

Panel 'Gen AI past its hype and its impact on education in Aotearoa New Zealand'

Panellists: Claire Amos, MEdLeadership, Principal at Albany Senior High School in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland; Steve Leichtweis, PhD, Head of the eLearning Group with Ranga Auaha Ako | Learning & Teaching Design Team, at University of Auckland, Professor Stephen Marshall (PFHEA), Director at the Victoria University of Wellington Centre for Academic Development

Moderator: Kwong Nui Sim, PhD

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The [recording](#) is available on YouTube.

Kwong Nui Sim 00:01

Alright, it's 1:01pm in New Zealand, and very good afternoon to those who are in New Zealand or good morning to those who are in Australia, who is going to be in the afternoon soon as well.

Unidentified speaker 00:15

So I pulled up from the pulled up from the...

Claire Amos 00:25

Good reminder for people to mute their mics [laughs].

Kwong Nui Sim 00:31

Sorry, I'm going to mute you if that's okay.

Kwong Nui Sim 00:49

All right, let's start again. Hi, good afternoon everyone. Welcome to this webinar, and either good morning or good afternoon, wherever you are, but it's one o'clock in New Zealand. Let's start with a karakia, Whāia te mātauranga kia mārama. Kia whai take ngā mahi katoa. Tū māia, tū kaha. Aroha atu, aroha mai. Tātou i a tātou katoa. So in summary, it means seek knowledge for understanding, purpose in all that you do, stand tall, be strong. Let us show respect for each other. So have a good session, everyone.

Kwong Nui Sim 01:40

So this event is organised as part of the Asia Pacific Online and Distance Education week. In short, APODE, APODE, organised by Flexible Learning Association of New Zealand, FLANZ, and I was one of the Executive members, and I put my hand out to coordinate this webinar when I was in my turn. So as Bettina, who is also one of our portfolio member, is here to support us with this event. So thank you, Bettina, for being here and globally, we partner with EDEN, Digital Learning Europe, who will be holding the European Open and Digital Learning week as well.

Kwong Nui Sim 02:22

So today, we are convening a panel, Stephen, Steve, and Claire, who are here with us today for a conversation about Gen AI, Artificial Intelligence, now that it's past its peak hype, according to the latest Gartner Hype Cycle for emerging technologies. So where do our panelists see this impact of artificial intelligence, and in particular, Gen AI in our education sector in New Zealand? Before we pass on the baton to our panellists to introduce themselves within their context, Bettina would like to do some promotion about APODE Week and the upcoming event. Over to you, Bettina,

Bettina Schwenger 03:08

Thank you, Kwong Nui. Kia ora tātou. This is just a quick info for you to have a look in the chat for our other events this week. So we're kicking off today with our wonderful panel being back for the third time, and then we have a couple of more events this week. This week coincides with the European Open and Digital Learning Week, and you can see it all in the chat, in terms of where to register and how to participate, and also how you could become a FLANZ member, or if you want to check out the FLANZ website, you find it in the chat as well. We always welcome new member and over to you. Kwong Nui.

Kwong Nui Sim 03:52

Thank you, Bertina, so hopefully to see more faces in the upcoming events. So like I said, we are going to have our panellists introduce themselves. So maybe ladies first, let's start with Claire, please introduce yourself and maybe tell us about your context and what impact does artificial intelligence in particular, Gen AI have on your sector in New Zealand? So over to you. Claire.

Claire Amos 04:17

Claire Amos, toku ingoa, thank you for inviting me and thank you for being part of the panel. A little bit about myself. I am the timuaki or principal at Albany Senior High School. So I come very much from the secondary, and particularly the senior secondary space, and I'm really interested in the impact that it is going to have, and is already having in the compulsory schooling space. And I'm also a really vocal supporter of closing the digital divide.

Claire Amos 04:53

So I guess in terms of you want us to get into our first point, hey, just a little bit of background of what we see as the impact. So I think this is having a huge impact. I think there is real risk that potentially the, you know, from what we see from the Ministry (of Education), from what we see from government, and what we see from school leaders and from teachers, we're on a real continuum of whether we actually recognise how much of an impact it's having. There's no question it's having an absolutely huge impact on the sector. I think there's a little bit of quietness, resistance, nervousness, right through to head in the sand behaviour. That means we're not necessarily engaging with it. I believe it has the potential to power up how we lead schools, has a potential to power up our teaching capacity, but I'm also worried that this could be undermined by lack of engagement, lack of understanding, fears about technology, and I'm also hugely concerned about the digital divide, and that's both an economic divide and a knowledge divide, and what that how that means that the impact is having it is totally inequitable at this point in time.

