AY24-25

CRI Seed Grant

Poster Flipbook

National UNIVERSITY

CAUSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Table of Contents

Development of a Living AI Resource Repository Based on Faculty and Staff Feedback

Michael Zimmer. NU School of Arts, Letters, & Sciences

CONTEXT

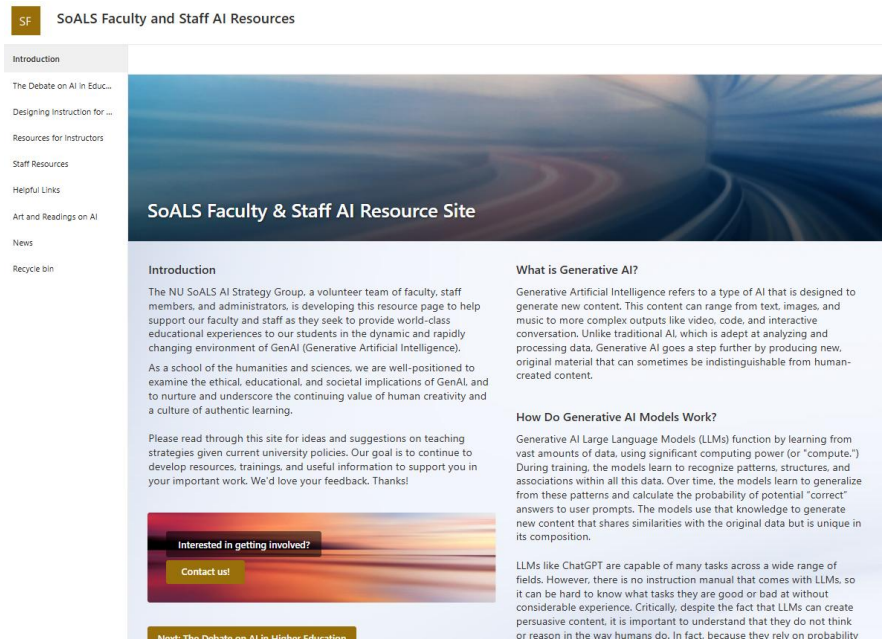
Through engagement and outreach to the School of Arts, Letters & Sciences (SoALS) community, the SoALS AI Strategy Group and I identified a critical gap in awareness and support on generative AI for faculty, staff, and students. To best serve our students' needs, it became clear that developing our own internal understanding of generative AI was critical to our ability to support students in this new era. To that end, the SoALS AI Resources Site is now a living resource that can evolve with the fast-moving technological change. The SoALS AI Resources Site for staff and faculty has been well-received by our constituents and served as a model for the NU AI Council's recently created university-wide page.

