

## **From adversary to ally**

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### **Citation:**

KOLADE, Seun and GIOVE, Samantha (2024). From adversary to ally. *Ambition*, 77, 30-33. [Article]

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# FROM Adversary TO Ally

Programme directors and leaders in learning and assessment must not fear the rising use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) among students, but rather welcome the possibilities it presents to enhance methods of evaluation. **Seun Kolade** and **Sam Giove** draw on the experience of Sheffield Business School to offer a pathway for the technology's effective adoption

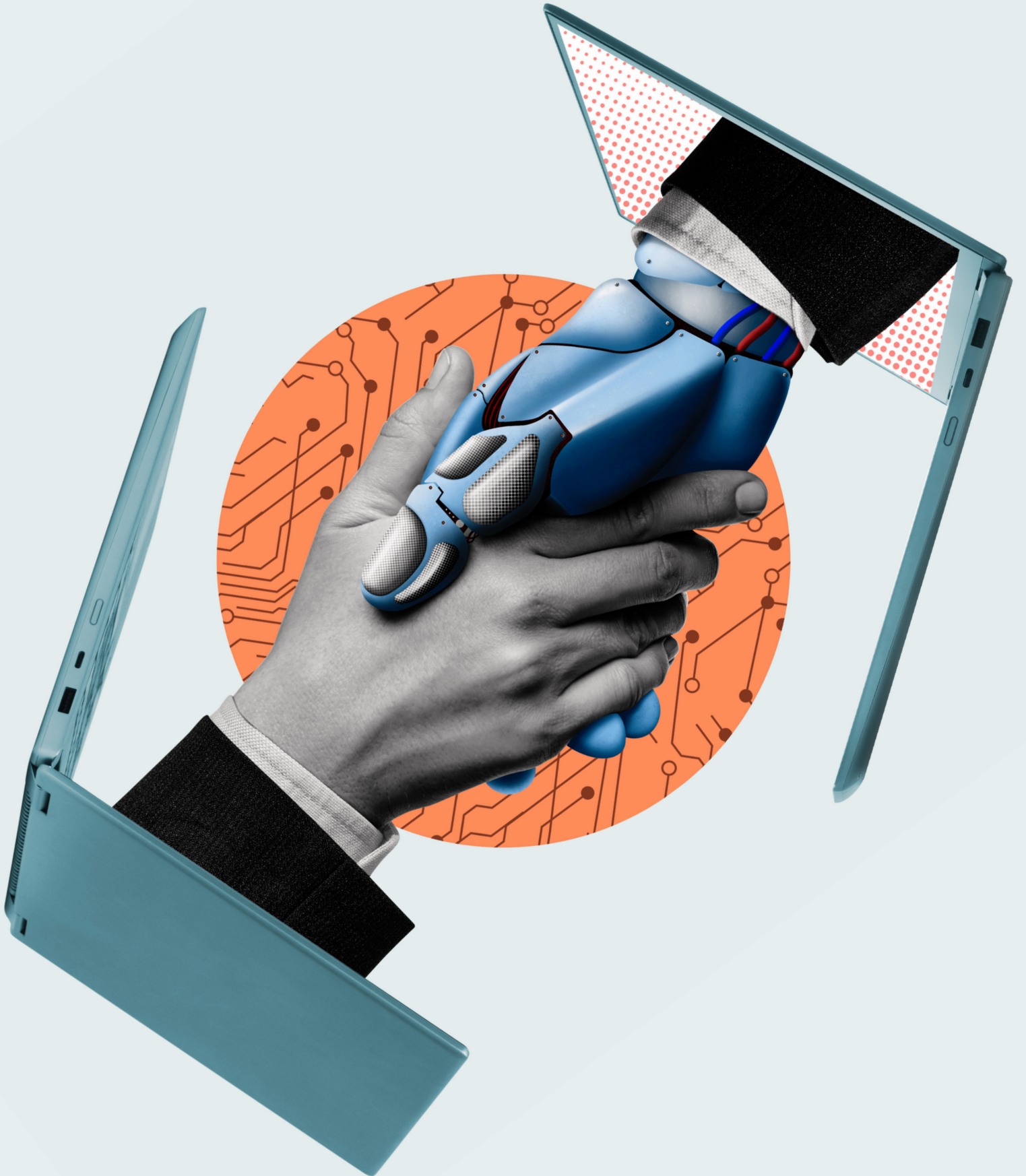
**S**ince OpenAI launched ChatGPT in November 2022, generative AI has continued to trend as a hot topic and sustained interest not only in the education sector but also among the wider populace. The reasons are not far-fetched given that, with the right prompts, a user can create new articles, poetry, music and other forms of content using generative AI that are often indistinguishable from those created by humans. They can also generate highly realistic images, videos and audio recordings of people – the so-called 'deepfakes' that are sometimes used to create the illusion that a person said or did something that, in reality, they did not.

In healthcare, AI has the power to speed up the process of drug discovery by predicting how different

molecules might combine to produce effective drugs. The technology can also be used to create personalised voice assistants, generate voiceovers in different languages and help people with speech impairment. Where data is scarce, generative AI can even be used to create new, synthetic data that then trains machine-learning models for deployment across a wide range of areas. These include real-time translation and subtitling, 3D-model generation, prototyping and simulation, as well as style transfer for image and video editing, to name but a few.