Claire Amos 06:08

So I'm worried that fears is going to hold us back. I'm worried that the digital divide is going to mean that everything that we're doing is inequitable, and that also can hold us back because people start using that as an excuse for us not to leverage it where it can be leveraged in a really positive way. I'm keeping it short. That's the idea, right? Shout out to Claire Schultz, who I recognise from my school days. So good seeing a face that I haven't seen in years [laughs].

Kwong Nui Sim 06:41

Thank you, Claire, it's good to hear from the school perspective as well because, you know, it's not only higher education, but across the whole education sector. So Steve and Stephen, who would like to go first, Wellington or Auckland?

Steve Leichtweis 06:58

Stephen, get stuck into it.

Stephen Marshall 07:01

All right, so hi, I'm Stephen Marshall at Victoria University of Wellington, Professor in the Centre for Academic Development. So my role, over many years has been helping people cope with the impact that technology has on their understanding of what we do as a university and how they can use tools to enhance the outcomes that we're able to achieve for learners and also evolve our own practice.

Stephen Marshall 07:28

And I think the thing for me that is important to recognise is that in most cases, technology doesn't create particular experiences or responses from the sector. What it does is catalyse or speed up things that were already present. And it perhaps often brings the foreground concerns that people may already have about how things are being experienced in the education system, and it gives a context to have those conversations. And so for me, the biggest impact that I'm seeing Ai have, in many respects, is increasing the anxiety levels of

many people within the university system about the state of the university, and it's challenging our confidence that our system can deliver what it needs to for New Zealanders, for society in general, to the world, particularly because what AI is doing is making it very difficult for us to sustain some of our historic practices that have allowed us to operate relatively efficiently and cost effectively at scale, and sort of challenge for that, and picking up on Claire point about inclusivity and equity and so forth, it's making it harder for us to do the ordinary, let alone challenge ourselves to go beyond what we've done in the past as ordinary. So there are real problems facing us in terms of our capacity to enact the level of change, given how anxious, lacking confidence, and how some of the tools that we've had in the past to make it easier for us to operate have been taken away. But I'll share some more points in a bit. But that's that's an introduction.

Multiple speakers 09:25

Thank you Stephen. And last but not least, Steve. Please unmute yourself.

Steve Leichtweis 09:37

Thank you. Kia koutou, make sure I got the mute turned to the right direction. Listen, I'm at the University of Auckland. I work out the central provost office and the education office at the University of Auckland in a large learning and teaching design team. I head up the eLearning group within that team, and the focus for us is on TELL innovations and supporting staff to look for efficiencies, to adopt tools, to help empower them to do what they do, whether that's in front of postgraduate students or undergraduate students, as best as possible and and effectively in a pedagogically effective way, where that's, that's the focus.

Steve Leichtweis 10:27

And I think I'll echo a lot of the same sentiments that I've already heard from Claire and and Stephen, but you'll notice that I am flying a banner behind me, and this is for ACODE, which is the Australasian Council for Open and Digital Education, and in the chat, let's see if I can get this shared. I'll touch on a white paper that we just released from ACODE, and it was asking the 50 institutional members the exact same question that we're going to talk about today. And so the it is Australasian. So those 50 institutions are either New Zealand or Australia, Stephen and Victoria University. And I see Sarah Stein here from Otago. Many of the folks in New Zealand are members of a code as well as a big chunk of the Australian universities. And the same issues are coming up in these sector wide conversations across Australasia. That white paper and the link to ACODE is is free. You don't need to log in to get those and find out what's going on with ACODE.

Steve Leichtweis 11:49

I'll just talk about a bit of a summary of that white paper as part of this introduction. And within the higher education space, I think the number one concern that popped out across all institutions was the issue of academic integrity, and wrapped up into that concerns around, how might we use Gen AI detection tools? Are they effective? Do they do what they say? What is the potential misuse of AI by students? And that was kind of balanced out by the absolute understanding and desire for more effective, generative AI literacy, professional development, not just for staff, but also for students. And that touches at the heart of the the

equity issue that Claire raised and Stephen then also talked about, if for those of you that keep on top of JISC, which is a UK version of kind of FLANZ, ACODE, and ASCILITE and looks after the tertiary sector in the UK, they just released a maturity index for generative AI, and most of the institutions in Australia that responded to the survey identified themselves at step two within that maturity index, which really means that they didn't have any sustainable push for generative AI within their institutional structures at this point. Step two usually indicates that most people are experimenting, piloting, exploring, researching, but in limited or localised ways, and that the next step on that scale is fully integrated literacy programmes for staff and students and instituting a certain wide or scalable or sustainable uses of the technology that is available to all.

