CHARTERED ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS SCHOOLS

PERSPECTIVES ON: DYNAMIC CONVERSATIONS

IS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE INAUTHENTIC IF IT DOESN’T EMBRACE AI?

Dr Xue Zhou, Reader in Entrepreneurship and Innovation
Dr Lilian Schofield, Senior Lecturer in Non Profit Management Practice
Graeme Hathaway, Innovation and Learning Manager
Queen Mary University of London
Graeme: "So what do you think of this – Is a learning experience inauthentic if it doesn’t embrace AI?"

Xue: "Well obviously not! We do a lot of work around authentic learning, and it doesn’t incorporate AI."

Graeme: "Yes, I thought the same, but reading the UK Government’s 2023 paper AI Skills for Business Competency Framework made me think again."

Graeme: "It’s developed in partnership with Innovate UK BridgeAI and the Alan Turing Institute, on how business can boost their workers AI skills."

Graeme: "There’s a framework with 4 personas – AI citizens, AI workers, AI professionals, AI leaders and the AI skills each should be competent in."

Graeme: "With this emphasis, it made me reflect on the question again, especially with our role in “training” graduates for the world of work."
Xue: "Ok, that's interesting, if educators fall into the AI professional category, as my research queries the importance they currently place on AI in learning."

Xue: "I found that from 106 educators, 52% were aware of AI, (predominantly Chat GPT), but hadn't incorporated it into their teaching or research."

Xue: "Only 11% of educators had undergone training, with a suggested correlation between training, positive perception and confidence to use AI."

Xue: "Factors hindering educator adoption included, interestingly, concerns about the development of student employability skills!"

Lilian: "Oh, this is interesting. I agree that whilst learning is not inherently inauthentic without AI, integrating it can enhance student skills."

Lilian's colleague in the School of Business has done some more work in this area, let’s loop her into the conversation and see what she says."
Lilian: "According to the IMF, AI will impact a large percentage of jobs, possibly up to 60% in advanced economies."

Lilian: "We've developed a capstone project that uses Gen AI to enhance critical thinking, creativity, idea generation, data capture and analysis."

Lilian: "It is informed "authentically" through our partnerships with organisations to provide real cases aligned to the workplace."

Lilian: "Students are being exposed to AI tool use, shaped by our partners, that they will encounter and be expected to utilise in the workplace."

Xue: "Yes, according to Essien et al., (2024), the integration of Gen AI in education could enhance both basic and advanced levels of critical thinking."

Xue: "Salinas-Navarro et al. (2024) also argue that Gen AI tools can be integrated into experiential learning to enhance skill development."

Rationale
Graeme: "Both explorations are really interesting. With employers seeking to acquire an AI workforce, there are implications for university graduates."

Graeme: "Jensen (2024), highlights the need to develop AI literacy in both students and staff, outlining their Arizona State partnership with OpenAI."

Xue: "But my research shows that educators might not be aligned to this at present and the expectations of being an "AI professional.""

Xue: "It makes me think that, learning experiences can be authentic without AI "at present", but in the future, with the demand, probably not."

Lilian: "Yes, I agree. Employers and the government seem to support equipping students with AI skills and having a digitally ready workforce."

Graeme: "I think we are in agreement then, that, even though it's provocative, authentic learning of the (near) future may need to embrace AI. So...."
Xue, Lilian and Graeme: “Whilst we acknowledge that authentic learning can take place without AI, to keep pace with employer and government expectations, do universities need to, at least, revisit their employability skills initiatives to embrace AI literacy skill development and make employer-informed learning authentic in the age of automation?”

Key question

References