teachers' use of Artificial Intelligence tools and ethical considerations in responding to assessment tasks

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INTRODUCTION

- Covid-19 accelerated global shift to distance learning

- Need for modernized, tech-enhanced education

- AI as key driver of educational transformation

- AI influences assessment debates: opportunities vs. challenges

IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT

- Central to teaching & learning
- Provides feedback to improve practice (Kakungulu, 2024)
- Types: Formative & Summative
- AI offers new strategies for assessment design & implementation

Problem Statement

- *South African higher education faces unique challenges*
  - ❖ several infrastructural and socio-economic challenges hinder equitable access to AI tools.
  - ❖ digital illiteracy, unreliable electricity due to load shedding, high data and device costs, and inconsistent internet connectivity (Kim et al., 2025; Venter et al., 2024). T
  - ❖ hese factors disproportionately affect students from underprivileged backgrounds, further exacerbating existing educational inequalities (Maphalala & Ajani, 2025)

- *Research gap: AI in Geography & Tourism assessment for student teachers*

- *Study revolved around two questions:*
  - ➢ *How do student teachers use AI in assessments?*
  - ➢ *What ethical implications arise?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

Role of AI in education	AI tools reshaping academic writing & assessments (ChatGPT, Grammarly, etc.)	(Kim et al., 2025 Perkins et al., 2023
Role of AI in assessment	Shift in assessment practices in education to online	Almelweth, 2022 Moorhouse (2024)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Benefits

- Clarity of tasks
- Personalised feedback,
- Efficiency
- Enhancing student teachers' engagement with assessment tasks

Challenges

- Digital divide, load shedding, high data costs in SA Issues such as plagiarism, over-reliance, and the potential for academic dishonesty are becoming more pronounced

- Inaccurate I-generated

Kim et al., 2025; Venter et al., 2024

(Perkins et al., 2023; Zhang & Dafoe, 2023).

Fitzpatrick et al., 2023

LITERATUR REVIEW

Ethical concerns:	• Plagiarism, • over-reliance, • AI bias, data privacy • insufficient training and professional development	Holmes et al.; 2023 Moorhouse, 2024
Strategies:	Universities redesigning assessments to ensure authenticity Student teachers need AI literacy &	Perkins et al., 2023; Kakungulu, 2024

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Interpretivist Paradigm

Concerned with interpreting how human understands the reality

Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research enables understanding of a social phenomenon from study participants' perspective

Case Study Design

Case study design is characterized by detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, and interactions from people about their experiences

This approach will be appropriate because I will explore students teachers' experiences of using AI in

The reason I will use the case study is

Data Analysis Methods

thematic analysis for transcribing and reading and re-reading the data to identify and report on patterns (themes) and concepts that are of interest to the research questions

Data Generation

Phase 1: Structured AI-based task

Phase 2: Reflective writing

sampling to select the research sites university) and the participants (Student teachers-Tourism & Geography).

30 PGCE students were

FINDINGS

Student teachers use of Artificial Intelligence to tackle assessment tasks

Using AI to generate responses to assessment questions	• Quote: "AI gives me specific responses … saves time" Some students rely on AI responses without modification Risk: passive learning & shallow engagement
Using AI to brainstorm ideas and understand content	• Quote: "It helps me overcome writer's block" Students use AI to generate ideas & frameworks Helps overcome writer's block Students adapt responses into own versions
Using AI to improve writing quality	Quote: "I use AI to improve my writing, not do the writing for me" AI improves grammar, flow, and vocabulary Seen as a supportive tool, not a replacement

FINDINGS

Ethical implications for using AI

Over-reliance reduces critical thinking	Student teachers acknowledge that in using AI there is a risk of diminished critical thinking due to uncritical trust in AI-generated information. Quote: "AI is quick … but I might end up not being able to write on my own"; "AI is good, however, relying too much on AI reduce my effort to think…and think critically."
Irrelevant/inaccurate AI responses	Student teachers further expressed that AI can sometimes give incorrect or irrelevant information to respond to the task at hand. "AI is helpful because it provides quick, clear answers. However, sometimes it can miss the details of the task and not fully understand the context
Academic dishonesty (copy-paste submissions)	The student teachers in this study agreed that they tend to accept AI responses at face value without cross-checking the accuracy or relevancy of the information in responding to the question. I am very dependent on AI for my tasks such that I copied the questions to AI, AI responded and the I copy the response to my assignment and submit. Yes, I agree that this is not appropriate but given the pressure in the PGCE programme I end up doing so

IMPLICATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

- Dual role of AI: support vs. dependency
- Some students reshape AI outputs → fosters creativity; enhances efficiency, and feedback
- Others copy-paste → undermines learning, encourage passive learning, ethical issues, loss of critical thinking
- Balance needed: AI literacy + ethics training
- Need for:
- • AI literacy in teacher training
- • Ethical frameworks & institutional policies
- • Balanced integration of AI & human

THANK YOU