

starting recording. Okay, so I'd like to just welcome you, Martin. So thank you very much for coming to talk to us today. And as I think we've mentioned, we'd like to talk about sort of artificial intelligence and all the scares that people are having.

But also how that links to academic integrity, and maybe how we can prevent moral panics. And I know you have a third AI, which you're obviously going to talk about at the conference. So I just thought it'd be nice to see where the conversation goes, really, and see what different ideas, possible solutions that we may come up with.

come up with. Well, thanks for having me. Where do you want to start?

you want to start? It's so massive, isn't it? I mean, I know you particularly were interested in where people are having that knee-jerk reaction of saying we need to go back to exams. And you know, your heart just sinks, doesn't it, when you hear that. Either they feel that everything's got to be oral presentations now, or we need to go back to exams.

back to exams. To me, that is a moral panic knee-jerk reaction. I don't know, you know, I'm presuming that you've come across similar starts, Martin. I mean, what is your reaction when you hear these kinds of solutions?

when you hear these kinds of solutions? Yeah, I mean, I completely understand people's disquiet. I think it's a really complicated picture.

And, you know, my starting point is to say, well, we'll hang on a little minute, let's just wind everything back a bit. Because when people are having that moral panic that you're talking about, and they're saying, we've got to get everyone back into the examples, it's the only way to assure integrity, they're also likely to be saying things like, we should ban this, AI is a terrible thing.

And that any of those kinds of framings, I think, are quite problematic and even dangerous for us as people working at universities, to be saying things that lack so much nuance and so much understanding.

understanding. So my starting point actually is to take a step even further back and say, when you say AI, what you mean really is text generating tools such as chat GPT, right? You don't mean all of AI, artificial intelligence, that's been ebbing and flowing through popular culture and through innovations and iterations for the last 70 years, because it's a much bigger thing than that. And we really need to be clear what we're talking about here. And that's that's first thing. And then when it comes to the whole, should we get everyone back into the examples thing?

thing? My first question is, not should we shouldn't but tell me what you think assessment is doing and what it's for. And that changes the dynamic of the conversation. And it stops people talking about a largely not understood very well in some instances.

instances. And I would include myself in that and a lot of software engineers and computer scientists will also include themselves in that, because this is largely undiscovered country and territory. But taking a step back and saying, what is assessment for?

But taking a step back and saying, what is assessment for? What do you use it for? What's its purpose helps preempt some of the reasons people might be thinking that they need to go back to the example. Well, that's a good point to get people to think of why we're doing this in the first place, because I think so often we do

forget why we're assessing.

It just becomes so much part of the daily job.

But do you find that people who are worrying or panicking often haven't actually had that much interaction with generative AI themselves. So it's almost like an unknown world.

Yeah, absolutely. People tried it, didn't like it.

And that, you know, that is a phenomenon to behold, because, you know, if you tried something in December 22, and then tried it again in June 23, and then again, today, you will notice the really stark improvements. I mean, there's been a lot of media narratives and social media chat about whether chat GPT-4 Omni is better or worse than GPT-4.

And it's all this mess of numbers and acronyms. And I can see how it puts people off. But even though I fully understand and acknowledge a lot of people's reservations about contributing to carbon, huge carbon footprints and issues with, you know, calling the systems that train the large language models that mostly AI refers to in educational conversations. I get that.

But still, I will say, you won't know what you're dealing with and what you're talking about until you get some hands on experience. It's no good reading either popular or even narrow media, or social media, or even listening to colleagues to form your judgments about this. You have to have an informed position derived from at least some experience.

And I think it's absolutely vital that people do that.

And finding something that you can find utility in, because, you know, so much of the talk around chat GPT, copilot, Gemini, Plexity, Claude, any of the, you know, the popular large language models is as if they were designed to be essay generating talks.

They weren't. They aren't. A lot of people are exploiting the opportunity by using them to encourage students to buy products that will help them write essays. That's absolutely a given.

