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Perspectives on current and emerging use of Generative and other AI models supporting multiple faculty roles

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Abstract

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), especially generative AI, is reshaping academia. While many faculty are concerned about students' unethical use of AI, both students and faculty find it a helpful tool that, when used properly, supports both learning and teaching. In this qualitative study, a series of interviews with faculty from different colleges and majors was conducted to examine how they adapt their teaching styles to the new paradigm. A critical analysis of the data reveals three emergent themes: a paradigm shift in information consumption in academia, a rethinking of content delivery mechanisms in higher education institutions, and a reconfiguration of the human role in assessment and evaluation. Implications for research and practice are drawn.

Keywords: AI, LLMs, academia, faculty, qualitative research, thematic analysis

Introduction

ChatGPT, the first generative AI large language model (LLM) widely recognized by the public, was released in 2019, followed by its mainstream arrival about a year later, and by the arrival of other similar models, such as Claude and Gemini. Over the next five years, generative AI will change the way we approach tasks across many domains, particularly in Academia. The newly emerged tools, particularly generative AI and large language models (LLMs), are reshaping the academic environment. While there is some concern about the increasing frequency of unethical use of AI, many faculty and students see AI as a helpful tool that can facilitate teaching and learning. Given such a limited timeframe, many faculty are uncertain about how to perceive the fact that AI is used virtually everywhere in academia, from simple information search to creating complex auto-graders and code generators. In this unpredictable environment, faculty views of AI vary from skeptical and critical (should be avoided altogether in academia) to more optimistic, viewing it as just a helpful tool that facilitates learning (Mah & Gross, 2024).

Many research studies examine faculty perceptions and use of AI; however, most rely on quantitative methods, offering no in-depth understanding of the reasons behind these perceptions. In an attempt to fill this gap, we ran a qualitative study to determine not only the strategy that the faculty chose in dealing with AI, but also the motivation for their choices. We sought to understand how the faculty perceives the future of Academia in light of the newly introduced AI tools and the changes they see as a result. In this research, we conducted a series of interviews with faculty from different universities and areas of expertise to

determine how faculty adapt to AI and what changes they perceive in academia as a result. We answered the following research questions:

RQ1: How are faculty teaching undergraduate students by using AI to support learning in classrooms?

RQ2: How do instructors perceive the influence of students' AI use on teaching and learning practices?

RQ3: What pedagogical strategies/ changes are warranted in response to the increasing use of AI in higher Ed?

The next section presents a brief overview of the research literature in this domain, followed by a description of the study's methodology. The results for each research question are presented, followed by a critical discussion of the study's overall themes and conclusion.

Literature Review

Large language models (LLMs) and generative artificial intelligence (AI), collectively part of the broader category of AI, are quickly permeating higher education. Transforming the way that knowledge is produced, shared, and accessed, it is altering traditional approaches to teaching, learning, research, and more (Adamakis & Rachiotis, 2025). This rapid reshaping not only creates opportunities but also challenges for both educators and learners alike. Teaching efficiency and learning experiences are being enhanced for educators and learners, respectively, through the use of AI tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, plagiarism detectors, adaptive learning platforms, and predictive analytics (Iqbal et al., 2025). The successful use of these tools, however, requires the coordinated participation of all involved parties, from educators to learners to institutional administrators (Tunkevichus & Bagrationi, 2025). Disparities in access to AI tools across institutions and disciplines worldwide are leading to uneven adoption (Matere, 2024; Zhao et al., 2025). If the implementation of AI into higher education is going to be successful, the choice of tools must be deliberate, and the implementation must be responsible and ethical.

Faculty perspective

Equally, or perhaps more, crucial to the successful integration of AI into higher education are faculty perspectives. Mah & Gross (2024) profiled faculty into four categories: optimistic (somewhat agreeing that the benefits outweigh the challenges), critical (agreeing with the challenges over the benefits), critically reflected (agreeing with the perceived benefits and being critical of the challenges), and neutral (both benefits and challenges are rated low), suggesting that the faculty perspective is not a simple dichotomy. Effort expectancy has also been shown to influence faculty's intention to use AI, alongside demographic factors such as gender and academic position (Alotaibi & Alayed, 2025).