Steve Leichtweis 14:07

And some of the other things that popped out of there were conversations around policies and approaches, and what are we doing that coincides with our respective accrediting bodies or regulators, the people that we, we report to, and who feed us as in finances and budget and and possibly one of the biggest things that people saw as an advance or a response to generative AI was the need to adopt and adapt and move on from very traditional processes that universities are renowned for, which you talked about Stephen, you know, and moving more into the authentic assessment space. Are we actually preparing students? Are we challenging them in their learning so that we know that they're not using generative AI tools to subsidise what they submit to us? But at the same time, are we actually preparing students for the workforce that they're going into, wherever their direction is.

Steve Leichtweis 15:18

And authentic assessment, or the redesign of content, and of a course and the assessments that go with it is a lot of time, takes a lot of effort and time and thinking and at a point, and that's obviously at a point where institutions are stretched or constrained in financial ways, more so than ever before. And our staff, and I'm sure this is probably very similar for you at Albany Senior, our staff, are still feeling the effects of COVID lockdowns and the amount of work and effort that went into remote learning and delivery at that point. And now along comes another, you know, disruptive tool to kind of not give anybody a chance to breathe and to actually jump into this with eyes wide open and with the feeling like they have the time and effort to address the substantial change that needs to come with the adoption of these tools. Yeah, I got plenty of notes, but though the white paper talks through that, and you'll get a good sense of where you might sit within the Australasian higher ed sector if you, if you take a look at that white paper.

16:37

Where you ended there, Steve, and comment that what I'm noticing is, and this is, we do this again and again with different technologies. What I'm not seeing is people recognising that this is an opportunity to look at what they think doesn't need to change, in order to ask themselves if I was thinking about how I would do my job completely with a blank page today, with the tools and capabilities that are available to us even now, and with the expectation of what our graduates will need to do when they're finished with those tools and technologies, would I, in fact, be teaching what I'm currently teaching them right now? Let

alone should I be how do I incorporate this tool into my teaching is like, why am I even doing this? I shouldn't be thinking very hard about what it is for my discipline, for my cohort of students, for the environment that they're working in. What is it that is needed to be effective as a graduate in this space now, and not to fall into the trap of simply seeing this as as we've done with so many other tools: PowerPoint was simply a better overhead projector, which was simply a better way of using a chalkboard. This is a we don't even need to be putting content up on the wall piece because the content will be engaging and directly delivered by an AI personal tutor, or type, type level of question that I think we need to enable our colleagues to start being able to talk about.

Steve Leichtweis 18:11

Yeah, I think it's even more interesting with this particular tool, and that in all of those other examples you presented, Stephen, you had a target that you knew wasn't going to move on you for a period of time, whereas here we're dealing with a target that is actually moving constantly. And so you might get an idea of where the students should be in six months time, but you're constantly going to have to iterate and test those assumptions.

Unidentified speaker 18:43

[unintelligible]

Claire Amos 18:44

It really, it does really challenge the teacher or the educator's desire to be experts, you know. And I think it's, it's one of those technologies that the more you know, the more you know you don't know [laughs], I think, more than any other technology.

19:05

Yeah, I think the other thing that I want to and I'll just share very quickly, just so that everyone can see what we're talking about here, rather than just talking about it indirectly, I bring this in the job, so hopefully folks are familiar with the concept of the Gartner Hype Cycle. And so for those that perhaps haven't seen it before, there's this concept that all "innovations" in big quotes, so any new technologies, things that are being bought out, go through a process where people see something new and exciting and think, 'Oh, we can do all sorts of things with this.' Or 'it'll reinvent the world for us' and at certain points it becomes hyped up and really overblown. And in essence it doesn't do that, we then go what's called through the trough of disillusionment, where people basically say, it's not cleaning my house for me, therefore it has no value to me, and I'm going to ignore it. And then they realise that actually it has got some good and useful things that it can do for me, I can see people using it productively. I understand how it works. Perhaps the business models settle down, so I'm now not so worried about my information getting stolen, or how much money I'm going to be spending. And then you settle into just using the thing in the way that you understand it to be useful and valuable to me.

Stephen Marshall 20:25

The other reason why I brought up this slide is so just what generative AI is now heading in, deeply into the trough of disillusionment. So there are a lot of articles talking about how with it, it's a false promise, it's not going to deliver, etc. That's part of having this breath is to appreciate virtually every technology goes through that phase as people reinterpret it. So there's an important message there, which is, technologies are not singular things. They don't exist in a particular form, understood in only one way and used by people in only one way. You have all technologies go through a process of an initial common use, but then a discovery of a wider range of potential uses, and then a reinvention of them. It's a very normal human social process that we go through.

