

## Audio file

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This is the unedited auto-generated transcript of the DigiEd Dilemmas podcast recording Season 1 Episode 2 on the topic of ChatGPT

## Transcript

Simon Thomson

Well, hello and welcome to episode two of the DigiEd Dilemmas podcast. Thank you ever so much to everyone who listened and subscribed to the podcast following our launch episode last month and this month, I'm delighted that we are also going to be jumping on the bandwagon. I'm talking about ChatGPT. It seems that everybody else is, so why not us? So I'm delighted to be joined by Liz Bennett and Alex Black to talk about not just ChatGPT, but some of the benefits and perhaps challenges of AI in assessment, particularly in higher education. As usual, I'd really like to thank the sponsors of the podcast Student Voice. Really appreciate that. So please do sit back and relax and listen to real humans talk to other real humans, which I guess we might not be so sure is the case in the future. Hello and welcome to the podcast. If I could just ask you to introduce yourselves and perhaps just give us an indication of your current experience of using ChatGPT or another AI platform.

Alex Black

Absolutely. Thanks, Simon. So just to introduce myself, my name is Alex Black and I am a doctoral researcher here at the Institute of Education, UCL and I also have many hats, but one of them at the moment. As English Language centre coordinator at the University of Gloucestershire, I'm also an IELTS examiner and I also work with several universities in Mexico. And my experience of ChatGPT so far has been fairly limited. I started playing around with the playground AI about a year ago now, just over a year ago. Thanks to my brother who he works in tech, so he's been telling me about a lot about open AI for a while now, and also several colleagues who are involved with assessment have been very interested in GPT 3. So that's something that that has appeared on my radar, but it's only something that's really come to actively affect my work on a day-to-day basis. Very recent.

Liz Bennett

Hi, I'm Liz Bennett. I'm professor of technology and learning here at the University of Huddersfield, and I'm also work as director of teaching and learning in a School of education here. And similarly my brother pointed it out to me at Christmas and he's was in marketing. He teaches economics now. And so he was interested in it for generating some marketing. Text for a cottage that we we both share. So that was. Yeah. So that was how I got it. In terms of the institution, it's on our institutional radar. Not I'm pushing it in as much. You know, it's not come to me formally really. And I've been trying to talk about it in my school to my colleagues because I think it's something that we need to be aware of, but nothing particularly formal. And I certainly had only started playing with it just after Christmas and my brother showed me so, so I'm I'm incredibly. Well, incredibly novice. I'm not experienced at using it.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. Well, I think it's great that you've. That to to try it and play with it. And that's one of the things I'm certainly encouraging colleagues to do at Manchester. So I think Manchester yesterday our Vice President for education actually put a blog post out about ChatGPT, just to say it's, you know, we're thinking about it as a university and the Manchester Institute for Education has already run. A number of kind of mini seminar series discussing it. I think like many universities are still kind of working out. What it means for us in terms of higher education? And that learning and teaching kind of element to it, I suppose. Alex, you mentioned that you kind of started playing with it a long time ago. And the first question I've got is. Because AI has been bubbling around for. A long while. Hasn't it? Why is it that ChatGPT has really ignited that view, so it's now become a really high profile discussion point. For us in higher education and digital education.

Alex Black

Right. And so I think there are two aspects to this. I think first of all, it's the fact that this is an Open Access and freely available tool which anybody can use. Which is fairly new and also the second kind of significant detail of GPT is is the the processing power that I think ChatGPT is the first is the first time playground day I was was I mean a very similar. My understanding is that it works in. A very similar language. Model and but the the power of ChatGPT is such that many educators, I think at at secondary and maybe at undergraduate level would struggle to differentiate lighting produced by Chuck GPT from work. Submitted by their own students. So I I think this is one of the reasons why personally for and for many educators, the, the, the first kind of alarm bells that that are ringing as a result of using this tool regarding assessments and and and what implications. The tool will. Have for assessment.

Simon Thomson

Yeah, but we'll come on the context in a minute and an assessment, no doubt will will form part of that. So, Liz, what is what? Why is it? Why is it you think that particularly in higher education space, there is so much conversation around its existence? At the moment.