From a tool perspective, faculty use some of the same tools as students, such as ChatGPT, but also adopt other educator-focused tools. One additional entry to the chatbot category is StatBot, which is a generative AI-powered chatbot for quantitative methods classes (Karunarathne et al., 2024). AI-powered grading systems, such as RubricAI, excel with structured/objective assessments and also implement similar plagiarism detection to Turnitin (Kannan et al., 2025). Intelligent feedback systems, such as Automated Feedback, are used to provide lower-level feedback on writing assessments (Fraser et al., 2023). For generating exam questions, platforms like IntelliA help faculty focus on instructional goals rather than manually writing prompts (Wang et al., 2025). Faculty also use discipline-specific AI tools, such as SEPAL in petroleum engineering, to align curriculum with industry standards (Okafor et al., 2025).

Despite the hype surrounding AI's mainstream introduction, only a small percentage of faculty are integrating AI into their routines (Hung et al., 2026). The majority of the concerns revolve around the lack of formal training, infrastructure, and risk to academic integrity. Formal training, such as hands-on, discipline-specific training, is essential for faculty success in AI integration (Mabrito, 2026; Chan et al., 2025). Although many faculty acknowledge the benefit of AI for routine academic operations, the lack of training and institutional policy hinders its adoption (Iatrellis et al., 2025). Other concerns, such as ethical risks and assessment bias (Rozputnia et al., 2025) and negative impacts on teaching autonomy (Sahay et al., 2025), add fuel to the faculty resistance fire.

Non-US Perspectives

Faraon et al. (2025) compared the usage and impressions of AI, specifically ChatGPT, between the USA and five Nordic countries. They found that social influence had a stronger influence in the USA than in the Nordic Countries and ultimately cautioned AI implementers to remember "... the importance of understanding regional differences when developing educational approaches" (p. 42). Wang et al. (2005) reviewed AI policies at the state and regional levels and their implementation. They found a very top-down approach to the implementation, concluding, "weak cooperation appears at the state level, while little cooperation is found among regional agencies" (p. 322). This suggests there is a disconnect between how the implementation of AI in higher education is occurring in different locations, with the USA being led more from the ground up (students) than other countries. One of the differences in the acceptance of Artificial Intelligence Generated Content (AIGC). AIGC in China is encouraged at some levels, while in many US universities, there are strict policies about submitting AIGC. They found that trust was a key feature of the acceptance of AI in general. That is, the trust mitigates "privacy concerns, information accuracy, and social influence" (p. 95).

Trust Issues

In organizational settings, temporary teams are often created for specific, short-lived tasks. Studies have shown that trust between members of these teams can be quickly formed (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998), with this type of trust termed swift trust (Meyerson et al., 1996). While swift trust is typically studied in human teams, Barrett (2025) suggests that due to AI's ability to engage and collaborate in a human-like manner, it can become an additional team member. Duan et al. (2024) examined variables that increase trust in teams, including AI as another team member. They broke trust into two categories: initial and situational. When AI trust was initially high, it was because it was expected to be less likely to have hidden intentions or conflicting interests (benevolence), less likely to have bias (integrity), or less error-prone (ability). When initial trust was low, it was because AI was unable to identify and/or correct its own errors. Continued, or situational, trust was found to have four main factors: responsiveness (promptness, timeliness, and consistency of replies), communication proactivity (being able to provide useful information without being asked), rectification and acknowledgment of mistakes, and learned distrust (having encountered AI errors, or hallucinations, in the past, wasting mental capacity on double-checking). It is crucial for AI systems to be consistent, reliable, and hallucination-free to ensure that they help rather than hinder human decision-making (Zhang et al., 2023).

Methodology

This is a qualitative interpretive field study. This study represents the faculty perspective. The participants represent a diverse cross-section of disciplines and years of experience in higher education. Our participants represent disciplines such as Information Systems, Social Sciences, Communication, Law, Cyber Security, and Computer Science. The average number of teaching experience ranges from 3 to 30 years or more. This is a convenience-based sampling in which each of the researchers used their professional contacts to recruit

4-5 participants. The level of familiarity ranged from 3 (somewhat familiar) to five (very familiar). There were 19 interviews conducted. Google Meet was used for these meetings, and a transcription was generated. The average duration of these meetings is 25 minutes.

