

ASCILITE 2024

Navigating the Terrain:

Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies

Responding to AI: Redesigning an assessment in a final year ITE curriculum specialization topic

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The influence of artificial intelligence “has enormous implications for higher education” (Bearman, Ryan & Ajjawi, 2023, p. 369). Those of us teaching in the higher education sector have felt this profoundly: after the rapid uplift in digital teaching and learning practices in response to COVID 19 we are required, yet again, to respond to a new set of challenges brought about by the impact of AI. As an example, chatbot technology is calling into question the reliability of the traditional essay as a valid assessment tool (Stokel-Walker, 2022), requiring significant critical reflection and reevaluation of assessments from teaching academics to ensure course learning outcomes are met.

This presentation outlines how a teaching specialist academic working in an initial teacher education (ITE) programme at a South Australian university carried out one such redesign. The focus of the re-design was a ‘unit/year plan’ assessment task for a final year curriculum specialization topic. The redesign aligned with the two guiding principles from TEQSA’s *Assessment reform for the age of artificial intelligence* (Lodge et al., 2023). The first of these guiding principles: ‘Assessment and learning experiences equip students to participate in a world where AI is ubiquitous’ (p. 2) points to the importance of educating students around AI use relevant to their learning. The second guiding principle: ‘Forming trustworthy judgements about student learning in a time of AI requires multiple, inclusive and contextualised approaches to assessment’ (p. 3) underscores the ongoing necessity for universities to have effective means by which to measure student learning outcomes, especially in accredited courses. The redesign of the assessment task both acknowledged the potential of AI for use in the professional space, and simultaneously sought to ensure assessment validity through the inclusion of an interview with the pre-service teachers.

Overall, the redesign of the assessment task incorporated three components. Firstly, a brief introductory module about discipline-specific uses of AI was incorporated into the online course content. Secondly, pre-service teachers were ‘permitted’ to utilise available AI platforms in the creation of their planning task. Thirdly, the assessment process was adapted to include an oral presentation (Gulikers, Bastiaens & Kirschner, 2004) conducted as a panel interview in which each pre-service teacher could provide evidence of the pedagogical perspectives underpinning their plan and subsequently demonstrate the successful achievement of topic learning outcomes. The purpose of the panel interview was to assist assessors in forming a judgement about pre-service teachers’ pedagogical understanding and application, in line with relevant criteria from Matheis and John’s Comprehensive Authentic Assessment Model (CAAM) (Matheis & John, 2024).

Autoethnographic reflections on the first delivery of the redesigned assessment are provided, including alternative approaches for future iterations. The learnings from the teaching initiative outlined in this presentation contribute to the growing discussion about how we can develop the capacity of our pre-service teachers as skilled and critical practitioners who can utilize AI as a valuable tool for their ongoing professional practice.

Keywords: AI and assessment, English curriculum assessment, ITE assessment

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