Liz Bennett

I think it's quite significant. I'm quite worried about it actually, and I think it's significant because we know that a lot of students do contract cheats or some students do contract, cheat and that's hard to spot and it's on a continuum with that. So we know that there is cheating. And I think it it at its worst. That's how it it can be used as a form of cheating. And we do a lot of assessment, which is continual assessment rather than exams, which is arguably, I would argue, better quality assessment, and yet it sort of it does and it it appears to appears to undermine that sort of assessment, non exam based assessment. And so. So I think that that that has the significant to undermine the validity of our qualifications and and that's why it's important for us to get our heads around and to be. To be clear and to be thinking about what we do, as in our practises that change that threat.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. So why? Don't we why we want assessment? Because I think it is a big topic of conversation, especially written forms of assessment. You know, we know the essay is a pervasive model of assessment in higher education. I flippantly said in the A workshop we had at Manchester that we should be thanking ChatGPT because it's basically the eradication of essay mills. Potentially so. If there's a positive, it might. Be that it's. Just shifted it to somewhere else. In some ways, hasn't it? So

what do you think we have to do as academics in preparing? Our assessments for the fact that ChatGPT exists.

Liz Bennett

Yeah, I've got some ideas, but there are any ideas, though I think one of the practises I'd like to see is shorter assessments that I, I mean I would struggle to be able to mark with the debt the marks for the debts that you need to be able to. Spox ChatGPT or other machine predictor? If I'm writing, if I if I've got long assessments. So I think short assessments that have been written to very specific briefs. So for instance, use this paper by May of 2020. To analyse this particular website, so very specific assignments perhaps shorter, but certainly specific, would would enable us. So having a completely a rethink of our assessment strategy, perhaps some programme level assessment so that you know we studied this in this module. How has your how has your thinking developed? So that shows transitions and development of ideas. But again, I'm sure it can. It can write reflective type. Assessments. They're not particularly good, but they're probably passable unless we write them. That says draw specifically on aspects of these particular this particular thinking, and that that we as the academic know that thinking very specifically and know the critiques of it. So I think our assessment needs to be more specific. More and more, yeah. Shorter, more specific and more applied to particular context.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. So what you're kind of suggesting there. It's gotta be context. Nuanced now, isn't it? We've got to really define more clearly the context within which the writing exists, because ChatGPT and similar tools do not understand the context within which that assessment might take place.

Liz Bennett

Yeah, I would say that. And they also produce things as plausible but aren't accurate. So we've got to be able to one way to avoid people using it. Students using it is to be able to more readily identify where people have used references that aren't correct that they're using. Arguments that are spurious, so so the so the more space. Traffic. We're asking people to students to be in the type of activity we're asking of them.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. Alex, what? Picking up on what Liz is saying there around having to kind of rethink our assessment practise in a way that takes into account what chat GPT can do in the in your kind of remit of English language teaching. Clearly, there's gonna be some nervousness around the extent to which chat ChatGPT might actually. Be used to demonstrate a level of English that a student may not actually have.

Alex Black

Absolutely, Simon. Yeah. And. And like Liz. And I'm also. And if we're thinking on our feet at the moment, we're trying to approach the issues which are arising from the use of chat GPT as they arise, but also trying to look at the positives. And I really like that positives that that positive that you just brought up, Simon about, you know, the fact that this could. Be the death of the essay. I think that's a, a, a phrase that I've heard recently.

Simon Thomson

The essay man, I think I said the death of the essay. I don't wanna. I wouldn't want to say the essay is. Dead, yeah.

Alex Black

Not that mistake, no, but I. I do think that it, you know, it really forces us to rethink assessment. It really challenges some of the more lazy thinking that exists in some institutions regarding what academic outputs should look like. So you've mentioned language testing. I'll come to that in a second. But I was, I was first of all just going to say that I was also actually some of my. Initial feelings about. About ChatGPT becoming such a kind of. Part of an important part of kind of popular, popular discourse, popular people's conversations regarding education. I think that at. The University of Gloucestershire and UCL, and there's a real push to to look to more multimodal forms of assessment, so my research for example is. Regarding using dialogue or using podcasting, kind of primitive forms of podcast as an assessment methods, but also a lot of my students we we don't really necessarily. Essays per say as a as a as a typical assessment method, we're much keener on using posters or personal reflections, as Liz suggests, or even websites which I think are much more authentic and relevant assessment formats. In regards to language testing. We do have a significant issue to address because with our international partners, we often rely on. Extended written text, written in English from students who are studying remotely. And it's something that we're already coming across as an issue that we're already facing and I've already received written work, which I strongly suspect. It was not written by one of my students by by any of my students, and so it's something that. That needs to be addressed and we're still thinking about solutions there.