But you know, one of the things that I find, and most people I speak to who have experimented find the outputs with, you know, one shot prompting, you know, so you just put an essay title in or a single prompting, the outputs there are wholly inadequate when it comes to quality essays. You know, I heard a lot of talk early last year about, oh, we put our essay in and I'd have given it a 40, I would have given it a 50. And my possibly controversial comeback to that was, then there's something definitely wrong with your assessment.

your assessment. Do you not have authoritative sources in there?

in there? Do you not have some kind of connection to either current events or specific instances of what you were talking about in your lectures? How is it possible that you can just churn something out? And actually, the questions are not about right, wrong, whether students will or won't use it, quality versus lack of quality. The question here is about what's the point of the assessment? How well designed is it? What are you actually testing? And is it fit for purpose in the 21st century when things have changed quite a lot in the last few years? Yeah, I mean, I think a really good point, because I mean, I use the fact that I have the PG-CERT students, so I'll get them to try things, I'll give them outputs and get them to think what level is it actually working at. Because we realised that, for

example, a lot of chat GPT outputs, I mean, this is obviously from the free version, tend to be very much like an IELTS task too. So there's a lot of vocab and there's a lot of sentences, but actually, there isn't much content. There's really a clear point.

Or we realise in terms of organisation, an argument is probably more like a GCSE.

We've looked at co-pilot and the summaries, but notice that it's pulling through from Wikipedia or sources that you wouldn't advise people to use in the first place. And so that's given them a bit more of comfort. But I've also done tricks where I've got bits that I've written and bits that chat GPT has written and said, you know, can you see when it's me, when it's AI.

And it's mainly to try and get some confidence in the staff so that they don't see it as this sort of unknown, terrifying thing. But I also say, look, if I felt that I can use generative AI in certain ways, I would be pretty hypocritical to say that the students can't.

So I think the main thing we need to do is have open, honest, transparent discussions with students to put, say, the assignment title in to critique those outputs.

And quite often students do then reject those outputs because they realise, no, there isn't any great level of critical thinking, there isn't an original stance.

And it's also reminding students what good, good practice is anyway, isn't it? I mean, you're back to why you doing the assessment, it isn't just to produce 4000 words for the sake of it, is it? Well, I mean, the problem is, is that that is how assessment is often perceived. The product of the assessment, the 4000 words, nicely produced on a piece of paper or digitally embellished with a nice picture on the front in a decent font or whatever. You know, these are the things that are valued. These are the things that are proxies for learning. But these are the things that don't actually represent learning. And all of the things that people say they're worried about with tools like chat GPT, it bypasses learning, it's going to stop students being able to engage critically, it's going to reduce our ability to write creatively, or argumentatively, or polemically, or whatever, it's going to homogenise language, all of those are very valuable things. But if you believe that, then you should also believe those people that are saying, that's what a lot of essays are encouraging people to produce and to do. And those are the kinds of outputs that we're valuing, because there is an expectation, there's a, you know, people learn how to jump through the assessment hoops, because of the way that we build learning outcomes and criteria.

And you you are working towards a modernised output in a lot of senses.

And it's rare actually, that the really risk taking innovative student can take a chance and a gamble on putting something out there that that really challenges thinking and really does take a really critical stance, because the chances are that they won't be hitting some of the criteria and actually, so they just play the game, and everybody is is going through this system.

So that's the first thing I'd say about that. And I do agree with what you're saying about that testing, that experimentation, finding out for yourself, all of that, that kind of stuff. But I think there's a bigger issue, and one that is becoming clearer.

Over time, I'm not going to make a prediction here, but there seems to be a tendency towards greater integration of what we are broadly calling AI tools into the tools that we are familiar with.

Look at Google Docs, look at copilot for Office 365. You know, I've got a WordPress blog, even when I'm typing stuff onto my blog, it suggests to me that I might like to embellish it with AI.

So that increased integration, like it or no, is coming.

Making an informed and critical decision about when it's appropriate to use that and when it's not, is something that we have an obligation to teach our students.

And I think it's absolutely fundamental that we do that. But I also think that we're going to have to have a really major shift in mindset about what quality writing looks like for different purposes, and how we create that quality writing. We kind of got over the everything must be handwritten, you know, we accept that people type, but that, especially with word processing, I mean, absolutely radically changed the way in which any given student would produce an essay.

I mean, you know, when I did my undergraduate degree, the only one that I handed in typed was my dissertation.

And I dictated that down the phone to my mom, who was 100 words a minute typist. And, you know, I didn't have the opportunity to type something, read it, think, oh, no, I don't like that. If I made a mistake in my handwritten essay, I had to cross it out of TipX here. And so, you know, essentially, the planning process was very, very different.

In other words, my cognitive engagement was different.

My processing was different.

The way that I use a word processor is different. But I don't try and ban people from using word processors.

