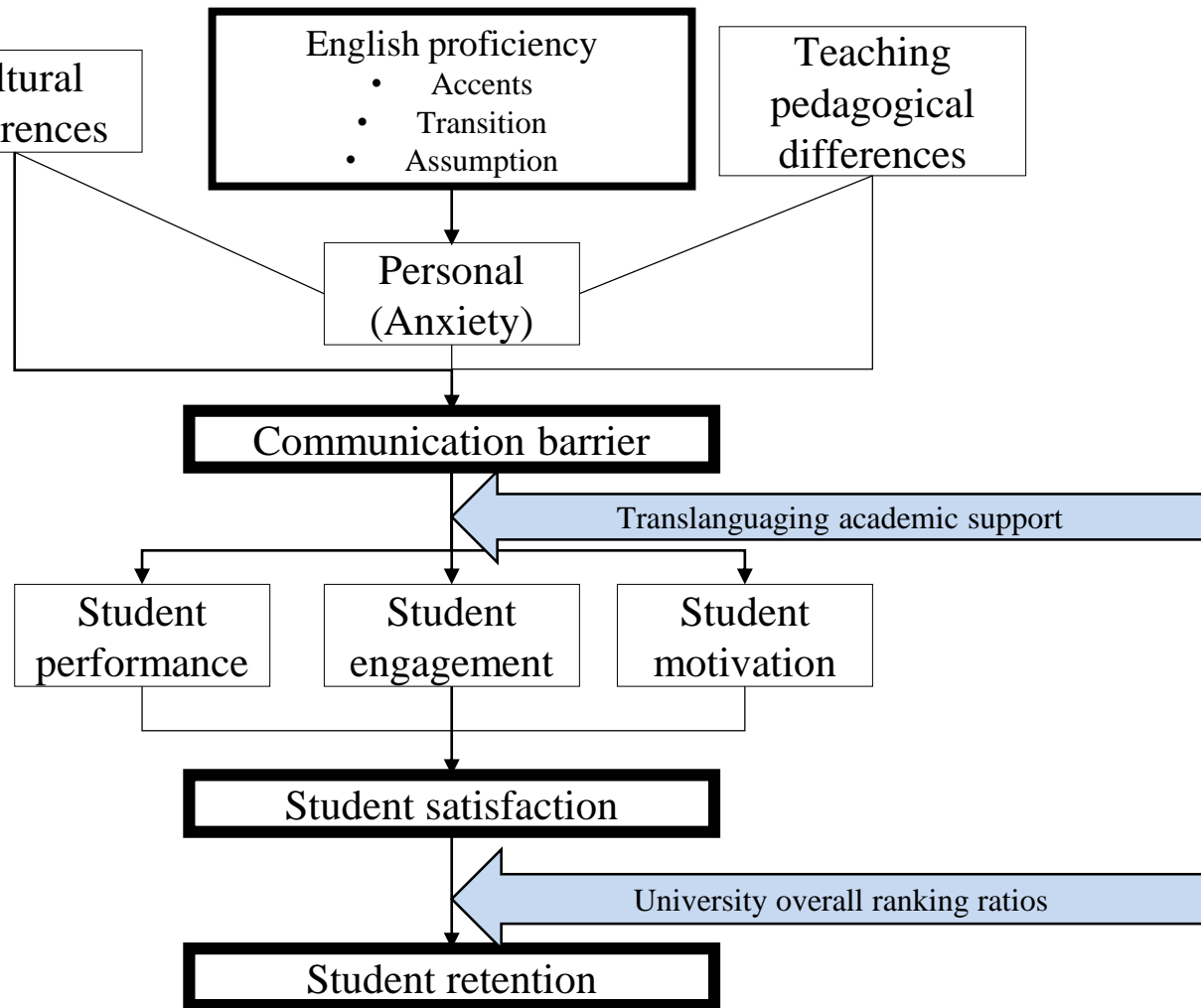
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Results-Impact of translanguaging support

- Selected quotes:

"Do not know the difference among **Moodle** and **module**, and they sound like **noodle**!"

"lecturer sometimes **make assumptions of what we should already know**, but we do not know. For example, we do not know the difference between essay and report at year 2 level, but the other students who studied here before know the difference".