Simon Thomson

Yeah, I'm just going back to you, Liz. Obviously within your kind of academic area of education, the written word is kind of a pervasive model, isn't it? For for what we're doing. So what kind of challenge do you think that ChatGPT really poses for that as a a model of assessment in the context of? Educational, research and teaching.

Liz Bennett

Well, I think. It's hard, isn't it? Looking into the future, that is what's hard and we're it, you know it it, it worries me and it seems quite huge, is what I worry and I hope I'm proved wrongly. But I, but but we don't know. So I think it in terms of that written argument, it produces plausible, but factually inaccurate. Text very easily and. I wouldn't use it because I wouldn't want to produce factually inaccurate and boring. It's boring the way it writes. However, if I'm a desperate student who's struggling and who's working and who's having a bit of a hard time in whatever way, it's a tool that you might be desperate enough to use. So. So it does produce. There's a potential for it to be a real theft, I think in terms of being able to to generate essay essays quickly and easily. And one thing it does do is it democratises cheating because it makes it accessible. You know, it's not a big cost to produce essays thrive.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. So let's say five years time. I'm not sure whether this is a dystopian or utopian view, but let's say in five years time it can write essays as good as an average academic. Yeah, because ultimately it's going to get better. What do you think in your context and in the context of many of the universities, we're really going to have to how how are we going to deal with that? The likelihood is it will be able to write as well as an academic at, let's say, a low to medium level at some point in the

future. At what point do we kind of start to address that? And say, right, what are we gonna do differently?

Speaker

Well the the.

Liz Bennett

One argument is that we should aim for quality over quantity, and so rather than producing having to produce a a significant volume of academic journal articles per year and be judged on those it, it would be the quality I I I fail to see how it can write. As well as. As a person because it doesn't have the creativity and the the insights that a person has. So I'm not sure I. Agree with the premise of your question. But I also think it it the the other argument that's going on around how do we respond to chapter GPT is to say that it's partly because we've we we're having to produce so many outputs that we're having to show our worth through that performative culture that is part of the issue. So less doing less. But doing at a higher level would be one response to that dystopian future.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. I think in conversations we had somebody said to me really great, which was that the the ChatGPT and ASR doesn't have any lived experience. It only has learned experience, so I think there are some unique elements to being a human and perhaps we need to as you kind of really emphasise what those are. So we've talked a little bit about the challenges there. What I'd really like us to shift to is what, you know, what are the potential benefits here of this kind of architecture of this kind of technology? So Alex, wonder if I could start with you, if you could think about a use for ChatGPT in your context and a potential benefit for it, what would that might that be?

Alex Black

Absolutely sign that. I mean, I think that kind of multimodal term in assessment is, to my mind something that has been a long time coming and that this could. Be a really. Great push for us to think about more authentic outputs for our students and perhaps even as researchers. I think that it's a fantastic tool. It's it's wonderful to be able to use ChatGPT to. Summarise basic information. I'm I'm hesitant about the way. That I word this but something. That an argument that I. Come across recently is that your students could use it as a way of overcoming writers block of getting some help to structure their essay. I think these are tense diseases that we need to explore with our students and perhaps in our own work as well. And but they're not users that. I would rule. Out because ultimately this is a technology that's here to stay. And we have. To learn to work with the technology.

Simon Thomson

Mm-hmm. Liz, what about yourself? What kind of how? How might you see a benefit in the use of ChatGPT or AI tools in the future?