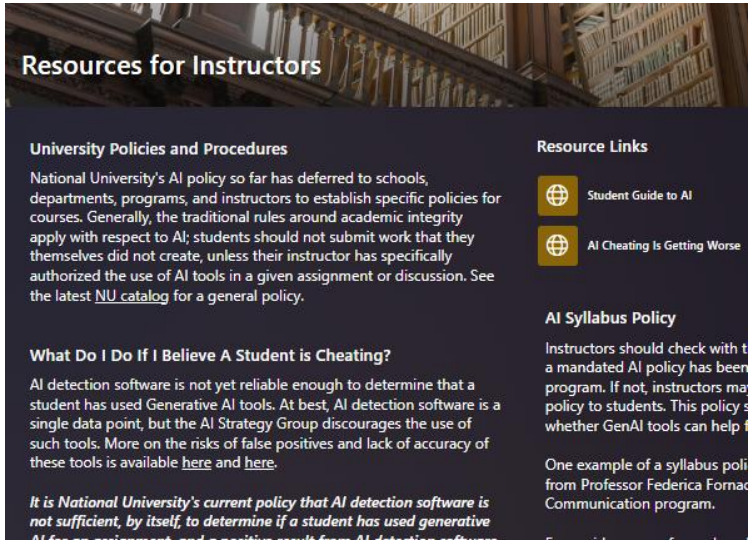
SoALS Faculty & Staff Resource Site

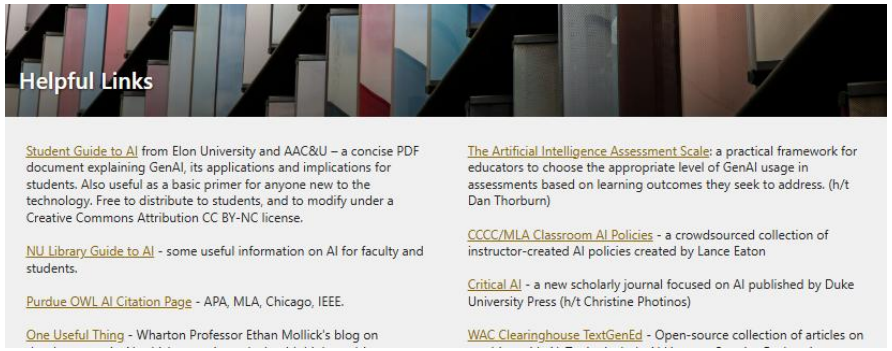
TEAM

Many thanks to all those who help create this resource & continue to contribute:

- Karen Goldman
- Julie Wilhelm
- John Miller
- Fede Forniciari
- Allyson Washburn
- Huda Makhluf
- Jacqueline Ruiz
- Colin Dickey
- Lorna Zukas
- Frank Montesonti
- Shelley Rees







Hello AI - It's me the office staff worker!

AI can automate administrative tasks by taking over routine and time-consuming duties. An AI Administrative Assistant can manage calendaring, organize emails, handle data entry, and prepare reports.

Hey AI - What can you do for me?

Email work, scheduling, prioritizing work, effective communication, just to name a few. These items can help simplify your daily office life. This will change the look of your desk from the one below (sigh), to the desk above (yeah!).

CAUSE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (CRI)

Exploring the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) to Maximize Doctoral Learning Experiences

Lori A. Demeter, PhD. NU College of Law and Public Service

CONTEXT

There is a **disparity in student knowledge & preparedness**, particularly among those in DIS9901A. **GenAI holds significant potential to aid student learning** when used appropriately. AI can present & interact with key concepts in various mediums, reinforcing understanding & engagement. Despite its promise, limited research exists on the use of GenAI in higher education dissertation research & its potential to enhance student engagement & dissertation development success.

OBJECTIVES

- Develop & test a GenAI tool that can offer graduate students personalized learning experiences
- Explore students' user experience of the tool
- Examine students' perceptions of the tool

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS (n = 41)

- 17 DPA & 24 DCJ students
- All under the age of 65, with the majority (68%) between 18-35
- 73% Were enrolled in CMP course, 17% had completed CMP, & 10% were about to begin the course

MATERIALS

- Students completed a **brief survey** via Qualtrics about their experiences, perceptions & insights

PROCEDURES

- Vender built the GenAI tool: **Dissertation Assistant for Research & Academia (DARA)** using provided content aligned with course topics & concepts (e.g., research problem, purpose, questions, methods, & alignment)
- Students interacted with DARA using a learning module & then completed the survey
- Students received a $25 e-gift card for their participation

FINDINGS

PERCIEVED USE

- Vast majority (92.5%) of students reported use of **DARA helped** in developing and/or aligning their problem, purpose, & research question[s]

- In terms of use, 92% reported DARA was easy to understand & 97% reported the module was easy to complete.
- 95% **students would recommend incorporating DARA** into future courses

HELPFUL ASPECTS

- Most students (72%) indicated that assistance in **developing their research problem** as the *most* helpful aspect of DARA, followed by alignment of problem, purpose, & research questions, & then development of purpose statement