The data were analyzed using a systematic thematic analysis approach to ensure rigor and enhance data depth. The data was reviewed multiple times for a deeper understanding. The iterative process of reading allowed us to identify patterns and meanings that naturally emerged from the data. Coding was done in multiple stages, with all coding information being shared with all researchers for peer debriefing in order to ensure reflexivity. The initial codes were merged into broader conceptual categories, reducing the volume of interview data. In the final stage of data-analytic reduction, sub-themes were merged to create a higher-level theme that represents the patterned responses in the data. This was an iterative process as themes were refined, collapsed, expanded, and redefined for clarity. Finally, the thematic analysis yielded multiple interconnected themes that captured the complexity of the data, providing a structured and nuanced understanding of the research problem.

Results

Demographics

To provide some context for the following results, Tables 1 and 2 provide some useful demographic information, such as the primary department in which the interviewee resides and their academic rank.

Table 1: Interviewee academic discipline

Discipline / Field	# of Interviewees
Computer Science / Information Systems / Cyber Security	5
Business / Analytics / Management	4
Communication / Journalism / Organizational Leadership	2
History / Social Sciences / Humanities	1
Mathematics / Statistics / Accounting	2
Education / Curriculum & Instruction	1
Engineering / Computer Engineering	2
Machine Learning / AI / Data Science	2
Total	19

Table 2: Interviewee academic rank

Academic Rank	# of Interviewees
Professor	4
Associate Professor	3
Assistant Professor	11
Instructor	1
Total	19

RQ1: How are faculty teaching undergraduate students by using AI to support learning in classrooms?

A thematic analysis of the data revealed four emergent themes for this research question. A detailed description of all the themes is presented below:

Theme 1: Productivity tool/Teaching assistant

Our data suggest that faculty primarily use AI to streamline their preparatory tasks rather than as a substitute for core instruction. As several participants mentioned, they use these tools to generate assignments,

summarize lecture notes, and draft exam questions. Some are using it to pull slides into spreadsheets to “speed things up,” while others are using it to refine syllabus development, such as defining learning outcomes or creating chapter overviews.

A consistent theme was the measured level of trust in the output of these tools. Many participants described AI as a “research assistant” or an “intern”—someone skilled at generating text but lacking the deep contextual oversight and experience. There was an agreement that the AI output must always be double-checked for “hallucinations” or factual errors.

As participant 1 observed:

I trust it about as much as a research assistant. I've got to be honest, someone who's very skilled at it but lacks experience.

It is important to note that faculty do not describe AI as delivering finished instructional products. Instead, they characterize the output as “partially usable,” which calls for refinement, contextual tuning, and disciplinary calibration. This outlook preserves the centrality of the instructor in the knowledge transfer equation. These tools have been used to support instructional preparation rather than teaching itself.

Theme 2: Conditional trust/verification

There were suggestions of integrating AI evaluation into pedagogy. One participant suggested that he have his students critically analyze AI-generated content to identify errors or interpret the data in their own words. This allows students to distinguish between reality and automated content. Another participant used it to help students “frame” reports in a professional, consultant-level manner, even though the core of the work was the students’ own response.

AS participant 7 mentioned:

So, for students, there should be a proper balance in using or not using AI tools because this will give them a summary, but they need to critically analyze the outputs generated by ChatGPT. Sometimes they are biased, sometimes they're incorrect, sometimes they're not writing or taking content from authenticated sources. So they need to critically analyze what is generated by GPT or different AI tools. So, it's good if they are exploring the content, but it's harmful if they're relying on it too much or if it is hampering their foundational knowledge.

Our data suggest that faculty do not consider AI a source of knowledge but rather a tool that can assist in the production of polished knowledge under supervision. The sole responsibility for the accuracy and intellectual quality of the content remains with the instructor.

Theme 3: Learning enabler /polishing

The data suggest that faculty see a distinction between AI for ideation and refinement versus using it as a replacement for effort. Using AI for brainstorming project ideas, summarizing resources, and polishing the grammar and personal tone of student work is generally acceptable on the faculty side. The concept of a “dynamic textbook,” as mentioned by some participants, helps students break down complex topics during the learning phase. The idea of using these tools as an “enabler” in the learning process resonated with many participants. However, there was concern that if students grew lazy and used it as a shortcut to complete assignments without processing the information they collected, it would backfire and impede learning. There was consensus that over-reliance on AI can hinder the development of students' critical thinking and analytical skills. As one participant observed, if a student turns over their analytical ability to a machine, they are “cheating themselves” out of a college education.

