turnitin

Crossroads: Navigating the intersection of AI in education

Research Report - April 2025

www.turnitin.com

A focused survey on the impact of AI in education

Research objectives

- **Present a view of the impact of AI in education** with insights from secondary and higher education participants across key regions around the world.
- **Provide insights to institutions, educators and students** that improve understanding and help discover a path forward for the future of AI in education.
- **Share key findings with the education technology community** to improve support of academic administrators, educators, and students.

Methodology

Turnitin commissioned Vanson Bourne to survey 3,500 respondents, including **academic administrators (500)**, **educators (500)** and **students (2,500)** in August 2024, with interviews in the Australia (350), India (700), Mexico (700), New Zealand (350), U.K. / Ireland (700), and U.S. (700). Academic administrators and educators were from both secondary (500) and higher education institutions (500), while students were from higher education institutions, studying both full time (2,064) and part time (436). The survey was conducted online using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

Academic administrators

Educators

Students

turnitin

Contents

Introduction

The education community can use technologies like AI to advance learning and nurture a culture of academic integrity.

Use of AI in education. It is commonly believed that students and educators are at odds over the use of AI, but findings from our study show that this is not the case. Students report greater concern about the use of AI in their education than either educators or academic administrators. And, while students recognize its benefits, they worry AI is short-cutting their learning, and are looking to educators for guidance and support.

AI-readiness and the future of work. Organizations are expecting both current and future employees to be AI-ready. Yet, survey respondents agree that students are far from that point, and educators have a pivotal role to play in ensuring students are ready for the workforce, including the use of AI.

Educators are the key to addressing both challenges. Educators are tasked with helping students navigate the use of AI in their education in a way that benefits rather than undermines the learning experience, while also ensuring students are prepared for the workforce. However, with educators themselves still looking for additional resources and guidance on the use of AI, the question remains...

Where will educators get the support and training needed to help students navigate the intersection of AI and academia?

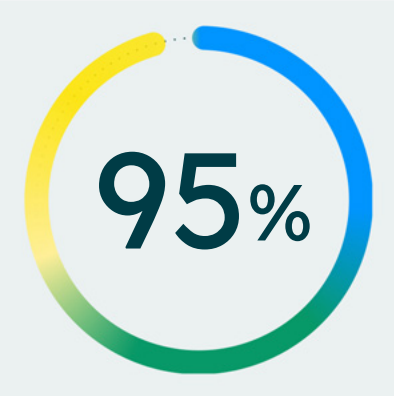
Key findings

1. AI adoption: Strong mindset, challenges in execution.

AI has been rapidly incorporated in education, but the line between using AI to “enhance student learning” and “cheating” remains unclear.

Despite enthusiasm for AI’s potential, many are struggling to keep pace with its rapid advancements and determine what is and is not considered misuse of AI. While 78% of students, educators and academic administrators feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education, **95% of survey participants believe AI is being misused in some capacity at their institution**.

Students, educators, and institutions alike require clear guidance and comprehensive training to effectively balance AI’s efficiencies with maintaining academic integrity.



of survey respondents think AI is currently being misused in their college, university or institution.

Using AI to write or produce entire pieces of work

	"Cheating"	"Acceptable"
	45% of Academic administrators	27% of Academic administrators
	55% of Educators	17% of Educators
	63% of Students	13% of Students

When we look at the response regarding the use of AI to write or produce an entire piece of work, it's the students themselves who are more likely to consider this cheating (63%) compared to educators (55%) and academic administrators (45%).

This is where the confusion arises: academic administrators, tasked with developing policies on acceptable AI use, report differing perspectives from students on the acceptable use of AI. This highlights the need for clear policies and guidance to ensure a shared understanding of how and when AI can be used in academic settings, and dispel potential unease and distrust.

2. When it comes to AI use in education, we still don't know what we don't know, and that can be overwhelming.

Students are outpacing all other surveyed groups (educators and academic administrators) in their concerns around AI, and there's still a lot that we don't know.

Despite widespread adoption of AI tools, the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming for academic administrators (72%), students (73%), and educators (80%). The feeling of being overwhelmed may cause many in the education community to stick to what they **do** know.

50%

Educators

of educators surveyed are worried about the use of AI within education.

41%

Academic administrators

of academic administrators surveyed are worried about the use of AI within education.

64%

Students

of students surveyed are worried about the use of AI within education.