And actually, that shift back to the examples that you were talking about at the beginning. I mean, that is for a lot of people, it's not we're not going to put them all in front of computers, because God forbid they might cheat using computers, we're asking them to do something that a lot of people hardly do very much of anyway. I don't know about you, but whenever I hand write, my hand like claws up really quickly. And I get really uncomfortable. I'm doing this all the time. Why would you put students through that when they're not versed in it, and then make all of their lecturers read those horrible scripts? It doesn't make any sense to me.

I think we have to come to terms with the reality that there are new tools, and that we have to learn to use them properly, and responsibly, and critically, rather than pretending they don't exist. And I don't know why people don't think, sorry, let me just say this, and I'll hand over it. I don't know why people don't think there isn't going to be an AI that helps you cheat an exam soon anyway, because I'm sure there will be.

I already exist. Yeah, absolutely.

absolutely. I was wondering, I'm interested in your your stuff around how much staff confidence there needs to be so we can teach students how to use these tools responsibly and critically, and what have you. And that's been one of our naughtiest issues, really, is who's going to provide that staff development?

And how's that, you know, how's that going to look? And how's that then going to translate from the staff team to be embedded in their teaching and embedded in

their, you know, their delivery?

you know, their delivery? And, you know, rather than it sitting somewhere separately that the IT team do, yes, we don't do that, the IT team do that, you know, and that I think is one of the things we've grappled with in terms of where Emma's been involved in writing the staff guidance and is currently writing the student guidance around use of AI or misuse of AI.

I'm interested with how your experience of actually upskilling the general kind of teaching population in using, you know, and being able to use, because it's all fine, we can play with it, we can go on Google, find what we want to play with, but that's not quite the same as actually having a structured kind of organized staff development process for AI.

So I'm not about to say that we've cracked this.

I'm glad to hear that.

Yeah, I mean, all the reasons you said that people are really busy, there's workload issues, there's universities that are making people redundant left, right and center, you know, this is a difficult time that we are in, in higher education, got the change of government, all the uncertainty, I assume a change of government, or all the uncertainty that that connotes as well, I mean, a ton of things going on.

And then we're asking people to do something else.

So the first thing, I think, is that we have to offer something back.

And we're fortunate, I think, in that, you know, we've created a lot of labor intensive administrative tasks and expectations, because we're utterly dependent on the written word, even though most of the communication we do as human beings is listening and speaking, we value writing and reading above all else in academia. And so it's skewed that way. And everything that we do funding bids, research dissemination, essay outputs, you know, resources we create, it's you know, it's dominated by the written word. And one of the things that we can do here is grunt work with these technologies if we find out how to use them creatively.

So the offer back to people might be, well, you know, there are labor saving opportunities here. And if you don't believe me, here are a couple of examples from my practice. But what I would say to you is, by exposure, you will find your thing.

So my thing, for example, is that I make quite a lot of videos, and a video needs a transcript to be accessible.

And transcripts, typically in the past using AI transcription were 70 80% accurate.

As you train these tools, they get more and more and more accurate. Most of my transcripts now are coming out at 97 98% accurate.

And I can use other AI tools to make them 100% In a matter of moments, you know, 10 minutes, it can take me instead of four or five hours waiting through these things. This is a massive labor saving aspect.

What I mustn't do is make more videos, so I've got more time. You know, I need to be sensible about this. But I can also in that in that process, use artificial intelligence to create alternative text to reformat the things that I need to read, because I don't read well on screen, particularly if it's in columns.

And I've been wasting a lot of time in the past reformatting things. But if I've got a trusted tool that will enable me to synthesize elements of a text in a particular way, I won't name any tools now, but giving me access or reformatting access.

Again, that is something for me as an individual, that's remarkable.

A lot of people who are multilingual, who are coming to English as a second, third or fourth language, you know, amazing that they're working in academia, either studying or working, but they can actually find real support from the from the these tools in critiquing what they've written, helping them to understand something that's heavy and jargon or full of obfuscation, long sentences that academics like to like to write in their publications that are read by two or three people, you know, so I'm joking, but you know, the kind of thing that I mean.

And so if you find your thing, then actually that says, okay, there is a quid pro quo here. That's the first thing. And I think getting people on board, getting people to have a little bit of a play is the first step. And the way that we've tried to do that, Kings, and we're continuing to do that is having a really multifaceted approach to everything.

So we've got the the guidance for staff, and we've pitched it different levels of stuff.

So managers and overseers, program and module leaders, lecturers, newly appointed staff, PGTA, PhD students, and then a separate set of guidance for students, we've got differentiated guidance, we've reproduced that guidance in AI automated podcast format to give give it, you know, the the medium is the message, but also to give it make it more accessible for people because people don't like reading a bunch of stuff, even though, as I said, our default is to write everything.