Theme 4: Evaluative assignments/AI literacy

Faculty members mentioned redesigning assignments to emphasize students' interpretation and critical evaluation, so that learning is not outsourced to AI. Many instructors admit their teaching has not changed as much as it should, indicating this is still an early stage of adoption.

There is widespread concern about maintaining academic integrity amid prevalent instances of students using AI-generated assignments. The detection tools appear unreliable, creating an ambiguous ethical situation when evaluating students' work. In response, traditional assessment practices, such as paper-based writing, are being replaced. The impact of AI on shaping assessment seems drastic.

AI adoption among faculty also varies by discipline and by the instructor's expertise. Instructors with greater familiarity and confidence in AI are more likely to experiment productively than those who have limited exposure. Faculty from disciplines such as analytics and computer science tend to integrate AI more proactively and deeply than humanities or journalism folks who use it in a guarded way. This uneven adaptation demonstrates a socio-technical fit among disciplines, skill sets, and pedagogical approaches.

In summary, in these themes, AI emerges as an assistant, conditional collaborator, enabler, and catalyst for change. Faculty use of AI primarily enhances instructional efficiency while maintaining control over the type of information provided to students. The higher education industry seems to be in a transitional phase marked by uneven adaptation of these tools across disciplines, academic integrity issues, and varying levels of expertise and confidence among instructors in using them.

RQ2: How do instructors perceive the influence of students' AI use on teaching and learning practices?

The four themes presented below were identified as the result of a thematic analysis for this research question.

Theme 1: Transformational capabilities

AI-driven tools are readily available to students and instructors for effective teaching and learning. The traditional model of teaching as a knowledge-transfer mechanism is undergoing a shift in its fundamental principles, requiring less emphasis on laying a foundation for higher-level concepts. Students have access to AI, which can significantly reduce the burden of doing tedious groundwork to build something by applying basic concepts, whether it is a research paper, an essay, a programming application, or an artifact. We are moving to an era of recalibrating instructional priorities. As these LLMs make tasks involving recall and routine synthesis easy to outsource, instructors have to return to focusing on developing students' interpretation, evaluation, and analytical judgment skills.

We are moving away from a traditional pedagogical model of here is the information, believe it, learn it, and apply it to situations. Instead, we now need to move towards a verification approach in which students assess the credibility of information, embed AI tool outputs in appropriate contexts, and learn to distinguish between accurate and misleading information.

As participant 4 observed,

When I make these assignments, I try to impress upon the students that they can't blindly trust whatever an AI gives them, because it could be wrong, made up, or what Google calls it. A hallucination. Could be a hallucination. So I mean, again, that's where the students' interpretation of the AI content is so important, because they have to read and understand it. They have to interpret it and make sure it makes rational sense.

Instructors need to adopt teaching strategies that prioritize learning designs emphasizing metacognition, critical or evaluative inquiry, and applied reasoning. We are seeing a disruption of old recall-based pedagogy and moving aggressively toward complex, student-centered instruction.

Theme 2: Revisit course design and assessment

AI usage in academia is leading to a shift from a product evaluation to a process-oriented assessment approach to adapt to these changes. AI integration is driving a structural redesign of how assessment and course design are performed. Faculty across the board are feeling the need to move away from static, product-based assignments, such as take-home written work, where the output can be easily copied with no learning involved on the student's part. However, the shift is more towards assessment items that involve interpreting data, applying concepts across different contexts, and demonstrating the reasoning or logic behind proposed solutions. Many participants discussed using open-source exams, in-class performance, oral exams, and interactive assignments to capture engagement rather than reproducible student outputs. This transformative phenomenon warrants a distinction between summative product evaluation and formative process-oriented assessments. Our data suggest that instructors need to shift and emphasize reasoning-based activities, encourage reflective justification of choices, and focus on observable performance. This would allow the instructors to reclaim assessment validity, assuming the product being evaluated is co-created by a student and technology. The AI tools are complicating grading practices and pushing for a theoretical shift towards performance-based assessment design.

Theme 3: Academic integrity woes

Our data suggest a significant amount of tension over the ethics of assignment ownership, which raises a deeper issue of dilution in student learning. Faculty responses indicate sustained concerns about the originality of work stemming from the outsourcing of cognitive tasks to students. There is a lot of concern about the misuse of LLM tools in assignments, ranging from blatant cut-and-paste to reformatting and reusing without learning. Instructors also acknowledged that prohibition does not work, and students would use these tools for work, and it would be impractical to expect them not to.

