Chapter 2
The False Sense of Achievement:
Navigating Academic Integrity and Assessment Challenges of GenAI

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ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the impact of Generative AI tools on higher education (HE). The authors explore how these tools, while enhancing learning experiences, pose significant challenges to academic integrity and higher education by fostering a false sense of achievement among students. The chapter delves into the complexities of using generative AI in academic settings, highlighting the ease with which students can produce passable assignments with minimal effort, thus bypassing critical thinking and deep engagement with the subject matter. It critically analyzes the inadequacy of traditional assessment methods in distinguishing genuine student work from AI-generated content. The authors discuss the implications of this reliance on AI tools for the development of essential cognitive skills and the authenticity of academic qualifications. Furthermore, the chapter proposes assessment strategies and policy recommendations to ensure the responsible and ethical use of AI in HE.

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INTRODUCTION

The advent of generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, such as OpenAI's ChatGPT, has rapidly transformed various sectors, including higher education (HE). These AI tools offer remarkable assistance in enhancing the learning process by providing personalized responses, generating written content, and solving complex problems. However, they also present significant challenges to academic integrity and the authenticity of student achievements (Simms 2024; Song 2024). Generative AI tools have been integrated into many industries beyond education, significantly impacting fields such as healthcare, business, and law. In healthcare, AI systems like ChatGPT have been employed in passing medical licensing exams and aiding diagnostic processes, highlighting their increasing role in professional training (Wójcik et al., 2024). Similarly, in business, AI tools have been adopted to automate customer service interactions and generate personalized marketing content, demonstrating their efficiency in routine tasks (Aler Tubela et al., 2024). In law, AI has even been used to pass bar exams, raising concerns about how such tools might undermine the rigor of traditional assessment methods (Rodriguez-Echeverría et al., 2021). These interdisciplinary applications underscore the transformative potential of AI across different sectors, prompting a critical reassessment of its role in education.

In HE, the rise of generative AI tools poses profound challenges for maintaining academic integrity. These technologies allow students to complete assignments with minimal effort, often bypassing essential learning processes such as critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving (Currie 2023). The increasing use of AI-generated content has made it difficult for educators to distinguish between genuine student work and AI-assisted submissions, raising concerns about the validity of academic achievements (Zeb et al., 2024). This creates what can be described as a "false sense of achievement," where students meet academic standards without fully mastering the material, undermining the core objectives of education.

As these tools become more sophisticated and accessible, educational institutions face the challenge of balancing the benefits of AI with the need to uphold academic standards. This chapter delves into these complexities, exploring the impact of AI on academic integrity, the risks of fostering a false sense of achievement, and the strategies that can be employed to address these challenges in the evolving educational landscape.

AI and Higher Education

The scholarly discourse surrounding AI in education reveals a landscape of both opportunities and challenges. For example, Chen et al., (2020) discuss the efficiencies AI brings to personalized learning experiences and content delivery, while Fowler