Students' Use of AI

Thursday 28th September 2023

Wonkhe x Abode Education Espresso: *How do students want to learn about AI?*

Frank Longdon | Student Insight & Voice Manager

Sector Caught Napping

Spring 2023:

Generative AI tools are here and assessments are looming

We Did the Simplest Thing We Could Think of

USE OF AI IN ASSESSMENT

STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY

"AI is here to stay. We shouldn't be scared of it, nor should the sector bury its head in the sand and pretend that ChatGPT is a passing storm. These tools will be as ubiquitous as Google or OneSearch so we need to learn how to incorporate them into our work. I'm thrilled to have been part of the reinvigoration of our Academic Rep scheme this year (not that I can take much of the credit) thanks to our phenomenal student leaders and the Students' Union's Voice Team. We hope to hold more events like this in the future so that our Academic Reps have the opportunity to live the values of co-creation that are so important to achieve excellence in our curriculum." - Noah Katz, VP Education 2022-2023

On Wednesday 3rd May, Academic Reps from across the University came together to discuss the implications of recent developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) software on assessment in higher education.

The twenty student representatives present had an interesting and intellectually stimulating debate before coming together to collaboratively write a set of recommendations for the University. These were then collated and harmonised by the Students' Union to create a succinct and accessible list.

These are their recommendations:

1. Staff should be taught how AI works and what it's capable of doing.
2. Staff should teach students how to use AI as a tool which will benefit them both now and in their future careers. The aim should be that students develop competency in AI and avoid dependency. The Library and Maths & Stats Hub could help with this.
3. The University should make sure it is continuously aware of AI innovations and regularly update its guidance for students accordingly.
4. Each department needs to create specialised guidance on what they consider acceptable use of AI.
5. Each method of assessment requires its own guidance with regards to use of AI.
6. In the same way that plagiarism is consistently discussed with students each year, the use of AI should be regularly discussed with students.
7. Staff should consider that student use of AI in assessment may be symptomatic of a lack of confidence in that area of study. Where there are clear trends of use, staff should consider how they can better support students in these areas.
8. Staff should consider alternative methods of assessment - such as verbal. Students may benefit from more variety of assessment methods and the withdrawal of assessment methods which have become obsolete.
9. Students need to be able to demonstrate clear understanding of learning objectives. No work should be submitted which has been completely written by AI.

The Students' Union will be presenting at the University's 2023 Education Conference on this topic and students' perceptions on assessment more broadly.

ACADEMIC REPS

A student has asked ChatGPT to write their essay. They take the AI-written text and make some small amendments; they add references, add a few quotes and bits of evidence, and change some of the wording to better fit their writing style and hit the word count. The resulting essay is submitted as the student's own work.

A student spent 5 hours writing a script for their presentation. They saved their script as a pdf, then used AI to convert the document into PowerPoint slides. They made edits to the slides and generated graphics for the slides using Midjourney. The student presented this as their own work.

Student is preparing for their dissertation. The first thing they do is run their proposed dissertation title through ChatGPT to create a basic initial piece of text. They hold on to this and use it as a basis for the structure of their own written work. They also use AI to generate an initial reading list on their chosen topic. As well as reading these resources, the student uses the AI-generated list as the basis for the Literature Review. At times through the writing process, the student asks ChatGPT to help them better articulate points. They tweak the generated text and include it in their dissertation. Despite this the majority of their 10,000 words is their own work.

Their dissertation is submitted as their own work.

What They Said

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https://lancastersu.co.uk/articles/use-of-ai-in-assignments

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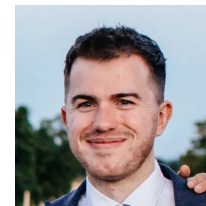5. Each method of assessment requires its own guidance with regards to use of AI.

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https://wonkhe.com/blogs-sus/ai-is-here-to-stay-and-students-want-clarity-on-how-to-harness-it/

What are students actually doing?

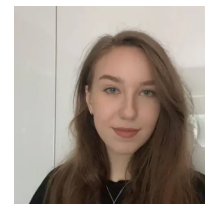*125 students' stories; gathered during assessment period*

"*Results from this research indicate that those who are utilizing AI as part of their university education are* **largely doing so in a way that supplements university provisions** *rather than in a manner which violates plagiarism guidelines. This brings into question if* **students should be taught how to effectively use AI to benefit their learning, in the same way they are taught how to effectively use OneSearch and referencing software to maintain high standards of academic practice**. *Departments should consider instructing students how to use AI effectively to supplement their learning in a way that upholds standards of academic practice and* **prevents over reliance on AI leading to explicit cheating**, *especially considering the benefits AI can have for those with ILSPs.*"

Read the responses for yourself:
https://lancastersu.co.uk/ai-in-assessments

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https://wonkhe.com/blogs-sus/students-are-using-ai-to-plug-holes-in-their-provision/

Some final points

- Punitive approaches have failed.

- If assessment is in-authentic, is it worth doing?

https://lancastersu.co.uk/articles/vp-education-calls-on-the-university-to-stop-turnitin-ai-detection

27 JUNE 2023
VP Education Calls On The University To Stop Turnitin AI Detection ...
VP Education Releases Statement On The Use Of Turnitin AI Detection Software ...

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