Many respondents suggested that guardrails should be drawn around the use of AI in coursework. Reframing academic integrity as responsibility and engagement that require disclosure, transparency, and critical interaction with AI output will help strike a balance between technology use and learning. A student-technology co-created assignment output with transparent parameters is helpful for instructors in supporting student learning. A total exclusion of AI tools from coursework would not be feasible. Instructors' mentality needs to shift from detection to expectation-setting. The detection route is exhausting, inconclusive, and detrimental to student learning. The locus of control shifting to "expectation-setting" in a fair, transparent way allows the instructors to transition from an enforcement paradigm to guided stewardship in higher education.

Theme 4: "Responsible use" guidelines and heterogeneous adoption

Our results suggest that instructors are struggling to develop their own practical governance mechanisms for AI use in the classroom to encourage students to use this technology responsibly in learning. Instructors of primality are not opposed to the use of AI but believe that the responsibility for ensuring acceptable use falls to them. Our participants are using a variety of methods to develop "responsible usage" practices for students with AI. Some of these include requiring students to contextualize AI outputs, submit the prompts used for the assignment, demonstrate independent thinking, or verify the outputs generated by these models. These strategies demonstrate that localized frameworks are being designed to preserve academic rigor while acknowledging the inevitability of AI use in higher education.

Participants agree that AI should be integrated into teaching, but the integration is not uniform. The adaptation depends on the instructor's discipline, their familiarity with AI, and the university's proactive role in addressing this issue. This uneven adaptation is reflected in some faculty undertaking substantial redesigns of their pedagogy and assessment tools, while others report minimal changes or uncertainty. This shows there is no stable institutional consensus on this matter. Yet adaptation remains uneven. Some

faculty undertake substantial redesign of pedagogy and assessment, while others report minimal change or uncertainty. This heterogeneity reflects transitional system-level transformation rather than stabilized institutional consensus. Higher education seems to be in an exploratory phase of AI experimentation and evolving norms regarding what is acceptable and what is not. Universities and their policies cannot keep pace with technological change.

RQ3: What pedagogical strategies/ changes are warranted in response to the increasing use of AI in higher Ed?

As a result of a thematic analysis of the data for this research question, we identified five themes presented in the section below.

Theme 1: Refocus on human cognitive skills (Critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinarity, non-linear thinking)

The first theme for this research question is about a pedagogical shift towards unique human skills and cognitive capacities. The results suggest that educators should emphasize and prioritize skills that cannot be authentically replicated. AI tools are good at generating text, solving problems, or synthesizing huge amounts of data very quickly. However, educators should focus on critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinary reasoning, and deep conceptual understanding, which are immensely important for learners and inherently subjective.

Our results suggest that the conceptual grounding of the foundation is more important than producing superficially polished AI-assisted work. The goal is to use AI as a tool for enhancement rather than a substitute for learning and understanding. This change in pedagogical approach is indicative of a larger phenomenon: a pivot from knowledge transmission to higher-order thinking. Moving forward, in the era of AI, educational priorities should increasingly align with analysis, evaluation, and creation, emphasizing the centrality of human judgment in the educational experience.

Theme 2: Redesign assessment tools for demonstrated learning

This theme reflects the need for redesigning assessment practices in response to AI's generative capabilities. Our results suggest that traditional written assignments are increasingly vulnerable to misuse. Educators are exploring alternative methods that verify genuine understanding of the content being taught. Some of these include oral examinations, in-class writing, real-world data collection, comparative critique of AI outputs, and assignments requiring personal interpretation. These strategies move assessment away from easily outsourced responses to the demonstration of reason and logic. When students explain, defend, and apply their ideas in real time, instructors can better evaluate their learning. This theme is indicative of a broader transition towards performance-based and authentic assessment capabilities. The goal is not to eliminate AI from the evaluation context, but to integrate it to ensure that the assessment captures intellectual engagement rather than surface-level output. This allows educators to reaffirm that understanding, not just producing, is the measure of learning.