We've had funded research projects, partnership with students.

So some of them are actually student led. So we put some money into a fund for research.

And we're really pushing the cross faculty dissemination.

We've had playground events where people are invited to come along, no shame, risk free, come along and have a fiddle. Everyone's in the same boat. Nobody knows what they're talking about kind of events. We've got more special events.

Yes, you call them playground, but that's a really that's a really nice kind of way of framing that opportunity rather than anything structured, it's just an opportunity to oh, they go down really well, they go down really well. And I mean, I think we should have been doing more, to be honest, we've got AI conversations, which is something I've led on, where I invite someone who's got an interest in AI to talk about their experience or whatever. And we, you know, these are online, but we're getting 60 to 80 people coming to every one of those.

These are nice things to do. Local level stuff I'm trying to support. And so my colleagues are from King's Academy, which is our faculty development unit.

And, you know, some of them are having high impact.

Some of them, we're thinking, okay, we might need to do something else. And we're also thinking about how do we reach the hard to reach? How do we get into every single program? And I think part of our strategy for next year is we're going to be targeting program leaders and putting responsibility onto every single program

leader to to share back with us what they're doing as a strategy at program level. Because, you know, if things are different across the nine faculties, they're also different within the faculties between departments and between programs that are consistent consistency.

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, one of the things we've yeah, we've we've we've got, we've got various things on the go. So we've got a large, quite senior, a lot of not only, but quite a lot of senior members of staff, we've got a large kind of thread chat thread going on that people post lots of different things that they come across, whether it's articles, videos, bits and bobs that go on. And that's quite nice, because that's that includes people like our legal and governance team, as well as academics, as well as other senior leaders. But I think you're right. I think one of the things we have struggled with is we've been a bit disparate in the sense that obviously it has a large learning and teaching element, hence why some of the responsibility lies with us.

But there's also the IT aspects of the provision itself and the software that we're using and all of that kind of thing, as well as HR or HR responsibilities in terms of the cost saving, like you say, the sort of labor saving stuff and what HR would say about staff using tools for that in that labor saving setting.

saving setting. So yeah, it's a really mixed bag of things, isn't it? Emma?

Emma? Can I ask around assessment design, because I know for the conference you're talking about your three AIs and Chloe is the academic integrity lead, but around assessment innovation.

So obviously you've spoken a lot about ensuring that assessment actually assesses learning, as opposed to a proxy for learning.

as opposed to a proxy for learning. So would you be able to share a little bit more about the kind of innovative assessments?

of innovative assessments? And obviously, you know, King's is a massive university, and you've got a wide variety of subjects that each have their own, you know, things that need to be assessed. So I get this is a very broad question. So feel free to focus it on examples that you're comfortable with, but kind of what counts as authentic assessment or valid assessment, or kind of AI savvy assessment.

It's kind of newly enabled. Well, if we move beyond the text generation.

Yeah, I mean, I think savvy is a good word here, and possibly innovation.

That's just me looking for another I to couple with an A, because it's not really innovation.

It's inspiration.

It's looking to things that people have been doing elsewhere for a long time. You know, there are entire cultures that have more of an oral tradition in terms of their assessment.

So look at the Italian system, look at the Ukrainian system, you know, that there are, it doesn't have to be the way that we do it here, first and foremost. And if we're going to be truly global and international, then we should be a bit more respectful, I think, of alternative ways of context, if it means a change from what you've been doing for the last 50 years, or 100, or 150 years.

So the essay is a real staple. And I'm not saying throw a baby out with the

bathwater. But there are ways that you can innovate the way in which you do an assessment.

in which you do an assessment. So for example, you know, in departments where let's not say departments, let's say institutions that I have heard of, where they have tried to limit or ban the use of AI, which is in itself feels a bit daft to me, because if you say banning AI, how are you defining AI?

because if you say banning AI, how are you defining AI? Are you including spell checkers in that grammar checkers? Where do you where do you draw, you know, you can't ban AI, it's daft, because AI is built into the things that we use, and we can't turn it off. So already, that's problematic.

But in those places where they've tried to do that, there seems to me, anecdotally, and I'm sure there'll be some emerging literature on this very, very soon, that they're having more problems with inappropriate use than in the places where, firstly, they've engaged students in the dialogue and discussions and the kinds of things that Chloe was talking about earlier, the kind of practices the, you know, we're aware of this stuff. We're not daft. Let's have a look at what it can and can't do. Let's talk about it together. If you can do that, then something needs to drop off your curriculum. And that's always a big problem for people.