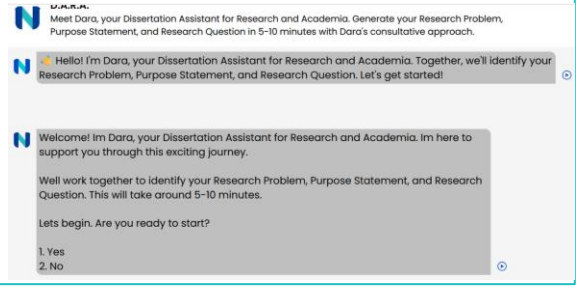
COMPARED TO FACULTY

- 86% indicated use of DARA was **more useful than traditional faculty feedback**

DISCUSSION

- Findings suggest GenAI tools have the potential to enhance student engagement & dissertation development success in graduate learning. Feedback from graduate DPA & DCJ **students indicated that the DARA tool was quite helpful in several ways.**
- DARA's real-time feedback & interactive nature were cited by several students as to why they felt it was more helpful than traditional feedback.
- **Future pilots** my look to incorporate GenAI tools in additional dissertation courses as a tool to enhance learning & complement faculty feedback.

Hello DARA 👋



The Effects of an AI Data-Analysis Tool on Higher Education Faculty Members' Perceptions of Their Research

Abi Nubla-Kung, PhD.
City University

Pressley Rankin, PhD.
City University

Mary Dereshiwsky, PhD.
National University

ABSTRACT

Higher education faculty survival has traditionally been part of the "publish or perish" phenomenon. This, combined with AI tools' seeming ubiquity in academia, provided the impetus for this study. Faculty were provided training and access to Intellectus 2.0, an AI-assisted qualitative data analysis tool. Preliminary findings reveal limited prior experience with AI tools, barriers to use, and beliefs AI could enhance faculty research output.

OBJECTIVE

To provide avenues of innovation for faculty with expertise in qualitative research by giving them the opportunity to use and vet an AI-driven data analysis tool (i.e., Intellectus 2.0) in their own research.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

- 23 faculty from City University & other US universities
- Majority had 1-2 publications & presentations a year
- All had:
  - ✓ Qual research expertise
  - ✓ Conducted at least 1 qual study
  - ✓ Qual data to use for this study

MATERIALS

- 21-Question survey on AI tool use
- Intellectus 2.0 training materials
- Semi-structured interview post-training about experiences & perceptions of AI tool

PROCEDURES

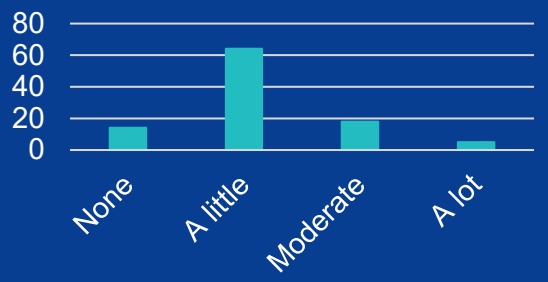
- O1-X-O2 framework used:
  O1 = Pre-training survey
  X = Intellectus 2.0 training
  O2 = Post-training interview

SRUVEY FINDINGS

AI General Use

- Numerous participants had a little (43%) or a moderate (48%) amount of experience with AI tools in general.

Percent of Reported AI Tool Use in Research



How AI is Used in Research

- Majority used AI tools for editing & finding citations (64%), followed by writing (41%) & data analysis (36%).

Barriers to Conducting Research

- 82% reported a "lack of time"
- 52% "lack of money"
- 33% "lack of inspiration"
- 33% "lack of motivation"

DISCUSSION

- The goal of this study was to explore how AI tools might increase faculty's capacity for research.
- Survey data showed participants' knowledge & experience with AI tools in their research were little to moderate.
- Preliminary data shows that a majority of faculty (82%) believe that AI tools could increase their research output.
- The impact of whether faculty believe an AI tool can increase their research output extends not only for a particular faculty member, but for the organization(s) in which they work, and beyond, as their research contributes to the literature at large.
- Future interview data may shed light on how they believe AI tools would impact their research specifically.

