

SHOULD UNIVERSITIES EMBRACE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE?

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Abstract

AI assistant represents a reality whether we like it or not. We do not question its existence, but rather the way we can integrate it to our activity and make it work for everybody's benefit. The present study is based on articles in HEPI. HEPI stands for Higher Education Policy Institute. According to AI assistant (sic), HEPI is “the UK's only independent think tank dedicated strictly to higher education.” The aim of the article is to throw some light upon some aspects of AI. Examining HEPI articles we reached the conclusion that after all, Artificial Intelligence is not an enemy if universities design their policies and strategies intelligently.

Keywords: AI assistant, higher education, university, students, teaching staff

I. Introduction

AI assistant represents a reality whether we like it or not. We do not question its existence, but rather the way we can integrate it to our activity and make it work for everybody's benefit.

The conclusions of 30 April webinar, that took place within our university, were that whoever make use of AI assistant might be pertinent enough to disclose that fact and at the same time to take on the responsibility of using it.

The present study is based on articles in HEPI. HEPI stands for Higher Education Policy Institute. According to AI assistant (sic), HEPI is “the UK's only independent think tank dedicated strictly to higher education.”

Since “Constantin Brancusi” University in Targu Jiu itself is a higher education institution, it is worth examining the opinions of this British think tank.

II. Why Not Making Use of AI, Instead of Blaming It?

The first article examined, “*Student Generative Artificial Intelligence Survey 2026*”, authored by Rose Stephenson (HEPI's Director of Policy and Strategy) and Charlotte Armstrong (HEPI's Policy manager) bring into forefront that AI has become “near universal” among undergraduates in just three years. Yet, according to the article cited not all the students have the same opinion on AI. Thus, for some, AI represents a time freer for deeper learning and critical thinking. Instead, for others, it may become a crutch. A crutch to support them in learning.

The authors of the article conducted a survey in December 2025 on 1054 full-time undergraduates. According to the findings of the study, the universal practice of AI does not question the students' use, but rather the degree in which, the institutions are supporting the students to develop their skills responsibly.

The above-mentioned survey revealed a striking difference between the speed with which students embraced generative AI and the fact that “institutional adoption is lagging behind the students’ behaviour” (1).

Here are the survey’s findings:

1. AI has become universal. 95% of students state using it.
2. Assessment has changed substantially. Some 65% of students report assessment changed to a higher degree.
3. AI improves the student experience for many – but not for all. A percentage of 49% believe AI improved their student experience in point of saving time. A smaller portion believe AI worsened their experience in what fairness, skill erosion, social isolation and future employment concern.
4. Students are using AI to support their wellbeing in point of companionship, advice or address loneliness.
5. Students see AI skills as essential, but institutional support lags. While most of the students believe AI skills are essential to succeed in life today, fewer feel that their teaching staff help them to develop skills for their future.

In the sense of finding a solution to meet the students’ necessities regarding AI, the authors of the article recommend:

- Providing AI training and transition support for all students.
- Contemplating revamping the curricula in teaching AI knowledge and skills.
- Publishing guidance on AI skills.
- Ensuring that AI tools are accessible to all the students.
- Ensuring staff’ access to AI training.

The second article examined, “*Tempo Conflict at the Heart of AI in Higher Education*” (2) is authored by Somayeh Aghnia. Somayeh Aghnia is cofounder of London School of Innovation. She left Iran in 2004 for UK, where she took a master’s degree in software development (7). Somayeh thrives on creating harmony between technology and humans in business and life, according to Geeks (8)

Somayeh Aghnia contrasts the universities and AI. While universities are “slow”, slow in fairness process, standards, legitimate authority, education continuity and public trust, Artificial Intelligence is “fast”, fast in capability, norms, exceptions, learners’ and staff’ tools.

At this point, Somayeh poses the right question, which is not “how we adopt AI”, but “how do we move at the right speed”. The author calls this a “tempo challenge” (2). Tempo challenge is translated as navigating exponential technology within systems designed to move slower and cyclically.

Regarding the fast AI and the slow university system, Somayeh foresees some future scenarios.

Scenario 1 - Compliance university

One possible remedy would be for the universities to improve policy, detection and guidance to gain some control over the matter. On the other hand, this strategy might create a gap between formal rules and lived behaviour.