And then the second thing around this whole idea of what is, is innovation and what can I change and what can I tweak doesn't have to be a massive thing, because what people worry about in universities, of course, and I'm sure yours is the same as mine, is that if I want to change my module, it can take like 18 months to get it through the system. You know, but we're looking at things changing here that are like this lightning fast. And all of a sudden, you can do the most amazing things. I was playing with the character AI today, and I recorded a 15 second audio clip of myself. And now I can get this AI to talk in my voice. And it blooming well sounds like me.

It can I can make you know, it says anything. It's just mind blowing. These things are happening all the time. I mean, of course, I'm worried about deep fakery, but I'm also blown away by this.

So so what do you do if you can't radically overhaul? Well, you know, speaking to people in our history department, they're really keen on perhaps reducing a little bit the written word count, and using an allocation of the word count to have short dialogues with every single student.

single student. So build that into the assessment process, where it's not using it as a sort of reactive, checking, punitive, I want you in here, because I think you've used AI kind of thing, everybody comes in, and you use that 15 minutes to start and in some cases, finish the marking process, right?

process, right? Because you could, for example, record your meeting and then get the AI to also to ask students a couple of killer questions about their essay.

And then you use that to form your judgment about where they sit on the on the on the step grading or percentage grade that you want to give them. You know, you probably know that I'm not a big fan of grading at all anyway. So you know, I think it's an opportunity to say, have they fulfilled the criteria? Do they understand this stuff? Yes or no? Yes. Right. Let's move on to the next thing and learn some more stuff. That's kind of my approach in summary.

So I think a small tweak is doable within the definition of most assessments.

And yes, I understand that there will be some people who say, oh, my God, we can't



possibly do oral assessments for all our students. We haven't got the time. I argue you can you can scale it.

And secondly, there are students who are neurodiverse and who may resist or be discouraged by that.

We still do exams and there's a heck of a lot of people who get severe anxiety from exams.

So it doesn't stop us there. How do we make accommodations there? How can we make accommodations elsewhere? Nothing is too big a problem. And then the second thing I think is if you do want to make some bigger changes, look for inspiration where great stuff has been happening.

So I've worked quite a lot with the School of Pharmacy, which is a joint venture down at Medway and with the School of Pharmacy, funnily enough, at UCL and with the medical school at King's.

And they use Oskies, so structured observational examinations. And as a template for large scale, authentic ish examinations or assessments, these are things actually have transferability outside of medicine.

Can you imagine, for example, taking a group of historians to a museum and using that as an opportunity for a structured observational assessment based on what they're seeing, how it's curated, all of that kind of stuff.

It's doable, right? If they can do 300 students in a day in pharmacy, you can do 300 students in a day in history.

And if you said to a historian, you know, for your 15 credit module, that one that you mark over reading week, and it takes you all week to do 50 essays, I'm going to reduce that to a day, but you need to think about changing your assessment. I'm not going to bite your hand off for that.

I think it's all about the framing, actually. But for some people, it's a bridge too far, but it's a possibility. And if it is a bridge too far, just think about a minor tweak and so it's everything from minor tweaks, being savvy, to use your word, Emma, being savvy or, okay, let's take inspiration from it.

We're definitely chipping away at that. We're definitely on that road to helping courses.

Yeah, and we have a lot of courses where that's very possible.

Yeah, absolutely. And I agree with your analogy about Oskies. I mean, I come from a medical health background.

And so I've, I've, I've taken them as well as, as well as plan them and delivered them and mark them.

And I agree, you can do them at scale, although one observation I would say about medicine, I'm not a medic, but is that they have huge numbers of staff, which the historians might not have.

You know, so there is a, there is some consideration about how that scalability works.

But we do have, we do have some really innovative thinkers, people, you know, we have some really innovative ways that some of us, and we have huge resources that

are not, I wouldn't say they're untapped, but that we could use differently to create more authentic assessments. So we have lots of simulation opportunities, we have lots of space, we have a courtroom, you know, we have a prison, we have, you know, we have all these kind of spaces that really would allow people to use simulation more and an Oskie style assessment more as a kind of authentic and, and I think for students often helps with their engagement and their general enjoyment and assessment for learning, rather than of learning, because they come to play with, you know, fake blood and dummies and people pretending to be barristers and stuff, you know, they can, like, it gives them a much more, you know, interesting and enriched kind of experience of assessment, I think as well.