## A double-edged sword

Now imagine this versatile tool in the hands of a university or business school student. With minimal fuss and no intellectual exertion, they can generate an entire academic essay by issuing a set of commands to a generative AI platform and bypass the detection



of official plagiarism checkers. Of course, such students will still grapple with some problems, because generative AI continues to have difficulties in generating and listing appropriate and recent scholarly citations. However, a student can still use the technology to generate an 'original' essay and augment it with a sufficient number of relevant citations to receive an 'A' grade, according to our recent research paper published in peer-reviewed journal *Heliyon*.

This is the nightmare scenario for higher education and a major source of consternation for practitioners across the world. In the eyes of many, generative AI is an affront to the integrity of learning, the credibility of assessment and should simply be banned. But even if concerns of this nature are warranted, is a Luddite opposition (ie one that stands against the introduction of new technology vis-à-vis the 19th-century movement of English textile workers) to generative AI justified? After all, the 21st-century knowledge economy is shaped by the increasing ubiquity of digital technologies across all aspects of life and their presence will continue to transform economic activities and social interaction for the foreseeable future.

In this context, running against the current of digital transformation is a fool's errand and higher education practitioners must embrace this reality to gain the power to shape it. This is especially important for business schools that aspire to be at the forefront of developing leaders for the future. Such leaders must be skilled in leveraging data-driven insights to navigate complex challenges, innovate within a dynamic marketplace and make strategic decisions in a globally interconnected business environment. It goes without saying, therefore, that technology is not the enemy.

Today's businesses are required to meet the challenges presented by digital transformation and frontier technologies to leverage their opportunities, so educators must do the same. To achieve this, an important starting point is to rethink the structure of learning and assessment. For the most part, business school assessment models have traditionally oriented towards testing knowledge. Educators have increasingly prioritised critical reflection and the ability of learners to co-produce new knowledge, drawing from what they have been taught and what they have researched. This is fundamental and will continue to be a cornerstone of assessment. But it is also, by its very nature, foundational. Business school programme directors and leaders in learning and assessment

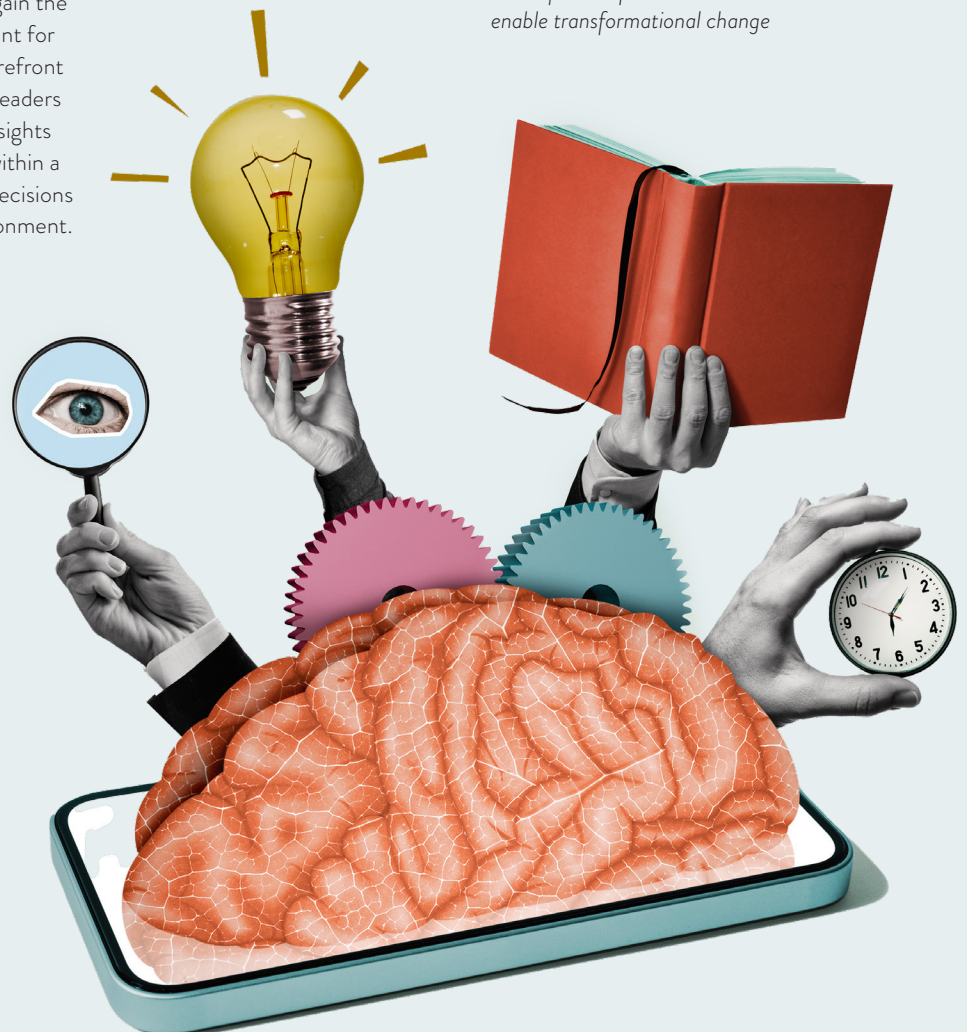
## BIOGRAPHIES



*Seun Kolade is a professor of entrepreneurship and digital transformation, as well as interim head of research at Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University. His research spans digital transformation, circular economy, transformative entrepreneurship and business strategy in turbulent environments*



