When Reports Become “Too Good”: Rethinking Assessment in the Age of Generative AI

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Abstract

The widespread adoption of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools is changing academic writing in higher education and, consequently, some of the assumptions traditionally associated with its assessment. This presentation draws on teaching experience in supervising and assessing undergraduate Project/Internship reports and Master’s dissertations in Computer Engineering, considering changes observed following the widespread availability of GenAI tools.

Before the emergence of these technologies, academic written work frequently showed grammatical and syntactic errors, difficulties in structuring technical discourse, limited vocabulary, and problems with clarity and coherence. These aspects often required considerable attention during assessment and oral examinations and could significantly affect the evaluation of the written work.

More recently, a noticeable change has emerged. Reports and dissertations tend to be linguistically more polished, better structured, and stylistically more sophisticated. While this represents a positive development in terms of written communication, it also raises an important assessment challenge: the formal quality of academic writing may no longer provide the same evidence about a student’s ability to independently structure, articulate, and critically communicate technical knowledge.

Rather than treating GenAI solely as a threat to academic integrity, this presentation considers its growing use as an opportunity to rethink assessment practices. Greater emphasis may need to be placed on students’ understanding of their own work, justification of technical decisions, critical thinking, implementation skills, and ability to defend their choices during oral examination.

The presentation discusses these changes from a teaching perspective and considers how assessment in engineering education might evolve when producing polished academic text becomes increasingly accessible through AI-assisted writing.

Keywords: Generative Artificial Intelligence; Engineering Education; Academic Writing; Assessment; Academic Reports; Master’s Dissertations; Large Language Models.