Yeah, well, we've got, yeah, we've got the prisoners yet to be sort of fully, fully developed. But because it's just a quirk of the site that we're on, that we have this, we have the prison and the courtroom and the ex-courtroom, but we have lots of simulation opportunities. I mean, people are our forensic scientists use that a lot for assessment, it's trying to encourage some of the more traditional courses, I think more is often the case.

I was talking to our law team recently, because they're one of the ones being approved at the moment, they use a huge amounts of exams, I'm trying to encourage them to think of examination in a slightly different way.

And they say to me, we don't use simulation. And then in the next breath, they tell me about what they do in the courtroom.

do in the courtroom. Okay, that's that simulation then, isn't it?

isn't it? It's about getting people to think differently and use maybe slightly different language, so that they can think of a small tweak that actually doesn't change the assessment type necessarily, but just makes them think about it differently. And others, like you say, giving them the freedom to be innovative and creative in their assessment design, if it's helpful. We're trying on a small scale on the PG cert, because the second module, I've thought, well, we don't actually need to know that the lecturers can write, because I'm going to assume that it's the lecturers that they can.

So we've got a reflective interview instead, and we cover a lot of themes. And all I want to know is how are you applying those themes in your teaching. So we've just put that through course review.

And we'll be trying that out with the first cohort in September.

September. But it's a good point. You know, do we need them to write? Not really. What I want to know is, can you use, you know, compassionate pedagogy in your teaching? And if you are, did it work? And how do you know? That's the important point is, is your teaching practice big and hot?

That is what we need. So yeah, we're trying to break out of our traditions, aren't we, on the PG cert?

aren't we, on the PG cert? I mean, I mean, I have to say, I, you know, my first degree was history. And I, and I hear those arguments about the craft of writing as a historian, that historical voice, that aspect, constructing an argument, use of sources, all that is really important. But a lot of the time we invent tacit criteria, where it's not actually essential. So you know, those people who are good at writing, who may be trained as historians and are now training to be teaching academics, they've got an automatic advantage in the more traditional assessments, because they can already write over the people who might be multilingual, teaching something that's more hands on, maybe from a STEM background, where writing is less

important traditionally, and then put them in this other space. And they don't achieve as well. Because wrapped up in the thing that we're trying to see, whether they understand is all of this other baggage around quality writing.

So it's, you know, like I say, no babies in bathwater here.

And accepting that there are spaces where the development of writing is part of the learning process, where the development of the skill of writing is an aspect that we really want from our graduates, you know, history, literature, language, development, those kinds of things.

But there are a lot of spaces where we skew the weighting towards quality writing, often without even realizing it. So it's like a tacit thing. It's part of that hidden curricula.

And students are penalized, because they don't write very well, even though their brains might be functioning at a much higher plane. And I think that's really problematic.

This is an opportunity for all of us to really consider the quality of our assessment. Chloe and I are both English graduates, and I completely agree. So I definitely sit on the side of the fence who have an advantage in the in terms of in terms of written communication, I have heard and to partly agree with all of those arguments that you are saying.

And actually, your undergraduate degree, and in the way that I did for my undergraduate degree, then that is very worthwhile.

And it is actually the process is a part of the the product in that sense.

However, I would argue since actually digitization of journals, and actually the huge volume of information that has exploded, particularly since the 2000s in terms of online journals, so when research moved outside of a building, and was no longer contained within the walls of a library, the sheer volume of information that occurs out there, even for the traditional researcher has made the traditional process of writing an essay almost redundant.

The number of times I hear even staff colleagues saying, I write what I need to write, and then I find a reference that fits, which is obviously flipping the process on its head, it's not not always supposed to read first, understand and then pull that into our own worldview and our own arguments. And I heard a postgraduate student say, you'd have to give me a really strong argument for me to not control F that journal article to find the bit I need. And so that process is already underway.

So take aside generative AI, and the impact that has had on writing. So the research process has already been short circuited predominantly because of the sheer volume of research information out there. Now the writing process itself is being short circuited, because of the lack of needs to actually generate, put the words in the right order, because that's being done for us.

Okay, it's done on a very general level. It's being, you know, AIs are trained to be generalists, not to be specific, you know, specific to our subjects, but we can train them that the time is coming when we can have our own AIs that we will train to our own specialisms.

So that's going to be overcome fairly rapidly.