Stephen Marshall 21:16

But the other reason I brought this diagram up is to also be really clear, we're not talking about a singular experience of AI. This is an incredibly diverse collection of tools, some of which are completely different in terms of their underlying technological parameters, but they're also capable of being combined and integrated with each other to create hybrids that generate a combination of capabilities. And it's that capacity to hybridise different tools within a broader space that generates an incredibly rapid pace of change and unexpected things for people and to think about that, we've got things like computerised vision and facial recognition and things like that. Those technologies are now routinely used in many spaces. So there's now your cell phone camera is using facial recognition technology to identify faces in the images, to improve the composition of the image, to embed metadata about who's present in that image so that you can manage your library of photos. It's those combinations and the unexpected connections that those generate that I think are going to be a very fertile area for considering an impact on the complexity of the human development and knowledge building that we do in the university.

22:52

Hopefully, I'm not echoing as much now, but move the microphone a bit closer as well.

Claire Amos 22:56

It's good.

Kwong Nui Sim 22:58

Yeah, that's good. Thank you all for setting the scene and context in a detailed manner. Just for everyone, if you have any question or comment, please feel free to unmute yourself or put it in the chat as this will be run in a more conversational way. So I think all our three panellists have been touching on the questions are being asked since the emergence of AI. But do our panellists have any thoughts or perspectives on which questions are not asked or are being pushed to the back of the conversation in this emergence of generative AI, any thoughts? Maybe we can start with Claire again. Yeah, yeah.

Claire Amos 23:46

I was just I'm worried about that the recent conversations that we've heard, obviously the media misrepresents things as well, but around about the return to pen and paper, and I

worry that our question is, the questions more quickly asked is, 'How can we protect how we used to do things' rather than how we can actually change what and how we assess it's a it's a much, much less seemingly complex question to say, like, how can we turn off all the access to everything and return them be confident that you know they're using their pen and paper rather than having really challenging conversations where we are actually asking ourselves a what is actually the purpose of school like that's one of those big, meaty questions that I I think we often shy away from because actually, once you open that can of worms, it throws up a whole lot of complex answers that isn't solved by structured literacy, maths, and an attendance strategy, you know, because you're actually starting to talk about some wider purpose of schools. But also, how might we change what and how we assess rather than defaulting to the past practices and again, bundled up with that, I'll be a squeaky wheel on this one, how do we close the digital divide? Because I'm seeing that being used as an excuse to default to past practices as well. Like people start saying, 'Oh, it's unfair, because not everyone has access to those tools. Not everyone knows how to use those tools, so let's shut off everyone's access to those tools.' So I think closing the digital divide, I don't know why we didn't do it throughout COVID time. We're a relatively small population, and I don't think it would have been impossible to get nearer to closing that divide than we are at the moment.

Claire Amos 23:56

I'll kick in. We certainly closed that divide during COVID and that showcase that it's it's actually possible. So for students who identified as not having the right kind of broadband access or the computer equipment at home, you know, they were sharing a one single desktop with the entire family who are all studying at the same time, we were able to, as a university, provide laptop equipment and connections.

Claire Amos 26:03

I was frustrated that it was left to institutions to do that, though as a school, but for leaders who lack confidence in that space or lack drive in that space, they were given permission to not close that divide.

Steve Leichtweis 26:16

Yeah, we know it's possible, because when you're talking about the number of the percentage of students in a population that might not have a device or might share a device, you're talking single digits, and that's something that you can actually work to fix, as opposed to a much larger issue, which it isn't. So it's something that's fixable, obviously, from a university perspective, they would have, probably government would have said, yeah, it's up to you guys to figure that out as your own institution, whereas you're absolutely right from the compulsory sector, it should have been a government response across the board. So there wasn't that inequity from school to school.

Steve Leichtweis 26:53

I think back to the questions being asked versus the ones that are not being asked. Yeah, clearly, we're getting a lot of people asking about the cheating and the academic integrity, and why don't we just go back to pen and paper and invigilated exams? Because, you know,

that's what we know, and we can do that very well. But then the things that are not being asked are the ones that actually going to take time and thought, and that is around assessment redesign. What are we teaching and how are we teaching? Are we teaching the right things to prepare our students for whatever career they go towards? And they all represent time, people's time, and people feel like they don't have it right now. And so it is a difficult space to be right now with a tool as disruptive as generative AI really challenging people to think deeply about, what does this curriculum need? What should we be doing to prepare our students for wherever they go.

28:01

Another question connected to sort of both of those points, a question that is not, I think, being highlighted as well as we need to, which is, what are the acceptable business models to control who has access to this capability and how that access is being mediated, exploited, monetised, and developed with / by commercial interests. I think there's, there are superficial solutions to some of the equity issues that involve using various freely available tools that are openly available on the internet. But of course, what that is exposing the people who use those tools to is an extremely exploitative business environment where the personal data, the behaviours, the panopticon that that exposes people to is not ethically acceptable so.