*Sam Giove is director of Sheffield Business School. She has worked in higher education for more than 25 years, holding several senior academic posts, in addition to gaining substantial experience in industry and as an entrepreneur. Giove is a recognised authority in developing authentic and inclusive strategies in higher education, with a passion for how the sector can enable transformational change*



must become more creative and intentional to build on this foundation of knowledge with new layers of competence testing and performance evaluation.

In short, business schools must do better in moving from assessing ‘know-what’ to assessing ‘know-how’ and ‘show-how’. And guess what? The biggest ally in this challenging but exciting journey is digital technology. Imagine deploying AI to create assessments based on gamified business simulations and strategy challenges. Imagine creating customised versions of ChatGPT that offer tailored learning to individual students. Consider the impact of a tireless AI tutor that offers as much feedback – and ‘feedforward’ – as a student wants, whenever they want it. Generative AI could become your enemy, but with the right approach, it is sure to be a fine ally.

### Generative AI as ally

Alongside the explosion of AI in education there has been a business school revolution, as authentic learning and assessment has been pushed to the forefront of course and curriculum design.

At Sheffield Business School, the process of accepting AI has been less intimidating than some may have experienced because of the school’s focus on facilitating personalisation and inclusion, alongside employability and enterprise. Indeed, our early-adopter academics are growing in confidence and increasingly welcome the use of AI in their teaching. They recognise that its use in business is already widespread and will be integral to the day-to-day requirements expected of business graduates. As educators of responsible future leaders, these faculty members also acknowledge the need to encompass AI in the learning experience as part of their role to prepare students for the world of work.

For example, the school has always briefed students about the need to cite their sources and communications regarding AI are no different. Our current regulations acknowledge the likely use of AI while stressing that “attempting to pass off work created by AI as your own is cheating”. Most importantly, we encourage students to be transparent about using the technology, in the same way as they would when using any other tool or source.

Academics, meanwhile, are beginning to see the benefits of promoting AI as a research tool that can support students tasked with structuring a written piece of work. Alongside this, the school advises students as to the technology’s limitations, by pointing out instances in which it can be inaccurate, show bias, fabricate references and put data security at risk.

### The place of AI in assessing applied knowledge

Sheffield Business School approaches teaching and assessment with the aim of facilitating engagement with businesses and delivering problem-based learning that is unique to an organisation and its associated context. With the emphasis on applied learning, this method requires students to be creative, curious and courageous. In this, we believe that developing a combination of humanistic skills, expertise in AI and a desire to

make a difference in the world will make them valuable assets to business and society.

The school’s focus means that assessment is not simply about testing knowledge but also assessing students’ ability to apply that knowledge and solve real-world problems. Their ability to do this in a selective and discriminatory way shows us that they can put their education to good use. Our formative assessment approach also ensures that tutors can keep track of individual students’ progress and offer feedback at regular intervals along the way.

In order to receive appropriate feedback around their use of AI-generated content, students must present their sources of information adequately throughout, emphasising the importance of transparency in this context. When this is done effectively, AI is a valuable research tool that helps students evaluate output and provide a rationale for all the evidence selected and included in their final submissions.

However, this is not the only way in which AI is being used in assessments at our school. In projects, students work with employers in a consulting capacity to produce drafts of AI-generated solutions to real-world problems. They critique, refine and further develop the initial AI iteration to either strengthen the solution or produce alternative solutions. In addition, event management academics at the school encourage students to generate a newspaper article on a particular event using ChatGPT. Taking this as a first draft, students then review and develop the article, providing additional evidence and data from recently published sources, media, industry research and reports, as well as the opinions of key people and community groups.

### Carving a pathway for AI in business education

Generative AI does present significant challenges for business schools, but this is inherent in disruptive technologies. For those who are willing to embrace the challenge, the opportunities are manifold. We believe that the model adopted at Sheffield Business School can provide a pathway for other institutions. Let early-adopter academics at your school lead the charge in sharing best practices and building confidence among colleagues. This should encompass ways in which generative AI can be used to shape formative and summative assessments, with a view to pushing the frontiers of learning and enriching students’ learning experiences.

Having said that, it is important to take the challenges and potential pitfalls of AI seriously and put measures in place to address them. Institutions must also set clear guidelines for students on expectations in relation to appropriate uses of the technology and the consequences for any misuse. Given that AI continues to evolve rapidly, with new features and capabilities appearing every other month, business schools must seek to stay at the vanguard, grappling with new features and finding innovative ways to apply them in teaching and assessment. The future is disruptive, but it is all the more exciting for that very reason. 