So if the craft of research is already short circuited, and has been for a while,

and the craft of writing is short circuited, we're no longer learning in through those original processes, in which case the output no longer represents the learning.

the learning. So we need to rethink the output. 100%. Yeah. And I heard someone recently, a keynote speaker recently say, why, why do we insist on assessing the things a computer can do for you?

for you? You know, why are we insisting on assessing the human, the human, the individual, in something that's not that they don't need to do? Which brings us back to the right point. You know, it was a challenging, it was said as a challenge, you know, as a challenging thing. But we need to think differently about writing. Absolutely. Yeah.

Yeah. Because if writing straightforward production of text no longer represents actual communication, it's what is the human? What is the learning? What is the actual process? So how do we think about communicating? Because I still think that good writing is a form of communication. But it's about how do we achieve that? And I think you have to go back even earlier, though, what is it you actually want? What is good academic practice? Because underneath it all is that what is the skill set you want people to leave with?

that what is the skill set you want people to leave with? And only then can you decide what assessment is suitable.

But because we're always going, okay, what do we let's choose from this bank of assessments, right, we need a bit of writing and a bit of speaking, you know, I sometimes feel like the good practice is forgotten. And then you've got, of course, the whole commodification of education and people wanting to get, you know, the mark or the piece of paper with two, one or first on it.

And so you're back to forgetting why you're there in the first place and what the point of a university is.

No, but then we come back to the general context within higher education and what we're operating in more broadly in the purpose of the purpose that our government and our society sees higher education playing more broadly. Yeah, because I have always been encouraged to question and challenge and break down in the various things. So I started in English, and then I was linguistics, and now I'm in education. But at any course I've ever been on, I've been it's better to critique and break down and to question and to say, how would you do it differently? Or why would you do it? And which what rationales have you got? And those are the skills I try to pass on to my students, right little wrongly, but then I would say that's something I suppose could still do for you. But you would hope that people would want that skill set to be able to think for themselves. Again, you're back to why, why are you really here apart from wanting the piece of paper? I agree.

But there's there. If we're still talking about assessment, and academic integrity, and artificial intelligence, then it's about Okay, so how does the written word, or indeed, the picture if it's going into creative arts and, you know, being able to use AI to generate video to be able to generate images, etc.

to be able to generate images, etc. So how does that output represent the learning that you need the student to have? We're back to the first question, aren't we? What's the purpose of the assessment?

Do we have something? We've all gone horribly quiet. Do we feel like we've come to come to the end of the thought?

come to the end of the thought? So I just think it's interesting, because I've done a lot of research into academic misconduct lately, because I'm working on that for my doctorate. And the type of plagiarism that we worry about is very confined to Western society. And it's usually the UK, the US, Australia, New Zealand, you see a pattern emerging, France would say it doesn't have any academic conduct, because it either has all or examination that it doesn't have anything else in its system, for example. So their concept of academic misconduct doesn't exist.

And then, like countries like, say, for example, China, that's like, well, okay, we know you shouldn't copy, but at the same time, the collaborative idea about honoring by copying those are entrenched deeply into society.

those are entrenched deeply into society. And we're here going, that's wrong. And that's bad. So the thing you find, Chloe, is that everybody has their own nuanced, fantastic understanding of what is fair and what isn't fair. What is plagiarism, what isn't plagiarism, you know, even down to really clumsy, clunky, inexperienced use of turn it turn it in similarity checker, you know, how many times I bet you've been asked this question, what percentage should I allow for my students?

my students? Yes. Okay. Yeah. So does anybody ask that question, you know, that the system is failing, because that shows a complete misunderstanding of what that technology is supposed to be for. But how it's being used is something different. And the other thing that I often provoke people with in this space is asking them to consider two of my history students.

On the one hand, I've got the one student who said, Oh, yeah, I've done my first essay, I'm quite pleased with it. I found in the end, I wasn't really happy with the way that I was structuring it. And I got chat GPT to rewrite some of my paragraphs, hope that's okay.

And then the other student over there said, Well, I didn't need to use chat GPT. Because as you know, my dad is a professor in the same department here. And, you know, my brother did the did a history degree here, my sister did a degree in the Faculty of Social Science, Public Policy. And they all had a look at it. And they said it was really good. But obviously, my dad changed a few things and suggested I reorder my paragraphs.

paragraphs. And, you know, the way our academic integrity policies are written, they both breach the policy, right?

the policy, right? But if you're telling me that the one with privilege is going to get punished for having a dad who's a professor, and ran it under the nose of his brother and sister, I would argue with you because that doesn't happen.

That is cultural capital.

