Write or Wrong? AI, Academic Integrity, and the Student Voice

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Irina: Welcome to Write or Wrong? - a podcast about AI, Academic Integrity, and the Student Voice.

Irina: I'm Irina, you host.

Miguel: And I'm Miguel, your co-host. Together, we'll explore the real stories behind how university students are using AI tools like ChatGPT in their academic writing.

Irina: AI is rewriting the rules of learning. From proofreading essays to summarizing research articles, students are finding new ways to integrate AI into their work — but not without challenges and big questions about academic integrity.

Miguel: In this podcast, we'll hear directly from undergraduate students as they share how AI is shaping the way they write, research, and navigate a landscape filled with innovation, uncertainty, and ethical grey areas.

Irina: This research is supported by the BCcampus Research Fellows Program, which provides B.C. post-secondary educators and students with funding to conduct small-scale research on teaching and learning, as well as explore evidence-based teaching practices that focus on student success and learning.

Irina: To protect the privacy of those interviewed, we've changed their names and removed identifying details. All experiences shared are real. This podcast uses AI-generated voices created with Descript.

Miguel: So whether you're a student, educator, or just curious how AI is used for writing, this conversation is for you.

Irina: Let's begin with the most common way students use AI: as a writing assistant. From grammar correction to idea generation, many students see AI tools as an extra pair of eyes.

Miguel: Brandon uses a combination of AI tools, but not to outsource his thinking. His strategy? Think first, then refine.

Brandon: I like to make sure I'm making the ideas and I'm writing the paper… I use, you know, for instance, one of the literature review platforms to find articles, and then also while that's happening, I'm looking for articles on my own to make sure that I'm finding some good stuff. Then I can compile that, and you know, I'll read the papers. By that point, I'll kind of have the picture of how I want to write my essay in my mind, or I'll have a structure or sort of an outline, like briefly point form on a piece of paper that I'm following and then I'm plucking out ideas from the papers that I've read or from

the summaries of the AI following that sort of structure that I have on my paper. And then, once there's like a rough draft, I'll plug it into Grammarly. It'll look for errors. I leave it. Maybe read once again on my own like a day or maybe the same day if it's due that day or whatever and then, like, once I reread it, I'll also put it into Grammarly again, because I might make changes.

Irina: Kiaan agrees. He values AI as a brainstorming companion, especially when he hits a block.

Kiaan: If I give it a topic, and I'm stuck, it's really good at giving concepts I wouldn't have thought of on my own. If I feel like I'm trying to describe something or I'm trying to describe an idea, and I can't find the words for it. It's really good at like finding good words that will then work out.

Irina: Nicki uses Grammarly just to catch grammar mistakes, saving time and stress.

Nicki: Oh, I think editing usually takes me the longest, so that's why I don't like to do it. It would probably take me like an hour to sit there and like comb through the paper and then I'd send it to somebody else to read it. So, like it would save me like three, like two or three hours, I'd say.

Miguel: And Sofia, who has dyslexia, finds Word's built-in editor essential to her writing flow.

Sofia: AI just cuts off a whole lot of the time that it takes to write a paper when you have, like, an editor helping. Because it's like instant help. It's not like they have to read through it a million times and takes like 10 minutes to read one sentence properly and edit it properly.

Miguel: Robert, though not a frequent user, appreciates AI's ability to help with structured problem-solving.

Robert: I'll ask it to list out the steps without giving the answer… it helps me process the questions better.

Irina: Let's move into our next topic: Strategic Use and Boundaries. Of course, not everyone uses AI the same way. For many students, when and how they use AI depends on the type of assignment. Some students use AI only when they're stuck. Kiaan explains his timing.

Kiaan: I don't use it right away… I only go to AI when I feel stuck… I'll go to AI to especially like maybe Perplexity, and then I'll basically ask it to like expand on this. I'll say like what other things can I talk about or what are are some other perspectives? As I can consider things like that and so it'll maybe like give me other concepts I can look into.

Kiaan: Or how else I'll use it is if I get all those and then I can't figure out how I want it to flow, how I want to structure the ideas like from the beginning to the conclusion. Then I'll ask like to write an outline for me or a guide of like how I should start the paper and how I should end it and like sort of what's the path that I should take my reader on and then it'll give me like that guide.

Irina: Robert uses AI for math, not writing, and only as a learning tool.

Robert: I don't really use AI for course work. I only use ChatGPT when I'm doing math questions, and if I can't remember exactly what steps, I'll ask it to list out the steps without giving the answer because otherwise my brain kind of just jumps ahead and I get the wrong answer. So, it's I mainly just get it to slow it down and help me as like a tool to help me process my own thinking.

Miguel: Even Raj sees AI as helpful for quick tasks like business emails, but not for analytical writing.

Raj: For writing boring memos or emails or reports. That is just boilerplate like general information. That does not require critical thinking or creativity.

Irina: Sofia also uses AI carefully — only for grammar, not content.

Sofia: I try and stay away from AI because I don't want to get in trouble. I'll write my whole thing, and then I'll look at the editor after and be like, yeah, this needs to be fixed 'cause it's like pretty automatic.

Miguel: And Oliver uses it tactically for quizzes and fact-checking.