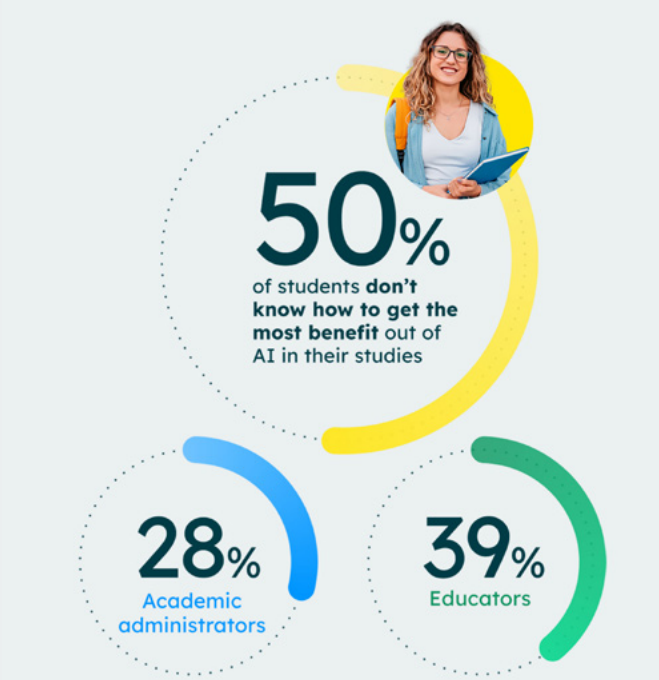
Half (50%) of educators and 41% of academic administrators are worried about the use of AI within education, so it's no surprise that those feelings of unease are having a major impact on the worries of students (64%).

Part of this unease may be due to a lack of guidance for educators, which hinders their ability to deploy AI in a truly beneficial way for students, or for academia more broadly.

3. Identifying the blind spots. With educators, students, and academic administrators learning to leverage AI tools concurrently, there are natural gaps in training and resources.

Half (50%) of students and nearly half (47%) of educators and academic administrators want to leverage AI for their studies, teaching and organizational roles, but feel they lack the knowledge and support to do so.

Half (50%) of students report that they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their studies. Educators and institutions are the key to closing that knowledge gap and defining how students can and can't use AI in an effort to take away some of the uncertainty. But, with students looking to educators for guidance on AI, who is providing guidance and resources to the educators?



"I don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in my role."

Educators are the key to helping students navigate the world of AI – to use it effectively in their studies and prepare them for the world of work. Yet, they are struggling with how to use it themselves – over half of educators (55%) acknowledge that they would like to leverage AI to make more informed decisions for their teaching and organizational roles but lack the necessary knowledge to do so effectively.

47%

of educators and academic administrators said, "I would like to leverage AI to make better decisions, for my teaching and for my students/ organization, but I don't necessarily know how."

4. Educators are the key to creating an AI-ready workforce of the future, but the burden of that responsibility is a big one to bear.

Today, educators and academic administrators surveyed are trending ahead of students in their belief that AI-readiness will be essential to students' future careers.

90% of educators and **89% of academic administrators** are positive that AI will enhance their students' future career prospects in some capacity. **70% of students** feel the same way. Organizations are showing increased interest in future team members that bring AI skills to the table, sending a clear message to the education community that AI proficiency is becoming a differentiator in the workplace.

Teaching, learning and assessment must evolve and adapt to support these new priorities as demand for an AI-ready workforce grows.

67%

of students agree that AI is essential in helping them prepare for the workforce and their future career.

81%

of educators strongly agree that AI is essential in helping me/my students prepare for the workforce and future career.

89%

of academic administrators agree that AI is essential in helping them prepare for the workforce and their future career.

As the numbers continue to grow, educators face a daunting list of considerations regarding the implementation of AI within teaching practices and internal processes, as well as its use by their students. Given these challenges, it is unsurprising that many educators feel ill-equipped to navigate this evolving landscape. While positive about its potential, educators are pressured by the volume and complexity of AI.

With 37% of educators reporting that their institution doesn't have the resources for them to use AI effectively, they are looking to external solutions for AI guidance - a potential issue for consistency and fairness across classrooms and campuses.

On a positive note, a significant proportion of academic administrators indicate plans to introduce policies that support ethical use of AI in education.

5. Students want to learn authentically, while using AI to support their work. The challenge across the board is to overcome the risks of doing so, while also ensuring academic integrity.

Adoption and use of AI in academia has exploded, and misuse is still rampant. The risks of AI use must be addressed in order to foster academic integrity and move forward together.

Educational institutions, and those working within them, need to thoughtfully adopt and integrate AI in order to ensure workplace readiness for their students. An examination of the perceived risks associated with AI reveals alignment across the education community. 59% of students worry that risk of over-reliance on AI could lead to a reduction in critical thinking skills.

Key findings: Students want to learn authentically, while using AI to support their work. The challenge across the board is to overcome the risks of doing so, while also ensuring academic integrity.