Stephen Marshall 28:59

And part of the challenge there is that we've become acculturated through the development of the internet, to an environment where people are very accepting of a level of manipulation, of monetisation, of the presence of corporate activities within information spaces that are very challenging to have present if you were trying to educate people to be critical advocates of their own communities and cultures, and for them to be active participants in an effective democratic society, in that case, in New Zealand. So I think there's, there's a real challenge in navigating that space, given the conflict of interest from our technology providers who are very much dominating the space right at the moment. And it's going to be difficult because, as much as we might want to pre specify the use of singular tools, that complex ecosystem I showed in the image earlier is not amenable to simplistic use or disuse policies, which I think is a real problem.

Stephen Marshall 30:14

The other point I was going to make is that recently, I was very pleased to see on our campus, just prior to our large in person, paper based examination process, a big room filled with desks with students individually studying in the study week before the examination period and in the room were learning support people, tea, coffee, lunch, snacks, and an environment which had good power, good [unintelligible] light and was quiet and amenable to people focusing on preparing themselves for their assessment. And for me, that was both great to see, but also clearly an indication of the scale of the need. So the sort of digital equity question is not purely one of access to a technology or to some bandwidth or something like that. It is the entire holistic experience of translating that potential capability into something that is a meaningful part of a student's learning experience, and many of our students, that's been really problematic.

Claire Amos 31:29

I think there's been some interesting conversations coming around. The challenges that Te Kura has in engaging their students who are, you know, already disengaged from the schooling system and then enrolled into a virtual environment, which actually, if you don't have the social connections and those physical relationships, really lends itself to young people disengaging altogether. So it's never going to be about making sure everyone has a digital device and their capacities and the skills. It's always going to be an and and conversation about how we build and foster can physical community as well. Absolutely.

Claire Amos 31:32

I was a client of Te Kura in its previous version, the Correspondence School, many years ago, far too many years ago, I'm afraid. But where my experience of correspondence education was being given a stack of paper based materials that was...

Claire Amos 32:20

That wasn't that long ago [laughs].

32:22

Oh, yeah. And it was huge. And the only reason I worked my way through that stack was that my mum was very engaged with making sure that we kept doing what we had to do each day and put the time in to make progress through that. It. There's a lot of things that contribute to that distance model ever being effective, and we have to be realistic about the capacity of people to self manage and to guide their learning. And for me, one of the questions, coming back to the focus of the session, in terms of not being asked, is the open and honest conversation that I can hear being mumbled about at the university, which is people being worried that students are not themselves willing to commit and to engage in learning, and are in fact seeing technologies like AI as a mechanism to avoid having to learn. And then we've known students been strategic for years... Teaching in the computer science area, one of the great tracks was always designing the programme so the students couldn't avoid doing group group work that they had to do a class with group work in it to get through the programme because we knew that if you didn't do that, students would cunningly navigate the programme in such a way as to avoid ever having to do that. So it's a tension and something, I think we have to pay attention to this because there's a lot of possible great opportunity for learning if somebody chooses to pressure themselves to do that, to commit to doing that, put the time in, and skill the knowledge to do that, is another form of inequity.

Claire Amos 34:11

Yeah, I always think in the compulsory schooling sector, I realise that we're part of a privileged generation that learned a lot of foundational things one way, and then we developed a relationship with technology that allows us to amplify and enhance what we're doing and, you know, we don't ever want to lose sight of the the and, and. And, you know?

34:35

Those comment that was made in the chat by Michelle where she talked about digital literacies and how AI is more like social media than buying older productivity tools like databases and Word, and I think you're right, Michelle, but I also think, and I would say that that's been visible in our learning platform. So for example, it's a big difference between the old Blackboard Learn and the current version of Canvas, for example, is the timeline view of the world that is the metaphor used in the system now, rather than the old file and folder metaphor.

Stephen Marshall 35:09

But I think the thing that we need to be really careful about is many teachers have experienced the phenomenon of talking to students, giving them complex knowledge, and the student accepting the knowledge as it is presented to them and saying, 'Yep, that's plausible. I understand what you're saying. I can comprehend it,' and then 10 minutes later, not being able to use it in any meaningful way because their stream of consciousness has been superficially accepting of what they are being shown, but it isn't matched with the deep cognitive structures that come from an in depth and sustained engagement and direct application and reinforcement and re-engagement with complex subjects. And I think the challenge is going to be that that natural model of just watching knowledge drift by is going to be hard to interrupt in a way that leads to the capacity to then engage with knowledge where that superficial view is not going to be sufficient to understand what's being presented and to engage with it well.