That is first generation student lent into the technology, and he's going to get disciplined.

And there's something wrong with a system that allows that to happen.

And it's because we have actual policy, and then tacit policy, that we make up as we go along, and understandings that we make up as we go along.

And it's hugely problematic. And I'm sure there are a lot of people out there who might listen to this and go, well, that would never happen. I disagree with that. And I would invite them to drop me a message on Twitter or something. And we can have a debate about this, because I've seen it happen.

You know, I've witnessed this for myself.

And actually, as a first generation student, myself, I witnessed other people getting first class grades on their essays when I was an undergraduate.

And, you know, my perception was they were getting assistance from people they knew, but I didn't know anyone that had been to university. You know, I didn't even know what flipping essay was.

I'd have scored 16. And if you don't have that immersion, there is so much that you don't know. And if I wasn't being supported in how to write an essay 30 years ago, are we doing enough now to help students understand not only what an essay is, what appropriate use of these technologies are, but also challenging ourselves to think that the landscape has changed, that we need to change our thinking about purpose of assessment, what constitutes right, what constitutes dishonesty, and have a little bit more of a global perspective, as you've been queuing me up to say there, Chloe, Chloe, I just think we're far too insular and traditional and conservative.

It's just interesting to learn to challenge or question things there. Because, you know, when you've been like I've been working in higher education since 2001, and you start getting a bit like this is the way and the only way and then you realize, no, actually, that's not true. And if we're going to really be academics, we need to be a bit more open minded.

But also, we have a lot of second career academics in our institution because we're a continuing education institution, a lot of vocational subjects, we have people who are experts in their field, often feeling like they're not experts at all when they join us as lecturers.

And that's a really big area that we feel we need support because nobody wants their colleagues to be feeling disadvantaged.

And often they haven't been anywhere near higher education for 20, 30 years. And as you say, the concept of an essay or different assessments has changed in that time.

So you realize you don't know what you thought you knew.

So it's interesting what you said there, because I think that really fits with our colleagues who've changed career quite well. Yeah, it resonates with me. I did exactly the same. Martin had a \*\*\*\* education, left at 16.

And everything else happened since, you know, because because it Yeah.

And I didn't Yeah, I didn't understand what I was, you know, I didn't I remember going to university in the first few weeks, kind of thinking I had all this time on my hands, why was I only there like 12 hours a week or whatever, you know, because I've been used to working and trying to do trying to do a diploma at night school and trying to, you know, secure my entry to university.

And so I'd gone from a 60 hour working week to a 12 hour working week, and it all made no sense. But of course, I got to about Christmas and kind of went, actually, I actually need to put a bit of effort in here, you know, I need to actually do other things, not just attend for the 12 hours a week or whatever it was. That's the thing, isn't it? The people in this group here now we haven't, we're not very representative of what you might think. Yeah, what you might say, yeah, went to FE college, that was my first experience of education.

And if college, you're not really expected to go to university, I didn't get any preparation for it. But the thing is, is that, again, when they hear people say

students, I'm like, they're not homogeneous. There's not a identical people thinking and feeling and acting the same way. So the whole need, I suppose, is to see them as individuals. Anyway, I see the time is marching on.

So any closing comments or thoughts that we want to make? I mean, I think it's been a really interesting discussion.

And it's got me to think about assessment even more controversially than before. So I welcome that, especially because that's one of the areas I look after. I just wanted to say thank you. Yeah, we look forward to seeing you in Medway in a couple of weeks time.

And we're not releasing this podcast after the conference. Yeah.

But yeah, thank you so much, Martin, a really interesting discussion. My pleasure.

It's been great talking. I mean, I get on a soapbox about this stuff. But this is such an opportunity.

It's not about AI broadly. It's not about chat GPT. It's an opportunity to leverage into the limelight the conversations all of us have been trying to have with people for so long.

And now people are interested in this stuff. Let's get them interested. You know, one of the goals of King's next year is actually to make less visible the conversations about AI per se, more visible the conversations about good assessment, good teaching.

And, you know, we opened the door that's got a big AI on it. But you're in there. And what do you see? You don't see chat GPT, you see a whole raft of different opportunities to do assessments. That's how we're doing it.

Yeah, good analogy. Yeah, good positive note to end. Yeah, absolutely. That's brilliant.

So thank you very much, Martin. And I look forward to seeing you on the 26th. And yeah, I'll be in touch before.

But thank you, everybody. Thanks very much. Thanks, Martin, for your time. Cheers.