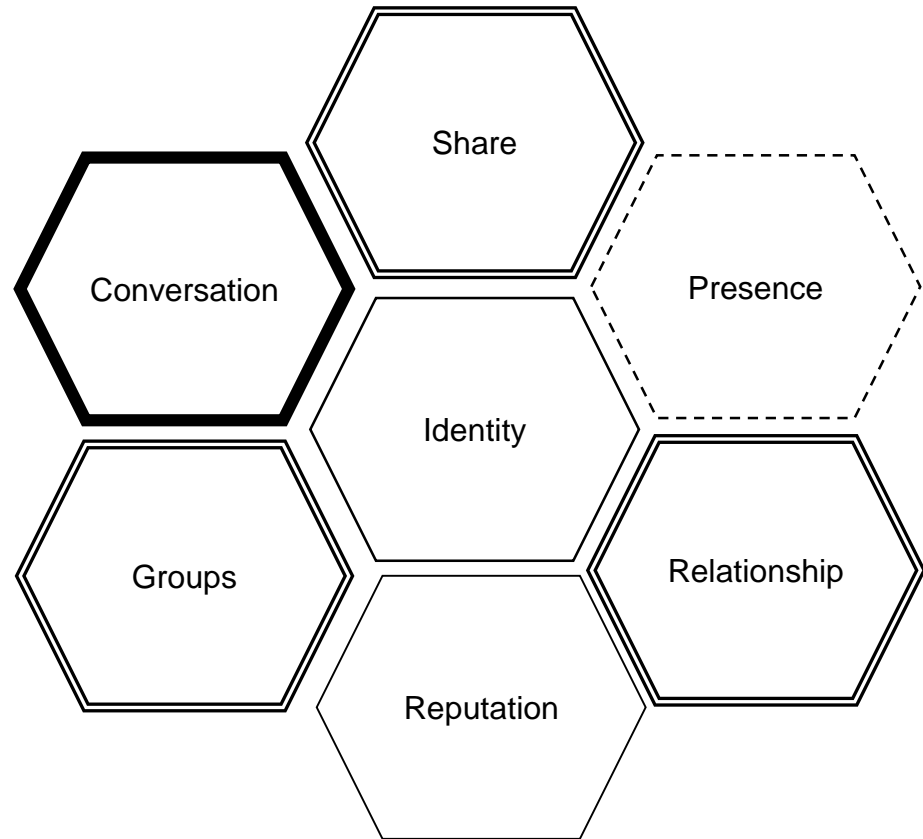"I feel **so nervous** that my tongue is twisted, and I cannot say a word"

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Results – Functions of WeChat

- Students believe **communication** is the main purpose of utilising social media within HE

  students believe **WeChat is part of their culture** due to "…almost any Chinese who has a smartphone has a WeChat account"

Share

Conversation

Presence

Identity

Groups

Relationship

Reputation

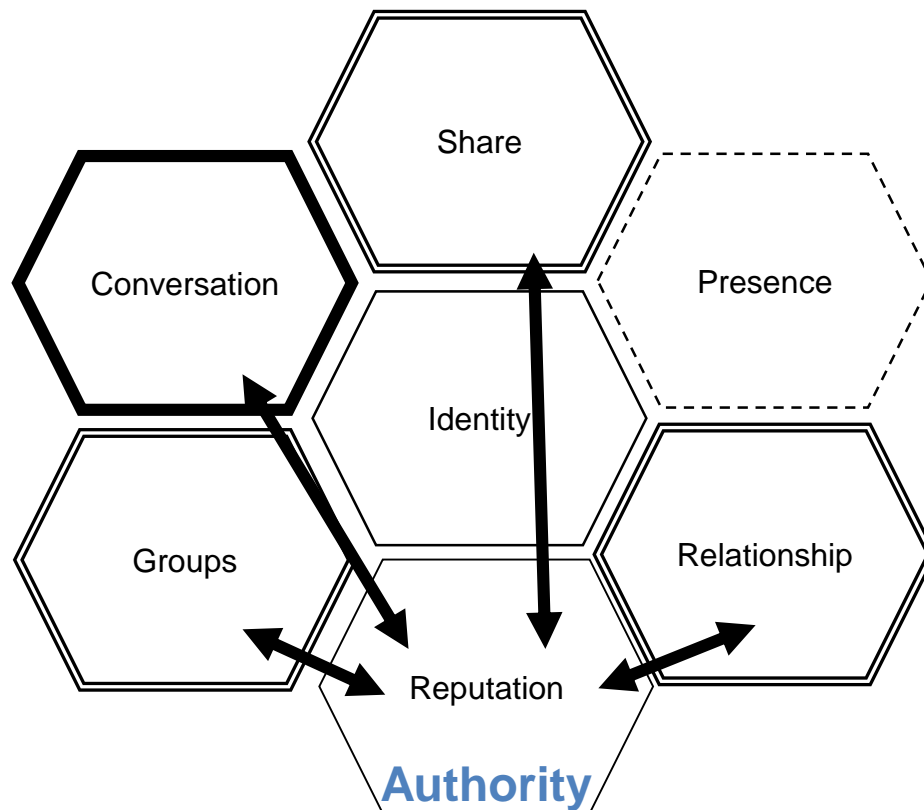| ▬▬ | Most often used function | ═══ | Often used function | ──── | Function provided | ┄┄┄┄ | Un-provided function |

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Results-Implementation of WeChat within HE

- Students believe **lecturers need to take control over the functions** (reputation, this is better to be interpreted as authority for the model to be applied within the education environment)

Legend:
- ── Most often used function
- ═ Often used function
- ─ Function provided
- ┈ Un-provided function

Diagram shows hexagons labeled: Conversation, Share, Presence, Identity, Relationship, Groups, Reputation, with Authority below.