Steve Leichtweis 36:24

Yeah, I hear what you're saying, Stephen, I think certainly from our perspective at Auckland University, we are on, we are a couple of years into a major push to get a lot of our courses to step away from a very traditional transmission delivery of content to something that's far more relational and active. You know, it's going to take years because that is another change process that we have to support people through, train them for, and and help them iterate, but you're absolutely right, the idea that it's no longer good enough to sit back and let knowledge pass over your head, and you grab bits of it, and you figure out how to do it yourself. We realise that transmission is one of just one small portion of a number of better ways to design and deliver and get students engaged. So we are definitely all in on active learning and relational learning within the university, but it takes a long time to push the needle towards the majority of it happening in that that way.

Steve Leichtweis 37:38

Yeah, you're absolutely right, and that's one of the tools that we've actually we're very fortunate, and we've been able to bring on a another license this year for a tool called FeedbackFruits, which supports group work in a very transparent, open, and obvious ways, so students understand how their individual contribution matches up with the team contribution. And there's a level of fairness through that comes through that transparency. A couple of years ago, if you asked students, what do you think about group work? Universally, 100% they would say 'we hate it because it's not transparent. We we feel like we're either, you know, having to bring along some freeloaders, or there's always problems, and none of it's transparent and can't be handled in an effective way by the lecturers.' But now we've got students in courses that have started to adopt the FeedbackFruits tool for peer-peer

reflection and feedback and group work, and the students are loving it. They love working with other students, knowing that there is a clear sense of fairness and transparency around the process of grading and assessing group work, which is lovely to see, because then it kind of it, it gets at what you're talking about.

Stephen Marshall 37:38

What do you think is AI's arrival, when it did, has distracted us a little bit from something that I think is a much more significant impact right at this moment on both our staff and our students, which is the rise of really effective collaboration tools that allow people to engage with peers, with communities, with co-workers, and to do that either in a variety of ways, so that they can do visual media, or they can do it with textual media, or they can do it around content artefacts that they share and collectively can edit it and work with. And I think that normalisation of the idea that the thing that we work on is not a piece of paper in front of us that we hold and therefore can only share with one person, one at a time, but it's a shared artefact that you bring together other people with you in real time to engage with. I think simply even being able to do that conversation with the university would have been highly challenging without all of the other distractions that, particularly AI has, and some of the other things going on in our environment.

40:09

I mean, it's going to pick up on a comment that Gabrielle has made in the chat as well about assessment in a second because it connects to this, the capacity to use a tool like FeedbackFruits, and I'm extremely jealous you've got the budget to pay for that, by the way, because it is bringing the observability and the capacity to see people's work in real time, which is, frankly, at the moment, the only answer that we have in the assessment space to the question, 'can you put your hand on your heart and say this graduate is themselves independently capable in these meaningful ways that your qualification represents, and can you guarantee that they haven't gained an illegitimate benefit of either assistance from other people or misrepresentation their ability through access to technologies.' And of course, the challenge there, and Gabrielle's comment talks about this idea of using video and a bunch of people have talked about using things like oral assessments and having conversations with students to really get in depth understanding of a student's understanding.

Stephen Marshall 41:22

But the sort of two major problems that I think we have to engage with as a sector in this space. The first is that there is an implication that you are making a holistic assessment of full capability of a person, either in relation to the course or for the full programme of study in order to validate the qualification outcome. That's quite hard, and the concept that we could do that in a single opportunity to have the conversation with the student is fairly unlikely. So these things can only be used in combination with other responses to that. And the second thing is, we just can't scale them up. I mean, the challenge, of course, is in any given year, our universities in New Zealand have between what's about 7,000 for Lincoln through to about 40,000 students at Auckland. If you just do the math. We're not having 40,001 on one conversation.

Claire Amos 42:23

Oh, and have you seen the copilot interview video, like the ability for people to get AI suggested answers in real time whilst doing a digital face to face? I mean, that's already that's already been...

42:37

I've seen worse. It's demonstrated a driver level video hack that can be done where the AI takes over your video persona. So in fact, while it looks like I'm looking at the screen and paying attention, actually I'm looking off to the side and reading a newspaper, but you can't tell that, because the AI is lying to you. So it's all it's an arms race which is driven by this concept that we're having to create, somehow, this response to control and to verify and to validate something which is inherently unable to be achieved. And I think that the unanswered question, and the question that is not being asked a lot is, when are we going to accept that some of the ways we have constructed our relationship with our student are simply not achievable in the future, and we're going to have to reconsider the connection between the experience of learning and the experience of being certified and qualified, and be much more explicit about when we're operating in each of those spaces, in order to have the capacity to maintain everybody's confidence that they should invest their time well to learn well, and that they should invest their time to become qualified, and that people should value the qualifications.