Theme 3: AI as a functional tool

The third theme centers around AI as a financial tool for learning support. Our participants widely described AI as a function that serves as a research assistant, feedback provider, editor, coding helper, or organizational aid. This tool enhances task efficiency and information accessibility and allows multiple iterations to refine ideas and overcome mechanical barriers to learning.

Our respondents consistently drew a line between seeking assistance and complete substitution or outsourcing. The core concern of educators was that students were delegating thinking to AI rather than engaging intellectually with the subject matter. Students who generate homework without comprehending

the content undermine the educational objectives of the programs. The important question is not whether AI should be used but how it should be used. This theme demonstrates a tool-integration approach to pedagogy. Calculators or spellcheckers are normalized in academia. AI can be accepted within learning environments if aligned with instructional goals. We need to move towards purposeful integration of AI to ensure it aids intellectual development, not replace it.

Theme 4: Policy frameworks customized to disciplines

The fourth theme emphasizes the importance of responsible AI integration in coursework, supported by guardrails and an ethical foundation. Educators argued for clear guidance, framed as “green, yellow, and red light” policies, to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable uses. Maintaining transparency, including citation of AI assistance, emerged as a foundational principle.

Educators stressed the limitations of detection technologies and the importance of normative education. Students must be educated about AI limitations, model output bias, hallucination, and epistemic opacity to comprehend the full picture of its use. This type of ethical framing of AI would change its use from a rule-compliance issue to a matter of personal integrity and informed judgment. This theme reflects a shift from prohibition to ethical literacy. Responsible AI usage should be a part of academic identity, aligning higher education with responsible innovation and governance. The focus should be on cultivating discernment, accountability, and informed participation in modern knowledge environments.

Theme 5: Permanent nature of changes

This theme points towards long-term transformation of teaching roles and the institution’s role. Our results suggest that AI is not a temporary phenomenon but a permanent feature in the higher education industry. Institutions must develop explicit yet flexible AI policies that uphold academic integrity while encouraging innovation and student learning.

Educators agreed that one-size-fits-all policies would be insufficient to address this systemic issue. Effective governance would require multi-level guidelines, university-wide principles complemented by course and assignment-level discretion. Institutional support is required to balance the prevention of misuse with support, training, and guidance that empower faculty. Faculty roles are expected to shift towards mentorship, interpretation, and higher-level learning facilitation. Education plays a special role in the AI-obsessed world we are moving towards, as it shares the responsibility of preparing students for human-AI collaboration. The challenge is to graduate students who are AI-competent and intellectually independent, capable of using technological tools while retaining critical autonomy. The professional identity of higher education would eventually be refined by this AI phenomenon in the years to come.

Discussion

This study indicates a paradigm shift in academia regarding the scarcity and abundance of information in consumption. There is easy access to abundant information in a very speedy and effective way. Digital databases, open-access repositories, and AI tools have made information instantly accessible (Adamakis & Rachiotis, 2025). The emphasis in higher education is shifting from locating to evaluating, synthesizing, and applying this information ethically. Information fluency is becoming increasingly important over mere memorization (Table 3 below).

Our results imply that we need to rethink content delivery and cognitive development in the teaching-learning equation. In our current human-centric mode of knowledge delivery, a transformation is occurring in how we structure and experience content. Instruction is shifting from a primarily lecture-based model to asynchronous modalities. Content is modularized into discussions, micro-recorded videos, and

collaborative digital spaces. The diversity offers greater flexibility and accessibility, but it also challenges instructors to maintain engagement, integrity, and rigor (Rozputnia et al., 2025). Education is increasingly becoming learner-centered and dynamic, and AI is facilitating this change (Tunkevichus & Bagrationi, 2025). LLMs can produce plausible-looking yet factually incorrect responses, and students should not be evaluated solely on completed assignments that use AI products. The findings in this study are supported by prior research in this area. Dellermann et al (2019) emphasize human-AI collaboration over complete automation. Burton (2020) supports the claim that more reliance on LLMs reduces critical thinking.

