

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Using Generative AI to enhance higher education student and staff teaching and learning experiences and outcomes

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The symposium will explore ways of better understanding, challenging and expanding the ways that its diverse users think about and use generative AI in higher education, to best respond to our emerging opportunities to achieve AI ethical and pedagogical best practice. The symposium features a discussion between a range of AI in education experts, and session attendees, guided by key questions on how to achieve the best possible use of AI in education. These questions include how to best bring together technological and human interfaces, and how to best use generative AI in education practice. This could include by strategically expanding its current uses to help it improve whole student education, as well as academic education. Student engagement, wellbeing and motivation could be strategically improved via identifying current levels of, and potential improvements in, student and staff knowledge of and attitudes towards educational uses of AI.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, higher education, strategic advances, human expertise, ethics

Area of Focus

The increasing use of generative AI in higher education is often seen as a threat, and something that needs to be reacted to by reducing its potential damage. This includes potential damage to educational experiences and outcomes, via a loss of academic integrity, and an associated loss of capacity for students to think independently. This symposium provides a valuable opportunity to expand on positive ways of looking at AI in education (e.g., Lodge, 2024) and achieve a balanced view of its current uses and potential best uses. This requires considering new ways that AI can enhance educational experiences and outcomes for students and staff, including by using it to enhance student engagement and wellbeing. Possibilities for expanding current AI in education uses and mindsets include the strategic introduction of features that systematically improve and support student and staff AI use motivation, and their ability to actively participate in and create their own AI in education adventure. In this symposium panel session, a diverse range of AI in education users and potential users will explore together how a balanced view of, and optimal use, AI in education can best be achieved, and why it needs to be achieved.

Summary of Ideas to be Explored

The symposium will feature an interactive panel discussion between a wide range of AI in education experts, with a wide range of views and ideas on how to optimally use generative AI in education. These questions will be discussed:

1. *How can AI enhance higher education student wellbeing as well as learning outcomes?*
2. *How are psychological factors like motivation and personality related to attitudes and propensity towards Academic Integrity? Can Generative AI improve Academic Integrity based on its relationship with student motivation?*
3. *In what ways can generative AI be used to enhance both teaching practice and graduate employability, particularly in fields like health and wellness where future professionals will be competing in tech-enabled business environments?*
4. *Do higher education students see AI as a force for good, or a force for evil?*
5. *How might generative AI increase fairness and reduce dissent among online students by improving communication with teaching staff?*

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Names of Proposed Panel Members and a Description of the Views they Represent

Dr Mifrah Ahmad, Tayab Din Memon, Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research and Optimisation (AIRO). **Associate Professor Stephen McKenzie and Dr Jennifer Day**, School of Psychological Science, Torrens University. *Wellbeing, mental health and academic performance are critical, interrelated dimensions of student success in higher education. With the increased reliance on digital learning environments and the complexity of student experiences, institutions must identify proactive, scalable interventions. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) offer transformative potential to detect, predict, and respond to wellbeing, mental health and academic challenges—personalising support and enhancing the overall student journey.*

Professor Mathew E. Mundy, Executive Dean, Health and Education, Torrens University. *Generative AI is often seen as a contributor to Academic Integrity problems, rather than as a solution, and Academic Integrity challenges are often seen only at a surface level – how to we reduce the opportunity for students to use generative AI to help them cheat? We have the opportunity to see Academic Integrity breaches at a deep causal level, by exploring the relationship between motivation and both forms of AI.*

Anne Digby, Senior Learning Facilitator, Health Science, Torrens University. *A recent curriculum redesign of a health science business subject at Torrens University embedded generative AI in assessments to build both student and educator capability. GenAI was used to potentially enhance teaching practice, support graduate employability, and prepare students for a competitive health business landscape where AI is already in use. Rather than replacing human expertise, this approach can position AI as a tool to elevate both learning and professional identity.*

Dr Nikolai Alksnis, Manager, Learning Design, Victoria University. *Across different contexts of AI adoption in higher education, the uncertainty of integration raises important questions about how these tools can be positioned within learning and teaching. Observing how active listening to students and engagement with industry provide possible ways forward highlights opportunities for approaches that build trust while enhancing integrity, motivation, and employability.*

Dr Lauren Shaw, Head of the School of Psychology, James Cook University. *A known challenge in online education is the heightened volatility of students. This phenomenon known as instructional dissent and is linked to poor perceptions of procedural justice. Dissent can be disruptive and harmful both to students and staff, but generative AI offers opportunities to improve clarity, build trust, and support fairer interactions. Exploring how AI can foster positive communication and reduce dissent can help support the creation of healthier, more effective online learning environments.*

Outline of the Symposium Format

The symposium discussion will be free and dynamic, and will include opportunities for audience as well as panellist participation. Each of the five symposium questions will be briefly responded to by one of the five panellists, and then the panel chairs will invite brief responses (questions or answers) from other panellists, and from the audience.

Details of the Intended Audience, Expected Outcomes; and Key Takeaways

The intended audience is higher education teaching and course development staff, and other educators, who would like to develop a better understanding of, and contribute to a better understanding of how we can best achieve a balanced view of the current and future uses of generative AI in higher education. The panellist's and audience's session discoveries and rediscoveries could form the basis of a symposium related publication, that contributes to the advancement of the next generation of generative AI use in education.

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Reference

Lodge, J. (2024). Where to next with AI in higher education? UQ News.

<https://www.uq.edu.au/news/article/2024/07/where-next-ai-higher-education>

McKenzie, S. & Day, J. (2025, Nov 30 – Dec 3). Using Generative AI to enhance higher education student and staff teaching and learning experiences and outcomes. [Panel Presentation]. Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education Conference, Adelaide, Australia. <https://doi.org/10.65106/apubs.2025.2750>

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