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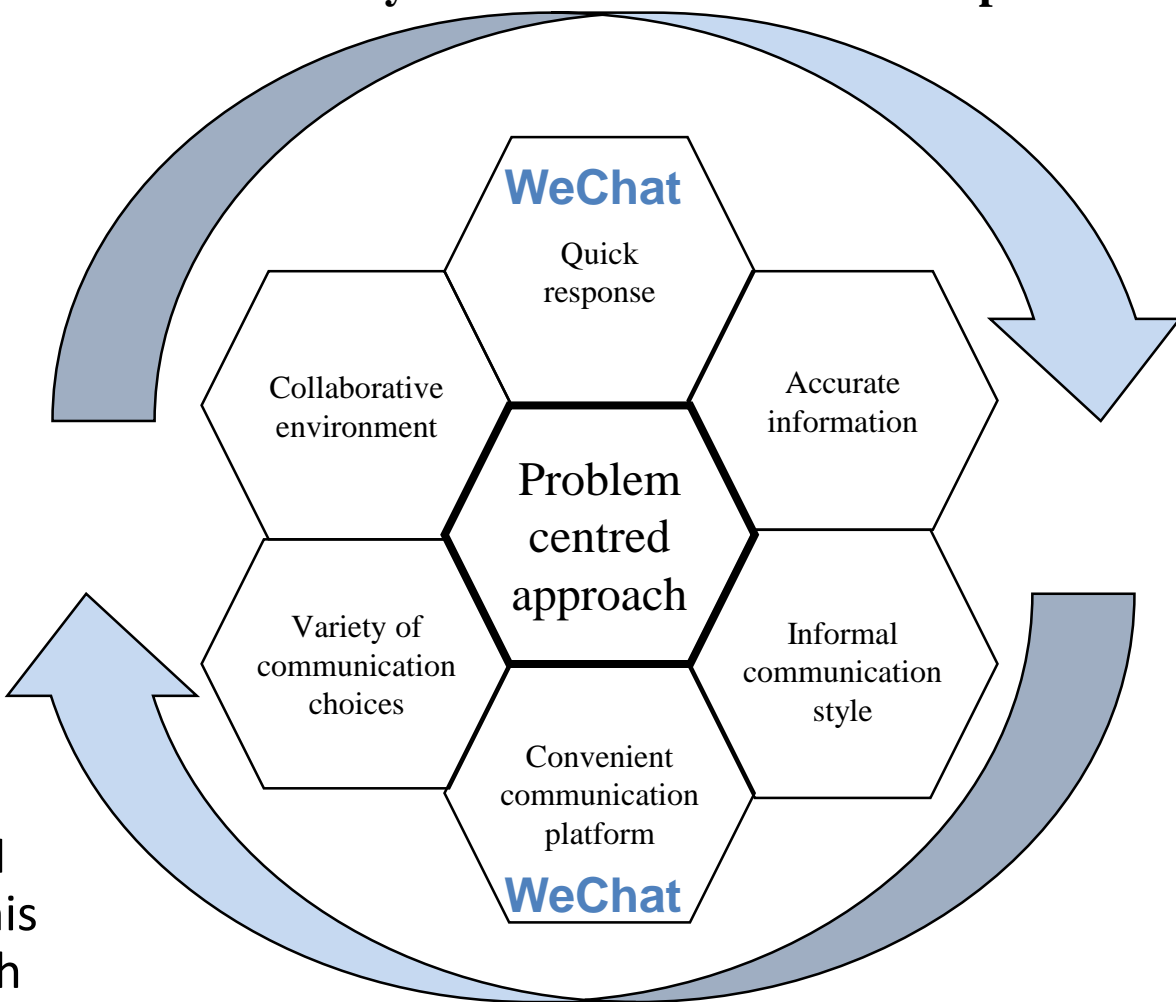# Result-Honeycomb framework for implementation of translanguaging support

- Selected quotes:
  - "…if the lecturer is young and not so serious, we can be more relaxed, and we **learn better if we are relaxed**".
  - "I just feel so happy every time a teacher gives me responses. I do not think most teachers actually understand Chinese students. **If this teacher is very approachable, of course, I will take this teacher as my friend**, and I am very happy to talk to this teacher or do anything with this teacher".

Friendly lecturer-student relationship

WeChat

Quick response

Accurate information

Collaborative environment

Problem centred approach

Variety of communication choices

Informal communication style

Convenient communication platform

WeChat

Understanding of the possible issues

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Conclusion

- This **translanguaging pedagogy with WeChat appears to be the most effective method** to help Chinese students to alleviate the communication issues and allow them to understand the expectations from the university and lecturers;

- This has **positive impact on their engagement, motivation, performance and retention** according to their perception

- WeChat is perceived as the **only effective social media tool** to facilitate this support

- Further research:
  o How to adopt translanguaging support for students come from different countries
  o How to adopt WeChat to support Chinese students in a wider scope.

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