Claire Amos 44:03

Could there ever be a university model where the educator knew the learner like I think one advantage we've got in the compulsory sector is we can actually task the teacher with knowing the learner through multiple, you know, interactions and and our relationship with them. So you know a teacher, who's - we keep coming back to that at a school, your best strategy is to know each of your learners really, really well, and then at least that's one of your best safeguards. Could there ever be a university model where they know their learners?

Steve Leichtweis 44:39

Yeah, I think there is. There's an opportunity, and I think you have to think of it in a much more holistic sense. We - I popped in a bit of a comment there about interactive oral assessments, which does really well scaling up to about 800 effectively, and you can actually sustain that within courses of up to 800. We do have courses that are up into the 2,000. Our big stats, Stats 10X course that a lot of the students take, that would be a challenge. But I think if you start to think of it at a curriculum level, not as an individual course level, you could actually do, you know, something like interactive oral assessments or patchwork assessment, where you're getting students do a variety of different things, not just the standard exam, essay submissions, where it's very easy for people to get lost and disconnect between who's actually learning or what tool is supporting them to do the learning, and as long as you're thinking about it at a curriculum level, like all the courses that they're taking through to their final year capstone, whatever that might be, if you're challenging them in lots of different ways, and including things like interactive oral assessments or invigilated exams or lots of different options and mixing it up, you could get a sense at a curriculum level about that student. I think it's quite challenging at the scale that

Stephen and I are teaching at within our universities for an individual course to really understand that, maybe understand an aspect of it or...

Claire Amos 46:15

... and surely we're getting to a point where we could use technology to do cross referencing of data points about a student across their their programme in a way that we might not be doing at the moment.

46:27

Potentially, but that involves the student's activity being observable in a reliable way in those spaces. And I might, I actually don't believe that that's currently true, certainly not to a sense where I wanted to have a consequential... I think the bigger, I mean, I absolutely 100%, 200% agree with Steve that the answer here is to lift our thinking out of an individual academic educator decision, locus of control in a small individual class / course / unit / module to thinking about this holistically across an entire programme of study, qualification at a curriculum level. And I think part of that's because many of the things that we would like to do to assess a student's genuine capability to operate at the level of a university graduate much easier to undertake and to be confident in towards the end of their programme. So there are many things that you can do and say for a typical undergraduate in the third year of study where it's immediately apparent how well prepared the student has been for through earlier years of study in their capacity to do the the quality of knowledge or skill work or cognitive capability of a graduate of the university. It's much more credible to do that at that point, particularly because the classes are smaller, we tend to focus in and that makes it much more manageable. Also, the things that are done at that level are often things which are not trivially easy for a computer to now do, in terms of the complexity of and the multiple sources of information that are being used. And if AI, to pick up Carl's point, if AI is part of them doing that, then that's fine as well because it is nevertheless in the service of that complex and important outcome.

Stephen Marshall 48:30

And so what that gives us an opportunity to really seriously explore is what, what does first year, even the early parts of second year, look like when we strip out all of the panic about academic integrity and the use of of assessment as a mechanism to exclude people from higher education, and rather look at how we use feedback and really effective learning experiences to build student agency, to build their confidence, to build their sense of what they are trying to achieve in their programme, and then having built those capabilities and confidence in the students, that legitimises us then coming in and doing the holistic assessments of them because then we're speaking to them as they want to be and assessing them against those things. So it increases dramatically the legitimacy of the outcome of a university level education by moving away from, frankly, what too many of our qualifications do right now, which is piecemeal assess how well you can memorise content, and it just isn't what we need from our graduates.

Stephen Marshall 49:41

So these are the really challenging questions that this technology is finally forcing us to confront. Because frankly, this problem has been with us for at least the last 20 years. If you look at the narrative - broader narratives of people saying university education is disconnected from the value it delivers to people in their lives subsequent to university. One of the reasons for that is the fact that it isn't building capabilities and valuing those capabilities in ways that people recognise in the modern world are valuable, as opposed to a world where books were hard to get and libraries were really special places. Everyone's walking around with a far better library and a personal assistant these days. I mean, yes, it lies occasionally and makes stuff up, but it will get better, and it will get better faster than perhaps many of our staff will realise that it can.

Kwong Nui Sim 50:38

Oh, I'm just conscious of the time here. Time flies when great conversation is in place. So I wonder if we would like to have a wrap up by the sharing your perspective on what are the opportunities and challenges moving forward in your context? Shall we start with Steve?

Steve Leichtweis 50:59

Sure. Listen, I think, like a lot of universities, University of Auckland, for the last 18 months, has been in a very conservative, reactive space around generative AI. We've been thinking about how this will change existing traditional processes, worrying about and reacting to all sorts of negative potentials, and to this point, hasn't been a lot of focus or top level kind of consideration about the opportunities. And fortunately, within the last month, our University Council has approved a new stance for the university where we are, we're going to be all in and that's to maximise its potential for learning and teaching, productivity, processes, all sorts of things. I think there's a lots of spaces where Gen AI can actually subsidise and create efficiencies, even outside the classroom, where the student and teacher are the primary mode of connection.

