

Weekly AI in Higher Education Report

Week of July 3, 2026 – Prepared by Manus

Executive Summary

The following seven points highlight the most significant developments in AI tools for teaching and learning in higher education over the past week.

- **Adoption is near-universal but governance remains thin.** 92% of higher education students now use generative AI in some form, yet only 20% of universities have a formal AI policy in place, creating a significant governance gap that institutions are racing to close. [\[1\]](#)
- **Faculty enthusiasm in the US and Canada is declining.** A major global survey of over 45,000 students and faculty found that North American faculty intent to use AI in teaching has dropped 9 percentage points (from 76% to 67%) since 2025, driven by concerns that AI poses a serious risk to human intellectual development. [\[2\]](#)
- **"Cognitive outsourcing" has emerged as the central pedagogical concern.** Educators and researchers are increasingly alarmed that students are using AI to bypass the productive struggle necessary for deep learning, and are developing structured frameworks to teach AI as a tool students direct—not an authority they defer to. [\[3\]](#)
- **Institutions are shifting from AI policies to pedagogical integration.** Leading universities are moving beyond policy statements to embed AI fluency across entire curricula, with Northeastern University and the University of Miami providing notable models. [\[4\]](#) [\[5\]](#)
- **The University of Texas at Austin School of Law has issued a directive to reinforce Socratic teaching.** The law school dean published a formal memo calling on faculty to reduce screen and AI reliance during class and to ensure students develop foundational legal reasoning skills before AI upskilling. [\[6\]](#)
- **A growing backlash is targeting student-facing AI tools.** Parent groups, child development experts, and the American Federation of Teachers are calling for moratoriums on generative AI in classrooms, citing a lack of evidence for learning benefit and documented risks of cognitive harm. [\[7\]](#)
- **Research confirms AI tutoring is effective only as a complement to teachers.** Randomized controlled trials in multiple countries demonstrate that AI tutoring systems produce significant learning gains when teachers remain present and involved, but not when used as a substitute for instruction. [\[8\]](#)

Major News and Developments

1. The "Cognitive Outsourcing" Problem and Emerging Pedagogical Frameworks

The most prominent theme in higher education AI discourse this week is what researchers call **cognitive outsourcing**—the tendency for students to use AI tools to bypass the intellectual effort necessary for durable learning. Writing in *Inside Higher Ed*, Jacob T. Brooks (High Point University) and Fayrouz Elwesmi (Duke University) describe the mechanism with precision: when a student asks AI to brainstorm before contributing any ideas of their own, or accepts a literature summary without verifying it against primary sources, the brain is bypassed, leaving only "the illusion of mastery." [\[3\]](#)

The authors draw on neuroscience to explain why this matters. Synaptic plasticity—the brain's ability to form and strengthen neural connections through active engagement—is the mechanism by which knowledge becomes durable and transferable. AI, when used passively, short-circuits this process. A randomized controlled trial at Georgetown University found that medical students who

used ChatGPT during study sessions scored higher on immediate assessments, but this advantage disappeared entirely one week later. [3]

In response, Brooks has developed a three-step framework for his undergraduate physics courses:

Step	Principle	Practice
1	Always start with your own attempt	Draft a rough answer before consulting AI, to have a point of view to defend
2	Never accept the first response	Verify AI outputs against primary sources; require it to show its reasoning
3	Document how you use it	Maintain a transcript of AI interactions as a professional and academic habit

This framework treats AI as a "lab assistant"—useful for executing tasks that are not the central intellectual work—while reserving the core thinking for the student. The authors argue that these habits can and must be taught early, particularly in undergraduate research settings where the stakes of intellectual ownership are highest. [3]

2. Google DeepMind Learning Director Warns Against "All or Nothing" AI Approaches

Miriam Schneider, Director of Learning Initiatives at Google DeepMind, argued at the World Education Forum that banning AI in higher education risks shutting down important pedagogical conversations. Speaking to *Times Higher Education* (republished in *Inside Higher Ed*), Schneider emphasized that AI does not have to change pedagogy but can instead reinforce it—provided that LLMs are intentionally built around learning science rather than assumed to be effective teachers by default. [9]

"It basically gives us this opportunity for reflective pause and to be able to grapple with some of those bigger questions that we mostly just sort of assumed. I think the risk is we don't end up having them if we make it all or nothing."

— Miriam Schneider, Google DeepMind

Schneider noted that the most productive conversations in education are increasingly less about the technology itself and more about the roles of teachers and students, how to center humanity and relationships, and how to increase motivation. Google's response has been to develop a "guided learning" mode in Gemini, powered by its LearnLM methodology, which is designed to support rather than replace pedagogical practice. [9]

3. Inside Higher Ed Student Voice Survey: Students Are Ambivalent and Underserved

A flash survey of 1,038 two- and four-year college students, conducted by *Inside Higher Ed* and Generation Lab in May 2026, reveals a nuanced picture of student attitudes toward AI. [10] The key findings are summarized below.