Liz Bennett

Yeah, I've. I've been thinking about this a lot because one doesn't want to be sort of sort of behind the curve really wants to anticipate value. So there's a couple of things I wanted to point out. One of the it's a similarity to all the overlaps with the Manchester phrase bank. So it's that idea of, you know, how to get started. So you wouldn't use a Manchester phrase. Thank as as an experienced academic, but I would point my students to it as a way of overcoming a block. So similarly I think it

can be used as part of. Working with students to say, you know what, how do we structure and what does academic writing look like and what are the limits of what it will produce in terms of arguments and voice? So what? What? You know, what does that mean? What does argument and voice look like? Because it produces something that is formulaic, which doesn't have the. A strong opinion, a strong voice. It isn't built on. It doesn't integrate solidly. Theory and practise in the way that we're looking for in work. So so there are limits to what it does at the moment and we could certainly use that as a teaching tool, but having a bit of fun with it as well because it is quite fun. I love so it is quite fun. You know, if you ask it, who lives, then it is from Huddersfield. Each time you ask, you get a different. Set of experiences sometimes have been a criminologist once. I think I was. I think I might have had an OBE or a I had also. It was great. It was quite fun. So I think there's a fun element there that you can look at, but say, well, actually it's wrong. It's wrong. So so unpacking with student. What its limitations are in terms of professional practise, I was thinking. You could use it to generate a scheme of work or a Lesson plan, and then critique those, and you could also use it, say, within a marketing course to generate copy and then critique them. So I think I think you can look at it, what does it offer. Professional practise because it might be a tool that we end up using to do. Do some some of the sort of mundane stuff you know, arguably some a lot of our teaching does follow sort of very rigid structure. So we could. Get producer scheme of work. Produce a Lesson plan, but then also how might you turn that on its? Head and make it more creative. So you could have those that discussion with student.

Simon Thomson

Yeah, I think that that. Is actually a lived experience. Somebody in our family is definitely using Chacha EPT for taking elements of the national curriculum. At key stage three and using that as a basis for writing lesson plans. You know, and it's actually producing really credible stuff, things that they're just having to tweak. So I think you're absolutely right. There's real opportunities to think about how what the benefits are around this. So what, to what extent do you think we will have to respond in a kind of formal sense as universe it is about this because at the moment. Only every universe is going to have a plagiarism policy or a cheating policy, but how do you think the universities are really going to contend with the challenge that will exist around ChatGPT, and how that might be different to something like essay mills?

Liz Bennett

Yeah, I think institutions do need a policy around it. I think that might be that they say it is misconduct to use this without acknowledgement or that's I think the way that I would like to go. But certainly we do well, certainly my view is that we need a statement for students and then we also need. UM. Ways in which we teach students about it. So we have academic integrity module that students do in which they're exposed to some of the dilemmas around the whole whole gamut of academic integrity issues. And it needs to extend just so that students are aware of the ethics limitations. Values and accuracies inherent in using those tools. And also training for staff, yeah.

Simon Thomson

Yeah, I think that's critical, isn't it? Because the technology is we know that students will already be playing with this and quite often you find with digital tools, as you know, Liz, in your work is in digital education, sometimes the students are slightly ahead. Of staff with some aspects but they using it in a different context. They don't know how to take what they're using and apply it in academic context. So how do we train staff? Perhaps to have these conversations with their students, Alex or

not, your thoughts are both as a member of staff and perhaps as a doctoral student. How might you like to see those conversations evolve?

Alex Black

Great question, Simon. And I think it's really important to have these conversations with colleagues and. And to have the time and space, which we haven't necessarily had that much of recently and to to play around with these tools and. To talk about the issues involved, I I think it's also really important to to be working with new digital technologies or tools with students in whatever discipline you're teaching in, and that's certainly a dynamic that I recognise on my built or training programmes that often. Often it is the doctoral students who. Or gently supporting their lectures and during seminars with with new technologies, whether it's mentimeter or or padlet or whatever. So yeah, I think you know, this is a great opportunity for a more collaborative approach. A more kind of you know, that kind of creative communion that, that, that should be happening in, in any good. Classroom or in any good educational institution, we should be making more space for those. For that, for that time, for that time, just to play with the technology.

Simon Thomson

So in the context then of our organisations, would you say we should be actively promoting the use of this these kind of tools in a kind of ethical, moral, sensible, pragmatic way? Or should we just? Seek to kind of create policies to avoid their use, and that's kind of a this way or that way and it might be a bit in between. I just wonder which side. Of the fence, you might sit, Alex.