Applying a Transformative Experiential Learning Model to Develop a Variety of Work-based Learning Experiences

Brian Epp. NU Learning Experience

CONTEXT

Evidence shows that students who engage in internships, or employer projects, are more likely to find work in their field and demand a higher salary than those who do not. This study explored whether the Transformative Experiential Learning Model (TELM) could be used to develop a variety of work-based learning experiences that also result in equitable student outcomes. Faculty working sessions were developed around this model and used to help faculty evaluate their curriculum to look for opportunities to add or enhance assignments that would provide students the opportunity to apply their learning in the most authentic way possible.

OBJECTIVE

To evaluate the effectiveness of TELM as a method to support faculty in the development of new or enhanced experiential learning opportunities for NU students.

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

- 3 faculty went through TELM training & evaluated their respective courses

MATERIALS

- TELM training resources
- Pre & post assessment of curriculum
- 10-Question post-intervention survey

PROCEDURES

- 3 faculty members partook in the intervention, which involved presentation of TELM, a discussion of its 6 elements, & how to use them to create or revise course assignment(s).
- A Learning Experience Designer was included for course revisions to make it a part of the regular Learning Experience course development cycle.

FINDINGS

TELM Evaluations

- 3 Faculty went through TELM training & evaluated their respective courses
  - 1 Faculty felt their course addressed most TELM elements & opted not to make changes
  - 1 Faculty revised assignments
  - 1 Faculty created a new course

TELM Elements

Fidelity	Authentic employer Interaction
Iteration	Cycles of reflection, trial & error
Team, Social Learning	Peer engagement, sense of belonging
Feedback & Guidance	Faculty & employer mentoring
Integration	Connected to career goals, other courses
Autonomy & Uncertainty	Student agency & ill-structured problem

DISCUSSION

- Faculty members who completed the full project believed the assignments that were created or revised using TELM would improve student learning & engagement & that they would reference the model for future curriculum development.
- This work can be scaled by presenting TELM & how it can be incorporated into new course development or revision at a LEX Learning Exchange which is attended by all Learning Experience Designers & their managers.
- An additional product that came out of this work is a faculty workshop template that can be adapted to a variety of contexts to generate high quality experiential learning assignments for students as part of Value Rich Education endeavors.

Acknowledgement

- Paritosh Kaul, MD. External Consultant

The Impact of a Virtual Mindfulness Program on Students' Stress Level and Persistence in an Online Setting

Zvi Bellin
NU JFK School of Psychology & Social Sciences

Patrice Mazyck
NU Sanford College of Education

Wayne Padover
NU Sanford College of Education

ABSTRACT

This study included student and faculty researchers who aimed to explore how participating in an online mindfulness community (The Mindfulness Training Collective - MTC) impacts student persistence in an undergraduate and graduate population of online learners. Through both quantitative and qualitative methods, we explored the relationship between participating in the MTC, stress, and student persistence.

Mindfulness Training Collective

OBJECTIVE

Explore the impact of the Mindfulness Training Collective on:

- Student persistence
- Subjective well-being
- Academic mindset

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

- Roughly 1,000 participants in the MTC were contacted to participate
- 48 Participants completed the fully survey

MATERIALS

- Survey focused on:
  - ✓ Demographic information
  - ✓ Frequency of participation in MTC
  - ✓ Academic stress levels
  - ✓ Persistence
  - ✓ Short answers reflecting on participating in the MTC

PROCEDURES

The MTC, within the Whole Person Center, organizes mindfulness training across the professional disciplines offered through National University. Students already involved in the MTC were eligible to complete the survey.