Steve Leichtweis 52:06

And you know, for that to happen, clearly, we're going to have to find money in a constrained environment right now, and we also have to grow the awareness and skills and capability of our own staff and our students at the same time. So we're, we're now in the process of building professional development resources for students and for staff. And sowe're at the start of the process of looking forward, as opposed to the reaction or the reactive, conservative space we've been in for a while. Yes, the two will mix and intermingle for quite a while a time because there's a lot of people that work at the University of Auckland and not are all on the same page at the same time, but at least there is a clear institutional direction where we're going to be leveraging the tools for the opportunities that it provides. At the same time, we're clearly cognizant that these tools in the hands of anyone without the right kind of literacy or professional development can be used for all sorts of reasons and purposes that we don't want them to do within a university environment.

Kwong Nui Sim 53:26

Thank you, Steve, and Claire, how about schools?

Claire Amos 53:30

So I think there's some really clear opportunities. I think we're already exploring ways it can power up teaching practice. We're already interested in how it can address workload issues, how we can use it to power up Universal Design for Learning and responsive assessment practices and design more inclusive teaching and learning. So we're really proactively trying to support teachers to think about how it can be used in a really positive way. But of course, we are also really cognizant of the challenges. I have really big questions that I don't even feel qualified to explore, around Māori sovereignty for sure, and te reo and tikanga, and how that's being impacted by this, issues around the digital divide, issues around ethics, issues around privacy, data sovereignty, security, bias. I mean, we're doing what we can to proactively adopt it and to proactively teach our students about it, like one of the things I've said is that we support, encourage teachers to use them. We're going to support them, but we also support and encourage our students to use it critically, effectively, and sparingly and so and the sparingly thing is really important for us, for students to recognise that there's absolutely a place for it to be really effective for them, but to have really open conversations about when it might not be the inappropriate time for them to use it. We would never assume that just because we tell them don't use it, they're not going to use it. You know, we need to be realistic about that. So you need to have that critical discourse about what they might be losing by using it, the cost to them actually, and the cost to their learning. Rather than it just being about cheating and authenticity, it's about actually, what are you losing when you take the shortcut, whereas there's other times where that shortcut might be really powerful.

Kwong Nui Sim 55:26

Thanks, Claire. And lastly, Stephen.

55:28

Yeah, I think one of the great opportunities, well, one of the challenges, and the things that I think will help the university respond to AI in ways that are consistent with the DNA of the university, particularly, is that, I think one of the great challenges facing everyone, and this is true throughout academia and scholarly communities, as it is in the public sector - space and in all our communities, is The challenge that we now face in understanding and interrogating the veracity of what we're experiencing. Is it being misrepresented? Is it honest and open in terms of what it's trying to achieve? Is it trying to manipulate people or to misrepresent or to obtain some illegitimate thing?

Stephen Marshall 55:30

The capacity to operate in a world which has become astonishingly divided and quite hostile in how it intersects with people now and then I was saying to people in the past, I could quite confidently go into the library and pick up a book on a subject off the shelf and be confident that that book would contain useful and productive information for me, it might contain false sorts of things, but at least it was representing itself as itself. These days, the equivalent of that is to go into a space where you almost feel at risk of being physically attacked by the books and some sort of Hogwarts in this demonic Monster Book in this capacity to interrogate the world around you, to use a variety of tools to understand what is being argued, what information is being used, how it's being manipulated and represented.

Stephen Marshall 57:29

I think we are going to have to spend a lot of time helping people how to operate in those spaces in order for them to be critical thinkers, to be effective in using these tools in ways that are beneficial and not in ways that lead to them and their communities and others being exploited or manipulated in ways that aren't helpful. I think that, to me, remains now one of our great challenges, and I think intellectually, it's something that universities are well disposed to think about in that regard because we do spend an awful lot of time arguing about truth. Yeah.

Kwong Nui Sim 58:14

Thank you. What a great kōrero to start our APODE Week. Thanks again to Claire, Steve, and Stephen for your time and contribution to in today's discussion, and thank you also to all the audience who are actively engaged in this conversation. Let's do a closing karakia. Kia whakairia te tapu. Kia wātea ai te ara. Kia turuki whakataha ai. Kia turuki whakataha ai. Haumi e. Hui e. Tāiki e! Restrictions are moved aside so the pathways is clear to return to everyday activities. Thanks again for joining us today. Look forward to seeing you in the rest of the APODE Week. On behalf of FLANZ, thanks again, everyone.

Multiple speakers 58:25

Thank you. Thank you.