Alex Black

Absolutely. I mean, personally I'm very much in favour of of trying to embrace new technologies and as I said, I think this is a technology which is here to stay and and which is only going to get more powerful. I think it would be a mistake to take. And unequivocally kind of punitive approach to to. To to using open AI, but I I think we have to, we have to find a way to work with it really.

Liz Bennett

Well, I I I would. I would be a bit more strict than that. I think I would be in keen to play with it with students for them to understand its its value in terms of you know the critique of what, what voice and arguments are about. You know what what. So, but I wouldn't be happy with people submitting stuff unacknowledged as an assessment. So. So Clay, because it's fun because it's it generates writing that is hard quickly, but. I wouldn't be wanting my students to be using it in assessments because I think it's it's. It's it's it's not authentic. It's not plausible. It's not always. It's plausible, but it's not authentic and it's. Not always accurate. So I would want them to be playing with it to get ideas, but not not to be using it as an assessment. So I think I don't know where that puts me on that continuum.

Simon Thomson

Yeah, I think many people will be somewhere along there. I just wondered if if students did actually kind of cite that it was, they did work through Jack, Jack, GPT, would that be acceptable or are we saying absolutely not don't use it at all, whether you cite it or not, it will still be considered. Some kind of plagiarism or unacceptable?

Liz Bennett

It's an interesting question. Isn't it? And I feel as though. In a few years time. One could replay this recording. And think, Oh my God, what was you thinking? That it would be easy to be out, you know, to to, to hoist just yourself. Or your dog here. Yeah. So I I don't know what the future is. I think I think acknowledging it, you know, but how? Does that what form? That takes that. Putting it as a as a on the reference list, is that sufficient? What would that mean if I was reading piece of work that had Chuck GPT? Would I take 5 marks off? Would I take 2 marks off? Would I not take any marks off cause at least it was? Which I don't know the answer to that, yeah.

Simon Thomson

I'm not meaning any of you to pin yourself to the mass by any so. So don't panic. We won't. We won't ever bring this back up and hold the task. But Alex.

Alex Black

I think these are conversations that we should be having. Where where did these ideas come from? Where did this text come from? I think in my working context at the moment I would like to be very clear with my students that they should not be submitting text generated by the artificial intelligence for a written assessment that that should not be happening. But I'm I'm very much of the opinion that at this stage rather than. Punishing students and I'm I'm in also in a very privileged position of not I I don't give any essays. As I I. None of the assessments that I give to my students are essays. So and even the written assessments are much more personal and reflective. And and it would be very difficult. And really, for ChatGPT, I think to generate text which could directly be used in their assessments. So I I'm just in a very different position from where where Liz is. So I. And and and. I also really appreciate what this says about, you know, the fact that perhaps in a few years time we may have a very different perspective on this.

Liz Bennett

But have you? Have you tried asking ChatGPT to write a reflective piece because it can write reflectively? It can copy that sort of style. It knows how to do. You know the the the algorithm. It knows how to write reflectively.

Alex Black

Want to give an example? Is just to respond to that and. Because I I I I. Totally get the fact that for some. Collective writing it probably Chapter PT could produce something that that would be possible for for an assessment at undergraduate level and. I'm just thinking about the assessments that that we give in my department. And I think that there is an element of multimodality built into them and whereby students need to attach a video of them interviewing an an English language learner, for example. Which make it really difficult for artificial intelligence to to generate a response. I think we need to think about incorporating perhaps multi sensory and multiliteracies in. Into our pedagogies not just into our assessments and. I think it is really easy to get hung up on the possibility of cheating, which is a very real possibility depending on the assessment formats that you're using it at your institution. But I think we. Need to try and work past that and. Really look at the potential and. Really focus on the. The the the teaching and learning and and the merits. The Chichi pitika bring. Right.