Scenario 2 – Platform university

The pros would be rapid adoption, rapid procurement and rapid rollout. This may lead to innovation, but also to uneven practice.

Scenario 3 – Split-tempo university

In this scenario, one part moves fast, while the other slowly. Somayeh views this scenario as internal fragmentation where the real problem is institutional coherence.

Though, Somayeh proposes a solution. The London School of Innovation, which has been designed as AI-native from the beginning. The School of Innovation makes use of AI as a lens for curriculum, assessment and institutional operation.

The author finds the Tai Chi metaphor enlightening. Tai Chi is not slow because it is timid. But rather because it is controlled in timing, balance and sensitivity. Therefore, power lies in when to move decisively, not from accelerated pace.

The AI is now; therefore, universities must learn balance acceleration and decisiveness.

In her article “*AI Assessment and Belonging*” (3), Professor Harriet Dunbar-Morris, Prevost and Pro Vice chancellor academic at the University of Buckingham, the third article examined highlights issues, the teaching staff experience in their activity – the presence of AI assistant. Nevertheless, the question that arises refers to the way higher education institutions respond to the challenge.

In referring to another report on students using. The generative AI, Professor Dunbar-Morris finds two recommendations standing out. They are the need for clear and accessible guidance on AI in assessments, on the one hand, and on the other the call for research on how students make use of AI for companionship, advice or support.

The underlying matter, which Professor Dunbar Morris put in the forefront is that AI is a technological challenge, but more importantly a pedagogical and student experience challenge.

Considering the above-mentioned opinions, Professor Dunbar-Morris suggests acting in the sense of taking AI as an opportunity not a threat. In what follows, we present her solutions.

1. **Clarity in assessment matters more than detection.** The students worry about what is allowed and what not, about being accused of cheating in the context of unclear expectations regarding the courses. The lack of clarity affects the students’ confidence, engagement and belonging.

At this point, Professor Dunbar-Morris mentions her survey *Being, Belonging, Becoming* (BBB). She has the students respond to questions like the staff’s clear expectations, the feeling of being part of a learning community or understanding the requirements. In the case of unclear expectations, the students may become disengaged and anxious. Professor Dunbar-Morris points out that in AI context, the BBB survey represents a measurement tool.

Her remedy is a better assessment design not a detecting software. Thus, assessments should assume the existence of AI, yet the requirement should be for the students to demonstrate their judgment and understanding. At the same time, the teacher should specify when to use AI and when not.

2. **Students still need to think without AI.** Under this finding, Professor Dunbar-Morris points out that the students should learn how to use AI as a tool for learning writing, reasoning, synthesis and critical thinking.
3. **AI, loneliness and belonging.** The third solution proposed by Professor Dunbar-Morris, bearing in mind the above-mentioned report, the report we began our article with, has it that students use AI for friendship, reassurance or emotional support. They do this instead of staff or peers. The procedure, Professor Dunbar-Morris argues, reflects confidence, convenience or curiosity on the one hand and on the other isolation, uncertainty or lack of communication.

4. **AI for staff, not only for students.** All the reports focus on students' making use of AI. Professor Dunbar-Morris points out that the teacher staff should also use the Artificial Intelligence. The teaching staff using AI means reducing repetitive workload and free their time for more interaction with students.
5. This solution comes as a conclusion to the challenge of AI. **The teaching staff should design we are in.** the focus of challenge change from resisting AI to designing teaching, assessment and student support in ways, which recognize AI presence.

III. Conclusions

In conclusion, AI's universality must not be overlooked. The students make use of AI because it enhances their confidence regarding assessment on the one hand and on the other AI supports their wellbeing. Therefore, universities should provide training and guidance for students and teaching staff.

In this sense, universities should improve their policy and design strategies so that AI became an ally to teaching and learning. On the other hand, universities should move decisively in pace with the rapid development of AI.

Notwithstanding, Professor Dunbar-Morris' solutions deserve special attention:

- Clarity in assessment matters more than detection
- Students still need to think without AI
- AI, loneliness and belonging
- AI for staff, not only for students
- The teaching staff should design we are in.

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