FINDINGS

QUANT PRELIMINARY TRENDS

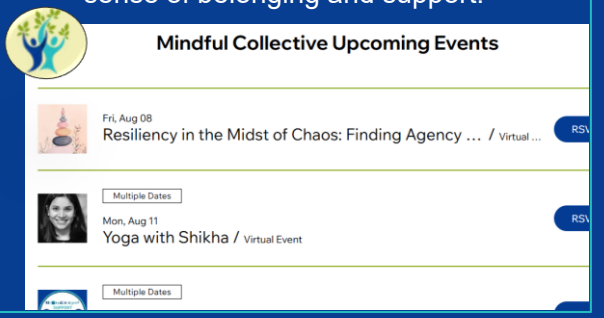
- We are still determining the outcomes from the quantitative statistics, though the raw data points to:
  - ✓ Negative relationship between MTC participation and stress levels
  - ✓ Positive relationship between MTC participation and persistence levels

QUAL PRELIMINARY TRENDS

- Our qualitative analysis created themes along the characteristics of academic mindset, which have shown to predict student persistence:
  - ✓ Belief in Effort
  - ✓ Sense of Belonging
  - ✓ Self-confidence
  - ✓ Relevance and Value

DISCUSSION

- The mindfulness program is a direct way to engage students and help them through the barriers and challenges to academic success.
- We have concrete data of the utility of our program and ways to improve - such as more varied times of online mindfulness gatherings and programs that speak to managing conflicts, improving communication, and enhancing creativity.
- Other programs can benefit from this work as they can consider a community-based practice that fits into their program's occupational goals and offer ongoing meetups that create a sense of belonging and support.



How Do We Partner with Emerging Technologies to Foster Rich Human Connections and Support User Wellbeing?

CONTEXT

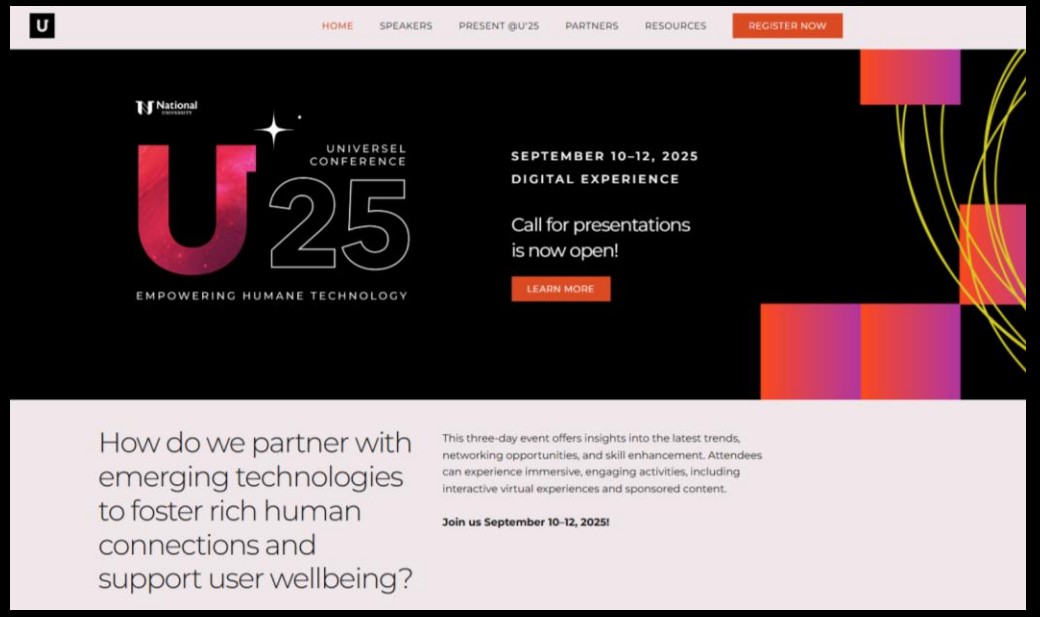
A CRI Seed Grant was used to develop and launch the Universel Conference (U25). This is a 3-day event featuring both synchronous and asynchronous content focused on how we can foster meaningful human connection and wellbeing through emerging technologies. Attendees can participate using full VR headsets or by piloting an avatar from their laptop. This conference is distinct in its themes and its use of XR spaces and supported real-time networking in a virtual event. Conference proceedings will be made available as an open educational resource.