Simon Thomson

I think what you're talking about there is and this is perhaps something that I've had in my mind, is the written word has been so pervasive in higher education as a form of both input and output that

perhaps it has had its time a little bit, and perhaps what you're talking about is. Starting us to really have to grapple with this kind of mixed mode type experience, where actually, yeah, maybe we should use more audio based. Maybe we should use more video based because. When you hear somebody's voice, that's about as authentic as you can get, isn't it? And which is why I love podcasts anyway. And when you see them on video, that kind of doubles up that authenticity. So I wonder if you both of you think that is a direction of travel, we will see and perhaps that is potentially one of the there's a benefits of. ChatGPT and particularly text based AI systems.

Liz Bennett

Yeah. I'm. I'm not saying. And I've been noting some. Has been. Speaking, I liked the idea of, you know, interviewing somebody. I think it it changes some of the our practises, doesn't our our external examiners being able to simply you know look at a sample, it changes the, the, the the assessment processes. But I think perhaps changes it for the better. So yeah, I think it raises really interesting possibilities.

Simon Thomson

Alex, it seems to me you're already doing some of this, but do you think other colleagues around you that things like ChatGPT will kind of encourage them to perhaps where they wouldn't have before picked up some of your good practise and experience now they might think actually this is a way forward?

Alex Black

I really hope so, Simon. I think that the alienating nature. Alphabetic literacy and academic writing is something that is very present in the minds of educators in. Mexico, which is the context that I. I've been working in. Ready for my research? For the last four or five years. So I think a lot of educators in that part of the world are already aware that in order to perhaps decolonized education, particularly language. Education. We need to be moving away from the written word towards something. More multimodal, more dialogical perhaps more digital as well.

Simon Thomson

I just wonder if I could ask you just one final question, which is how do you think you individually might make use of ChatGPT as a product, whether that's personal professional, how do you think maybe you've already used it and you think actually I might use it a bit more and I think you touched on this earlier, how might you use? That GPT or AI technology like that going forward.

Liz Bennett

Well, I think I might. Be using it with students to to. To explore the the ethics and the limitations and value, I think I might be using it in terms of, you know, generating a scheme of work which might be an activity I did with the students and asking them to critique it. I don't think I will be using it for authoring anything. I might be using it for. And in fact, I did have a go at this. This a scheme of work for myself on research methods. It was, you know, perfectly passable, useful, well structured. So I might use it to generate some ideas. And I would go through a reflective critical reflection before on it, yeah.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. No, I wouldn't expect anything else. There's, I wouldn't. Have expected you to say. I'm gonna use it to write things, but I think yeah, using it for those kind of. And I think one of the things that

I've observed is using it sometimes as a starting point for something. It can get. You like two or three steps down the road fairly quickly, even though you've got another 20 steps. Go getting you at least those three or four steps down the road is a starting point. So yeah, I think that's a great example. What about yourself, Alex?

Alex Black

I mean, I've only really begun. Using ChatGPT very recently, so again perhaps for idea generation. Perhaps just playing around with colleagues or students.

Simon Thomson

Yeah. And I think that's for me fundamentally what we need to be doing now isn't it is we need to be playing with this and not just as academic staff or as staff in the university, but also with our students because ultimately we've got to learn about this, these tools and the capabilities of it together. William, I think that's a lovely way to end and a summary of which is we recognise this technology exists and perhaps it's our responsibility to make sure that it's used in an ethical, moral, socially responsible manner, recognising that it has strengths but also weaknesses. So I think that's a really nice way to summarise our conversation. Thank you both Liz and Alex. We really enjoyed that and and hopefully you talking it through also as being useful. Appreciate that. Thanks very much. We've both.

Liz Bennett

Cheers. Nice to meet you, Alex.

Alex Black

Thank you, Simon. Lovely to meet you, Liz.

Simon Thomson

Well, that's it. Episode two of the Digi Egg Dilemmas podcast. Thanks to my guest Liz and Alex for stimulating conversation and sharing their thoughts and experiences of using AI, I think it will be a very interesting topic to come back to in 12 to 18 months time as our understanding of it has matured. And perhaps even our experience of it in a higher education context has become more nuanced. So my thanks to student voice as usual for supporting this podcast and if you want to add a dilemma for us to discuss on the podcast, then please do visit [dilemmas.digisim.uk](http://dilemmas.digisim.uk) and check out the blog where you can access a transcript of this podcast and the bios of the speakers today. Many thanks. Goodbye.