

ASCILITE 2025

Future-Focused:

Educating in an Era of Continuous Change

Collective wisdom in action: Lessons from a multi-university collaboration on student voices and Generative AI

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This panel explores the lived experience of cross-institutional collaboration in a major multi-university research initiative investigating students' perspectives on generative AI in higher education. Bringing together researchers from four leading Australian universities, the project exemplifies how sector-wide partnerships can overcome institutional silos, foster methodological innovation, and generate richer, more inclusive insights. Panellists will reflect on the benefits, challenges, and transformative potential of working collaboratively at scale, offering practical strategies and provocations for others seeking to harness collective wisdom in response to sector-wide challenges.

Keywords: cross-institutional collaboration, generative AI, student voice, higher education, research partnerships

Introduction: The Need for Collaboration in the Age of GenAI

The rapid emergence of generative AI has forced higher education to confront unprecedented pedagogical, ethical, and policy dilemmas. Yet, as sector-wide challenges intensify, responses have too often remained fragmented, with institutions developing parallel, isolated strategies. The AlinHE project was founded as a direct challenge to this siloed approach, intentionally building a collaborative research network across Monash University, University of Queensland, Deakin University, and University of Technology Sydney. By pooling expertise, resources, and perspectives, the project aimed to generate a sector-wide understanding of student experiences with AI that no single institution could achieve alone.

Theoretical Frameworks and Research Context

Our work draws on relational epistemology (Bearman & Ajjawi, 2023) and the concept of the sociotechnical ensemble, recognising that student engagement with AI is always shaped by broader social, technological, and institutional contexts. This collaborative approach aligns with recent research arguing that multi-institutional partnerships in educational technology foster "knowledge creation" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2014) and support more systemic, ethical, and innovative responses to disruptive change.

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Experiences and Insights from Cross-Institutional Collaboration

- Building a Shared Vision
- Pooling Resources and Expertise
- Navigating Challenges
- Collective Reflexivity
- Sector Impact and Influence

Panel Members

Associate Professor **Trish McCluskey**, Director of Digital Learning, Deakin University, Melbourne.

Professor **Michael Henderson**, Professor of Digital Futures, Director of the Educational Design and Innovation Hub, Faculty of Education, Monash

Professor **Kelly Matthews**, Professor of Higher Education, Institute of Teaching and Learning Innovation, the University of Queensland

Professor **Margaret Bearman**, Research Professor in the Center for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE), Deakin University

Dr. **Lisa-Angelique Lim**, Lecturer in the Connected Intelligence Centre at the University of Technology Sydney

Dr **Aneesha Bakharia**, Senior Lecturer within the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at The University of Queensland

Each panellist represents a unique institutional context and disciplinary background, enabling a rich, multi-faceted discussion of both the promise and complexity of collaboration.

Panel Format and Audience Engagement

- Brief opening provocations from each panellist on a key lesson or challenge from the collaboration
- Moderated discussion exploring points of agreement, tension, and unresolved questions
- Interactive audience discussion and Q&A with panellists

Intended Audience

This session is designed for academic leaders, researchers, learning designers, and policymakers interested in:

- Building and sustaining effective cross-institutional research partnerships
- Leveraging collective wisdom to address sector-wide challenges
- Embedding student voice in institutional and sectoral responses to AI

Key Takeaways

- Cross-institutional collaboration enables richer, more inclusive and impactful research on complex, sector-wide challenges like generative AI
- Negotiation, trust-building, and shared vision are essential for overcoming institutional barriers
- Collaborative models can serve as blueprints for future sector-wide responses, ensuring that innovations in educational technology are both ethical and effective

References

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