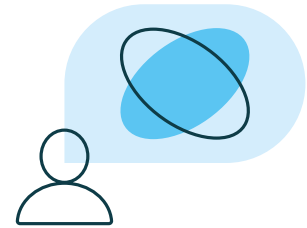


AI-generated text: What educators are saying

Educators talk, and we talk with them, and are always eager to strongly echo their voices in everything we do. Discussions that have dominated the media recently on AI-generated text have also featured heavily in conversations with our global community of educators.

Here we share excerpts of what we are hearing...



Firstly, we're all in this together!

The use of AI-generated text is a global not a local phenomenon. Educators from all regions of the world are considering both the opportunities and challenges that come with these tools for the integrity of the assessment process. As one UK educator acknowledges: *'We're all in the same boat, and the boat needs repairs, and even maybe a refit of some sort'*.

It's never too early to think about policy

Inevitably institutions are looking to update their academic misconduct policies and to include guidance on acceptable practices and use of new technologies as part of the assessment process. Whilst they recognise that enforcing these policies in practice poses additional challenges, it may be possible to apply sanctions where there is evidence that AI-generated text has been used *'without authority'*. Thinking more broadly, institutions may also wish to revisit standard definitions of what constitutes *'plagiarism'*.

Detection is not always straightforward

In conversations with educators they tell us that use of such tools is often identified quite by chance. This may occur through something external to the assessed work itself, a throwaway comment at a misconduct hearing or via a whistleblower. Detection within the work itself can be almost impossible, and as one UK academic integrity expert comments, *'[the work] doesn't have [many of] the normal hallmarks that tutors might associate with contract cheating'*.

Whilst some educators may be able to spot text which is *'uninsightfully robotic'* with disconnected subject material and inconsistent or nonsensical comparators, or which uses idioms or experiences that seem alien to the student writer, as AI-generated text continues to evolve such indicators will become increasingly less useful.

A return to more structured in-person assessment?

Some educators predict (and are already taking practical steps to facilitate) a return, in part, at least, to more formal assessments which require students to attend in person. Whilst a full scale return to the exam hall is perhaps not likely or feasible, requiring students each year, on a multi-year course, to complete a piece of writing in a controlled environment, which can be used as a reference point for their academic writing abilities may become a key feature of the assessment process.

Possibilities for assessment redesign

Many educators are genuinely *'excited'* by the possibilities that AI-generated text offers for experimentation and revisiting key aspects of the way in which they assess students' learning. The standard 5-paragraph essay has its limitations, and using this approach in a vacuum, as a means of assessment, is often viewed as problematic since students don't necessarily have to understand what they are writing. Educators also feel that struggling writers may be ill-prepared for the lengthy 5-paragraph format, and that shorter, more manageable pieces of writing, such as a thesis statement, are more achievable and beneficial in terms of scaffolding learning.

Another US educator is optimistic that those teachers who teach writing, where there is a *'strong focus on process and motivating students to get to know their authentic voice'*, while being the *'first to be concerned'* about the capabilities of AI-generated text, should perhaps be worried the *'least'*.

Promote and reinforce academic integrity

A US academic integrity expert observes that the need to have *'values-based conversations'* with students is paramount at this time. Giving students positive reasons to do their work *'authentically'* and communicating the value of the learning experience is key to helping to dissuade those who may be tempted to cheat. Talking openly and honestly with students about the ways they can undermine and devalue not only their own learning but also that of the wider academic community is a significant part of this dialogue.

Keep the conversation going

Just as technologies evolve, so do our responses in terms of the opportunities they offer and the challenges they pose, however, our global community is a valuable resource for continuing these conversations. The [Turnitin Educator Network](#) is a space to meet, discuss and share best practices.

Let's keep talking!

To explore more ideas about academic integrity in the age of AI, visit www.turnitin.com/resources/academic-integrity-in-the-age-of-AI