Top 2 challenges

Academic administrator

1. Academic integrity — 41%
2. Lack of expertise/ training on using AI tools — 39%

Educator

1. Academic integrity — 31%
2. Lack of skills and training on AI tools — 31%

Students

1. Worried about becoming over-reliant on AI — 49%
2. Plagiarism concerns/ using AI will get you in trouble — 47%

Top 2 risks

Academic administrator

1. Misinformation/ misuse of AI tools — 41%
2. Loss of innovation/ critical thinking — 41%

Educator

1. Over-reliance on AI, reducing critical-thinking skills — 51%
2. Reduced face-to-face interaction with students — 33%

Students

1. Over-reliance on AI, reducing critical thinking skills — 59%
2. Unreliable or inaccurate data/misinformation — 47%

There is a significant balancing act to be navigated for AI usage within education - weighing ethical concerns and academic integrity with student preparedness and support for employee decision making. This is a growing concern across all surveyed groups, with over half (57%) reporting that AI is a threat to academic integrity.

Defining the appropriate use of AI should be a top priority for institutions, as fostering critical thinking skills is fundamental to the mission of education. If critical thinking is no longer effectively taught, and students are inadequately prepared for the real world, the ability for educational institutions to fulfill their core purpose becomes increasingly difficult.

6. When it comes to AI use, there is little to differentiate between the concerns of secondary education and higher education.

Respondents from both secondary and higher education institutions identified academic integrity and a lack of expertise/training on using AI tools as the top to challenges they are facing in the age of AI. They also shared the same concerns when it came to the risks associated with AI in education.

Both groups named misinformation/misuse of AI tools and loss of innovation/ critical thinking abilities as the top two risks in the age of AI.

Top 2 challenges

	Secondary education	Higher education
1. Academic integrity	43%	39%
2. Lack of expertise/ training on using AI tools	38%	40%

Top 2 risks

	Secondary education	Higher education
1. Misinformation/ misuse of AI tools	40%	42%
2. Loss of innovation/ critical thinking	41%	41%

While there is plenty of work to be done to overcome these concerns, the good news is that agreement on top challenges and risks across higher education and secondary education indicates a natural alignment of priorities in addressing them.

From shared focus to proposed funding, there is an opportunity for collaboration and a joint effort to establish standard practices and policies regarding the use of AI across education and learning environments.

For educators and academic administrators, this is a chance to identify training and resources that directly address challenges and mitigate risks, so they can focus on preparing students for an AI-enabled future while protecting academic integrity. For students, who have asked for guidance and support in leveraging AI tools without jeopardizing the learning process, this is a chance to establish positive AI use practices, develop skills that enhance their digital citizenship, and support AI-readiness in their future careers.

7. There are differences across countries with how academic administrators, educators, and students are responding to and feeling about AI in education.

Response to the impact of AI in education

Among **academic administrators**, **educators**, and **students** surveyed in Australia / New Zealand, India, Mexico, UK / Ireland, and the US there is positivity about the impacts that AI is having on education. Academic administrators, educators, and students surveyed in India and Mexico reported feeling most positive about the impacts of AI as compared to their counterparts in Australia / New Zealand, UK / Ireland, and the US.

India

93%

feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education

Mexico

85%

feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education

Australia & New Zealand

78%

feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education

UK & Ireland

65%

feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education

US

69%

feel positive about the impacts that AI is having on education

Feelings about the availability and volume of AI

Among surveyed participants, **academic administrators**, **educators**, and **students** feel overwhelmed by the sheer availability and volume of AI, with respondents in India reporting the highest level of concern in this area. This widespread sentiment underscores the need for guidance across the board.

India
85%
say the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming

UK & Ireland
75%
say the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming

Australia & New Zealand
78%
say the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming

Mexico
62%
say the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming

US
71%
say the availability and volume of AI is overwhelming

Students report not knowing how to get the most benefit out of AI for their studies

Half (50%) of **students** surveyed across Australia, New Zealand, India, Mexico, the UK, Ireland, and the US reported that they don't know how to get the most benefit from AI. This uncertainty is most evident among students in India, Mexico, and UK / Ireland. A focus on guidance and policy, coupled with open and collaborative conversations between students and educators, is needed to provide greater transparency on the use of AI in the education sector.

Mexico
51%
say they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their role/studies

India
50%
say they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their role/studies

UK & Ireland
47%
say they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their role/studies

US
43%
say they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their role/studies

Australia & New Zealand
36%
say they don't know how to get the most benefit out of AI in their role/studies

Conclusion

Designing a strategy that enables students to use AI appropriately, and supports educators' efforts to integrate AI in the teaching and learning process.

