

GenAI in Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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SN5117
Palliative and End-of-life Care

Why did the instructor use GenAI for learning and teaching?

The subject palliative and end of life care is aimed to enable students to develop a critical understanding of key concepts related to palliative and end-of-life care, as well as to appraise and evaluate the role of nurses in advanced practice for patients and their families. Betty was interested in exploring how GenAI tools could serve as a critical friend when students finalised their proposals for palliative care practice improvement. The integration of GenAI into the palliative and end-of-life care course (SN5117) was driven by pedagogical goals to enhance student learning through innovative collaboration with AI tools.

Specifically, Betty sought to investigate the following questions when incorporating GenAI into palliative care:

- Could GenAI be considered a critical friend?
- Do GenAI and human critical friends share common attributes?
- How do students perceive GenAI's role when preparing their work (e.g. as a groupmate, tutor, or friend)?
- How do students compare their human friends to GenAI when collaborating?

How was GenAI used in this scenario?

Similar to Jeong & Hmelo-Silver's (2016) previous experience with the affordances of computer-mediated learning, Betty recommended that students engaged with GenAI for structured tasks mirroring human collaboration:

- **Joint Tasks:** Collaborative brainstorming and refining proposals.
- **Communication:** Practicing dialogue with GenAI to clarify ideas.
- **Resource Provision:** Accessing quick summaries of palliative care frameworks or evidence.
- **Engagement & Group Dynamics:** Encouraging interaction with GenAI as a "team member" to simulate real-world interdisciplinary collaboration.
- **Identity Exploration:** Students reflected on GenAI's "identity" (e.g., neutral advisor vs. creative partner) to deepen engagement.

Key objectives to explore included:

- **Critical Friend Role:** Exploring whether GenAI could act as a collaborative partner to provoke reflection, offer alternative perspectives, and stimulate critical thinking.
- **Attribute Comparison:** Investigating overlaps between GenAI and human critical friends (e.g., resource provision, feedback generation).
- **Student Perception:** Understanding how students perceived GenAI's role (e.g., as a tutor, groupmate, or assistant).
- **Human vs AI Collaboration:** Comparing how students interacted with GenAI versus human peers in collaborative tasks and engaged with various identities including GenAI's identity not just with humans.

What was the impact on student learning?

The integration of GenAI into SN5117 was beneficial to both students and the teacher, as both parties discovered what worked and what did not when using GenAI as a critical friend. Among the students' reflections, two pieces of feedback echoed the majority view of students:

'I think GenAI's view is not necessarily better than mine, as GenAI's responses sometimes failed to answer questions precisely. Even when I asked brief questions, GenAI replied with lengthy paragraphs that were not relevant. However, GenAI's views can inspire my own thoughts, even if they do not provide all the correct answers.'

'GenAI does provide a lot of important information quickly and accurately. However, from another perspective, AI lacks critical analysis in research fields, particularly when critical thinking and analysis are required for questions such as "How was the research knowledge transferred to improve palliative care practice?" In such cases, humans are better equipped than GenAI. In other words, we are encouraged to work or study with GenAI as an assistant, rather than relying solely on it.'

What were the challenges encountered during the implementation and what solutions were used?

As Betty aimed for students to understand the extent to which GenAI can serve as a critical friend in her subject, the challenges encountered were not solely about finding solutions to the pitfalls of GenAI. In this context, both students and Betty questioned GenAI's ability to comprehend contextual information. They found that the information generated by GenAI related to SN5117 was somewhat generic and transferable but lacked specialisation. They maintained that, in SN5117, it was the responsibility of human beings, rather than GenAI, to uphold the replicable and reflective processes necessary for creating an inclusive learning environment. Betty also found that GenAI could not replicate human-level analysis of research methodologies or ethical dilemmas, and that GenAI couldn't foster emotional or social connections essential for inclusive learning. Her solution at that time was to emphasise peer discussions and instructor guidance for complex tasks as well as to maintain human-driven group activities to sustain engagement and empathy.

Betty did find GenAI's potential as a thought-provoking tool in palliative care education in her GenAI experiment but underscored its role as a complement to human collaboration. Success depended on balancing AI's efficiency with human strengths in critical analysis, contextual adaptation, and emotional intelligence. This approach aligns with broader trends in education, where AI augments—rather than replaces—human mentorship and peer learning.