Table 3: Summary of individual RQ themes with interviewee counts and overall study themes

Research Questions	Themes (Count)	Overall themes
RQ1: How are the faculty teaching undergraduate students using AI to support learning in classrooms?	Theme 1: Productivity tool/Teaching assistant (18) Theme 2: Conditional trust/verification (19) Theme 3: Learning enabler /polishing (19) Theme 4: Evaluative assignments/AI literacy (19)	Theme 1: Paradigm shift in information consumption.
RQ2: How do instructors perceive the influence of students' AI use on teaching and learning practices?	Theme 1: Transformational capabilities (19) Theme 2: Revisit course design and assessment (19) Theme 3: Academic integrity woes (19) Theme 4: “Responsible use” guidelines and heterogeneous adoption (17)	Theme 2: Rethink the content delivery in the teaching-learning equation.
RQ3: What pedagogical strategies/ changes are warranted in response to the increasing use of AI in higher Ed?	Theme 1: Refocus on human cognitive skills (Critical thinking, creativity, interdisciplinarity, non-linear thinking) (19) Theme 2: Redesign assessment tools for demonstrated learning (19) Theme 3: AI as a functional tool (19) Theme 4: Policy frameworks customized to disciplines (16) Theme 5: Permanent nature of changes (17)	Theme 3: Reconfiguration of the human role in assessment and evaluation in higher education

The themes for RQ1 describe how instructors are currently adapting their classroom practices to improve instruction. These practices are collectively pointing towards a broader paradigm shift in how information is being processed by students and faculty in the AI era. Knowledge transfer is no longer about retrieving information but about evaluating and interpreting it using AI as a mediating agent. This is consistent with the literature in this area (Kasneci et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). This is also connected to the other theme, which is rethinking content delivery -where instructors are emphasizing authentic learning experiences over traditional lecture-based instruction. These findings are in line with a call for AI-supported pedagogical transformation in academia (Luckin & Cukurova, 2019; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

For RQ2, the findings suggest consequences for pedagogical strategies at large for institutions of higher education. The transformative capabilities of AI have benefits for learning but bring challenges such as academic integrity and a lack of guidance on how to deal with this powerful change. Our results suggest a recalibration of the human toll in assessment and evaluation in student learning. The data suggest that redesigning assessments to calibrate reasoning, creativity, and evaluation of AI outputs. The themes also suggest better governance structures, human oversight, and process-oriented practices to maintain trust (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Finally, our study suggests that reconfiguration of the human role in assessment and evaluation in higher education is warranted (Kannan et al., 2025; Fraser et al., 2023). As technology becomes increasingly important for information dissemination, human actors—faculty, mentors, and peers — are increasingly

focused on relational learning. The role of the instructor is moving from being a primary knowledge transmitter to a facilitator of inquiry, a designer of learning environments, and a cultivator of critical thinking. The human factor remains central to fostering intellectual growth, reasoning, ethical discourse, and collaborative scholarship. Technology will not replace educators but will amplify unique human contributions, judgment, ethics, and a contextual foundation in higher education (Zhang et al., 2023).

The trustworthiness and credibility of the study were enhanced using common qualitative research practices. In the data coding and reduction process for thematic analysis, the research team engaged in peer debriefing to resolve any discrepancies and refine the themes. Data triangulation was achieved by comparing participant responses across multiple interviews to identify recurring patterns so that the interpretations are consistent for the team. Member checking was not performed, but to enhance credibility, the team maintained an iterative coding process and a rigorous audit trail that connects raw data to final themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The research team adopted a reflexive approach throughout this study. The authors have academic backgrounds, and this could potentially influence the data analysis in this study. Data collection continued until the team felt that no new insights were available in the interviews. Then, the theoretical saturation was accomplished, and the data collected represented the phenomenon well (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study has some limitations. The authors are academics and have a certain bias in understanding the phenomenon under investigation. The participants represent the academic culture of the USA, and the results might not be representative of academia in other countries in the world.

Conclusion

This study underscores the fundamental transformation in higher education in the AI era. The faculty perspective, represented in this paper, emphasizes the evolving role of humans in the academic ecosystem. New modalities of information delivery and consumption are reshaping how learning occurs and challenging traditional pedagogical models. These changes point towards an adaptive, learner-centered, and technologically enabled academic environment.

The findings also emphasize that the importance of human involvement in higher education is not diluted, but rather repositioned. The role of faculty and academic institutions is central to students' learning experiences, particularly in mentorship and the cultivation of scholarly and professional identities. Higher education success depends on how technologies are integrated with human judgment, ethicality, and pedagogical intent. The study suggests that human roles are irreplaceable in higher education—rather, they need realignment with technological innovation to underpin teaching and knowledge creation.

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