Oliver: If I'm not sure about an answer, I'll ask it… I'd rather have the higher grade than the integrity of doing the questions myself.

Irina: Let's turn now to a deeper concern: Ethical Considerations and Academic Integrity. Many students support using AI—but only when it aligns with their values. Some are hesitant to rely on it at all, especially when the boundaries aren't clear.

Miguel: The issue of integrity often comes down to transparency. Robert shared that citing AI use was allowed in one class—but not discussed in another.

Robert: In my philosophy classes AI wasn't allowed at all, mainly because my professor just wasn't a fan of AI, but I had an English course where we were allowed to use AI for creating ideas. We were allowed to quote AI so long as we were like using the proper citation.

Irina: Kiaan also spoke to the ethical grey areas students face when instructors don't make expectations clear. When students don't fully understand the rules or consequences, they may hesitate to use AI at all—or use it in risky ways.

Kiaan: I don't think it's good for academic integrity in that way because it could be definitely directly copying something. And then if you just use what idea is giving you, you don't know what that source is. There's a likely chance that you're plagiarizing.

Irina: These quotes remind us that academic integrity in the age of AI isn't just about detection—it's about education and clear expectations.

Oliver: I think it compromises too many of my moral values to be like here's this piece of writing that I did, except it wasn't actually me. It was me and a computer. It just feels ethically compromised.

Miguel: Others worry that unequal access or understanding of AI might lead to an uneven playing field. Sofia noted that while AI can be a helpful tool, its misuse stems from a lack of understanding, suggesting that monitored, purpose-specific AI could help ensure appropriate usage.

Sofia: Maybe someone could develop a type of AI that does strictly editing and stuff like that and doesn't write out your paper for you and it's monitored by professors. Students are allowed to have that during writing assignments to help them.

Irina: Let's turn to our next theme: Institutional Ambiguity. One of the biggest frustrations? Mixed messages from instructors and unclear policies. Students often feel they're being left to guess what's allowed—and that can be stressful.

Brandon: I can't remember what course, but I do vaguely remember an instructor saying if you decide to use ChatGPT, you have to cite it. You have to say this idea came from AI. I used AI to generate ideas for another one of my electives. But the professor didn't really say anything about that either. Yeah, it's mostly kind of implied that you shouldn't use it because, you know, they give the syllabus out and it says like the use of generative AI is not allowed according to academic integrity or whatever. But if it's implied there's never an option, or there's seldom an option which says OK, we don't want you to use it, but if you do, this is how you use it, right? I find that's the option that's missing.

Miguel: And that confusion isn't limited to just one class. Sofia noted that most of her course outlines warn against AI, but without explanation.

Sofia: All of my courses have a whole part about academic dishonesty and stuff like that. In it they have a huge section that says don't use AI to come up with ideas and write. Like most of our graded work has that on it. Unless it's like something for completion and they just say do whatever you have to. Then that's them saying you can use AI.

Miguel: Students noticed inconsistencies from one course to the next that creates tension and uncertainty. Raj explained that sometimes it's easier not to use AI at all than to risk crossing a blurry line.

Raj: It's very hard to police AI because you never know if it's written by a human or an AI... Yes, restrict it... But how? I think that's the question that should be asked... AI cannot do personal reflection and analysis for you... My professor took pictures of a very, very old 1995 literature... so students cannot copy and paste... It's very hard for students to use AI to analyze that text.

Miguel: Ultimately, students aren't asking for a green light—they're asking for a roadmap. Without clear guidance, students are left to figure things out alone—or worse, make mistakes they didn't know they were making.

Irina: Let's move into our next theme: AI Literacy Education. Students across the board are calling for more structured education around AI—not just what tools exist, but how and when to use them.

Kiaan: I think AI literacy should be part of the curriculum.

Brandon: The library can come up with resources. I don't know if I would take like a whole another semester long course but if there were, you know, newsletters or like little workshops here and there, gradually integrated and even like a two-week mini, what are they called? Like little modules on AI literacy, that would be cool. Maybe a computer science class if students want to go really, really in depth. There's probably someone to teach an AI prompting course, I wouldn't doubt it.

Raj: AI literacy should be part of the curriculum. AI literacy would be ethical usage of AI and how to use it ethically. How to use it effectively, how to use it and academic writing that is not infringing on academic integrity.

Miguel: This isn't just about catching up to the technology—it's about preparing students for the future.

Irina: So what does all this mean for the future of academic work? Most students don't see AI as a replacement for learning, but rather as a tool that must be used carefully. Despite differing approaches, most students see AI as a support, not a solution.

Raj: The main idea still comes from my thought process.

Robert: I can write stuff instantly… I prefer working it out on my own. I have mixed feelings, mainly because I have a lot of friends who are artists and they're in universities studying arts. So, I don't really like the generative aspect and how it's being controlled and outputted for public use, but I do think that as a tool, it is still impressive because there's so many ways that it can be used beyond just writing.

Irina: Students aren't asking to abandon integrity. They're asking for clarity. So maybe the question isn't "Should students use AI?" but "How can they use it ethically, equitably, and effectively?" That's the conversation we'll keep having.

Miguel: Thanks for joining us on Write or Wrong? AI, Academic Integrity, and the Student Voice.

Irina: Write smart, think critically, and remember: AI is a tool, not a replacement.