With only 28% of institutions fully integrating AI into their strategies, more collaboration between academic administrators, educators, and students is essential. Policies must balance academic rigor with AI's potential, to ensure learning remains engaging and authentic while keeping pace with innovation and advancements in technology.

Clear guidelines on acceptable AI use—tailored for coursework, exams, and revision—are crucial. Students must understand how AI can enhance critical thinking and career readiness, shifting their mindset toward its opportunities.

Empower students to use AI ethically and responsibly to support and advance their education.

- **Communicate openly and consistently** across the academic community, including students, educators, and academic administrators.
- **Involve students in developing and defining AI policies**, building on their collective experience in navigating the use of AI in their own education.
- **Provide clear guidance that defines acceptable use of AI** to support learning in specific areas (coursework vs. exams vs. revision for example).
- **Leverage AI policies to set expectations and reorient student mindsets.** AI holds many opportunities students may not be aware of yet.
- **Teach students how AI can be used to support and develop their critical thinking skills**, rather than replace them or take them away.
- **Inform students about the importance of AI after their education**, including where AI can be an extension of their knowledge and how opportunities for efficiency through AI use may provide them with more time to focus on creativity and critical thinking.

Support educator efforts to integrate AI in the teaching process and support students as they leverage new technologies along their learning journey.

- **Take advantage of educators' positive mindset and desire to learn.** Train them to use AI tools effectively themselves.
- **Encourage collaboration between educators and students** with a focus on shared understanding of AI policies and guidelines, as well as transparency and open conversations around appropriate use.
- **Provide guidelines on what is and what is not acceptable use in their role.** For example, AI can be used optimally for time-saving administrative tasks, such as curriculum planning or automated grading, but should be used with caution (or within provided guidelines) when it comes to generating feedback.
- **Highlight that, as one educator put it, "we need the human touch, always."** Without human interaction and student/educator engagement, students may feel shortchanged and disengaged from their education.
- **Inform educators of the opportunities and risks of integrating AI** in their teaching and learning practice and use external resources to support an effective roll out.

Help is needed to facilitate responsible use of AI and prepare students for the future of work.

In addition to clear policies and guidance on AI use, institutions must develop a plan to support educators and students. At the same time, educators and institutions have to help students prepare for a future that expects AI-readiness in the workplace.

64%

of students are worried about the use of AI in education, more so than educators (50%) and academic administrators (41%).

95%

of survey respondents think AI is currently being misused in their college, university or institution.

67%

of students agree that AI is essential in helping them prepare for the workforce and their future career.

47%

of educators and academic administrators said, “I want toleverage AI to make better decisions, for my teaching and students/for my organization, but I don’t necessarily know how.”

86%

of survey respondents agree that it is the responsibility of their institution, college, or university to educate students on how to use AI ethically.

AI holds significant promise for transforming education, with 92% of educators and 88% of students anticipating an expanded role for AI in education in the next two to three years.

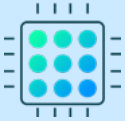
However, help may always be needed to facilitate responsible use of AI, keep up with evolving technology, and prepare students for the future of work. While AI is not the antithesis of academic integrity, more must be done to build trust around the use of AI in education.

Defining the appropriate use of AI should be a top priority for institutions, as fostering critical thinking skills is fundamental to the mission of education. If critical thinking is no longer effectively taught, and students are inadequately prepared for the real world, it calls into question how educational institutions will adapt and evolve to fulfill their core purpose.

Encouragingly, it seems that the education community is ready to have those discussions, and 33% of students in higher education report their institution involved them in making new AI policies.

A clear path forward lies in equipping educators with the training needed to harness AI effectively and integrate it in ways that genuinely enhance the student experience.

AI is not the antithesis of academic integrity, but more needs to be done to build trust around the use of AI in education.



Students and educators are not at odds over the use of AI in education, but students report higher concern about its impact on their education.

Educators are expected to provide guidance and support for students on the use of AI, but educators themselves are also seeking more training and resources.

Organizations expect current and future employees to be AI-ready, but students are currently unprepared.

Turnitin

Turnitin is a global company dedicated to ensuring the integrity of education and meaningfully improving learning outcomes. For more than 25 years, Turnitin has partnered with educational institutions to promote honesty, consistency, and fairness across all subject areas and assessment types. Over 16,000 customers in 185 countries use Turnitin solutions to uphold academic integrity, increase learning performance, and enable students and professionals to do their best, original work.

Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne is an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector. Their reputation for robust and credible research-based analysis is founded upon rigorous research principles and their ability to seek the opinions of senior decision makers across technical and business functions, in all business sectors and all major markets. www.vansonbourne.com

For more information, visit www.turnitin.com

turnitin®

VansonBourne

TII_GL_AI_Research_EduFocussedSurvey_Ebook_0425