EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF 'CHOOSE YOUR OWN' ASSESSMENT STYLES IN LARGE CHEMISTRY/BIOLOGY UNITS IN A POST AI WORLD.

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Authentic Assessments have been shown to enhance engagement and skill development, while student choice in assessment format can increase motivation and accountability (Hains-Wesson & le Roux, 2024). However, the integration of AI introduces both opportunities and challenges. While AI may support personalized learning and adaptive feedback, it also raises concerns about academic integrity and the authenticity of student work (Picasso et al., 2024; Stahl et al., 2023). Preliminary data suggests that up to one-third of students may be using AI, but the nature and impact of this use remain unclear.

This study explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on the completion and effectiveness of "choose your own" Authentic Assessments in large first-year science courses. With over 3,000 students enrolled in CHEM1 and BIOL1009, these assessments offer flexible formats—ranging from technical reports to videos and 3D-printed models—designed to foster real-world application, critical thinking, and creativity. The research investigates three core areas:

1) how students are using AI tools like ChatGPT in these tasks,
2) how students and staff perceive the experience of completing/marking the assessments, and
3) whether students are achieving the intended learning outcomes in an AI-influenced academic environment.

To date, 14 student interviews have been conducted and 782 paper-based questionnaires transcribed. A surface analysis appears to indicate that while many students are using AI for long-form assignments, a large number remain confused about how to do so ethically, and what may or may not classify as academic misconduct. Results from a deeper analysis will be discussed in this presentation.

Copilot was used as part of the editorial process when drafting this abstract to improve clarity and readability.

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