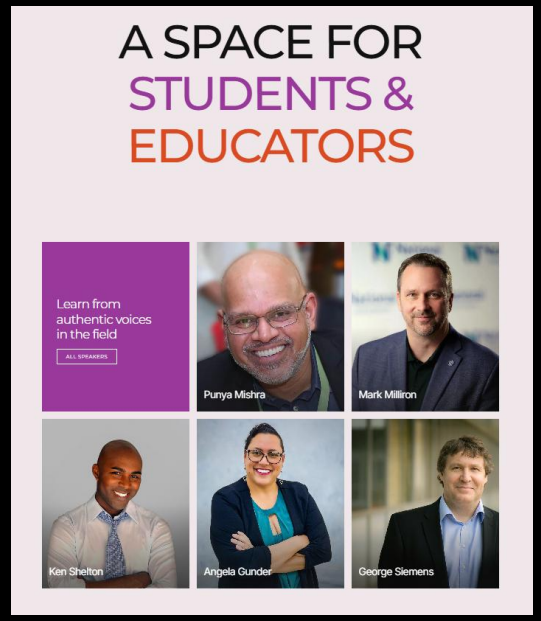
https://www.universel.ai

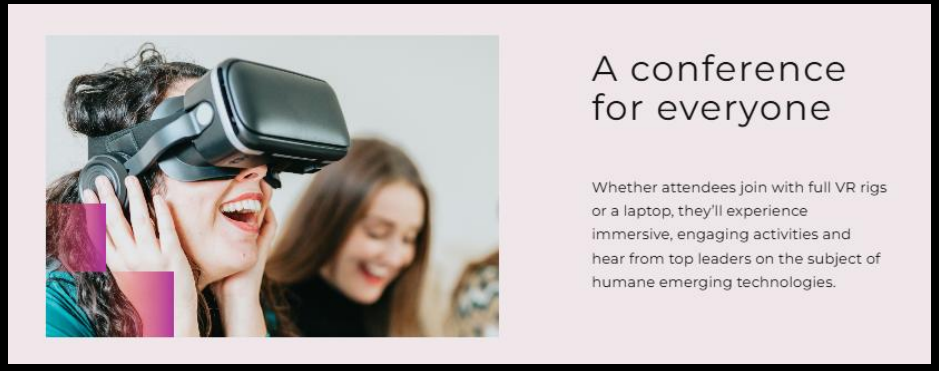
TEAM

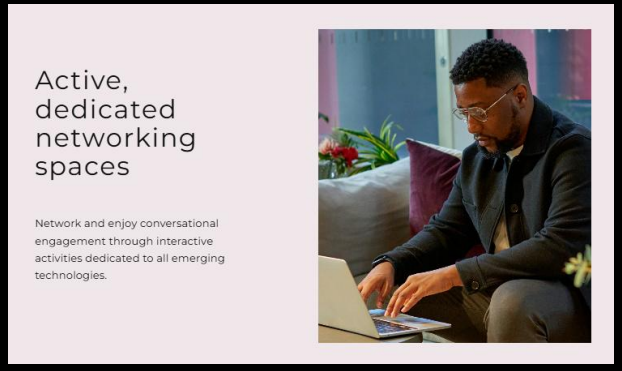
U25 would not be possible without this dedicated team:

- Alexis Osuna
- Brian Arnold
- Brian Epp
- Brittni Cameron
- Daniel Johnston
- Joshua Eckenrode
- Luke Cable
- Mark Otis
- Melody Rawlings
- Nicole Luke
- Richard Ressel
- Robert Lee
- Scott Moss
- Tara Stoudt









Thank You!

National UNIVERSITY