Finding	Data
Students using AI more than last year	30%
Most common student stance on AI	"Worried about dependence" (40%)

Finding	Data
Students who see AI primarily as learning support	60%
Students expecting AI to negatively impact career prospects	55%
Students who describe their institution's response as "very well"	10%
Students who describe their institution's response as at least "somewhat poor"	21%

Tawnya Means, a strategic AI adviser at Bowling Green State University, interpreted the dependence concern not as technophobia but as students "paying attention to what's happening to their thinking." She observed that institutional responses have largely defaulted to either ignoring the concern or issuing generic "use AI responsibly" guidance—neither of which addresses the underlying pedagogical challenge. [\[10\]](#)

The survey's most actionable finding is that students want AI woven into how they actually learn, not addressed through standalone workshops or policy documents. They want faculty to model AI use "out loud"—demonstrating what it looks like to push back on AI outputs, question its reasoning, and bring human judgment to bear. [\[10\]](#)

4. The Emotional Toll of AI on Faculty

In a widely read *Inside Higher Ed* opinion column, author and faculty development consultant John Warner documented the emotional impact of generative AI on front-line instructors. Based on faculty workshops across the country, Warner reports that anger, sadness, and despair are common, driven by a sense that their work has been irrevocably disrupted and that they have been "thrown to the wolves" by administrations that are either at cross-purposes with them or have left them without support. [\[11\]](#)

Warner cited two striking cases from the Bluesky platform: a keynote speaker at a digital humanities conference who admitted his address was AI-generated and confessed to feeling "useless as an intellectual," and a survey of Dartmouth creative writing students by professor Jeff Sharlet that revealed a spectrum of student emotions ranging from resignation to despair, including resentment toward an institution perceived as "all in on AI." [\[11\]](#)

Warner's argument is that the opportunity presented by AI is not to accelerate into an AI-integrated future, but to use the disruption as an occasion to recenter human agency, authentic learning, and the relational dimensions of education that have been eroded by credentialing pressures for decades. [\[11\]](#)

Institutional Implementations

University of Texas at Austin School of Law

Dean Bobby Chesney issued an eight-page memo to faculty calling for a renewed emphasis on Socratic teaching methods in response to the rise of AI. [\[6\]](#) The memo addresses three areas: what AI knowledge and skills students should learn, preserving the integrity of assessments, and mitigating students' use of AI for completing course materials. Chesney argued that the classroom is the "sole context" in which professors can ensure students are learning without AI assistance, making in-class dialogue the most valuable and irreplaceable component of legal education. The school aims to balance traditional legal training with a thoughtful AI upskilling program for practice. As of 2024, 62% of law schools had incorporated formal AI learning opportunities into their first-year curriculum, and 93% were considering updating their curricula. [\[6\]](#)

Northeastern University

Northeastern University has emerged as a leading model for systematic AI integration. Rather than adding standalone AI courses, the university is embedding AI fluency across all programs and disciplines through a faculty-led, bottom-up process. [4] Chief of Artificial Intelligence Jay Aslam described the goal as preparing students for a workplace of "co-intelligence," where they will work alongside AI tools. The university used the Digital Education Council's AI Literacy Framework as a reference point and adapted it to its own context, with faculty representatives across colleges defining what AI readiness should look like within their disciplines. Implementation includes program-level mapping, where faculty review courses to identify where AI literacy can be further developed. [4]

University of Miami Herbert Business School

The Miami Herbert Business School has redesigned its curriculum around what it calls the "Miami Method"—an approach that integrates AI into every course while centering human judgment and experiential learning. [5] Dean Paul Pavlou described the philosophy as training students to be the "final authority" who can explain and defend decisions to clients, using AI as a powerful ally rather than a decision-maker. The school offers AI minors and a new AI major with a robust technical foundation, interdisciplinary collaboration with computer science and engineering, and year-long industry projects designed to give students the equivalent of two years of full-time work experience by graduation. [5]

Google's University Partnerships (Gemini for Education and NotebookLM)

Google published a summary of university partnerships deploying Gemini for Education and NotebookLM across North American campuses. [12] Key institutional implementations include:

- **Virginia Tech:** Approved Gemini for Education and NotebookLM for use with high-risk data, with IT Security Office approval.
- **UC Riverside:** Launched "The Grove," a secure campus AI assistant built on Gemini Enterprise.
- **UC Irvine:** Approved Google Workspace and Gemini for Education for use with sensitive institutional data through its ZotGPT platform.
- **Case Western Reserve University:** Deployed Gemini campus-wide with staff training through conferences and self-paced online learning.
- **Indiana University:** Opened its flagship "GenAI 101" course, developed at the Kelley School of Business, to the public for free.
- **University of Virginia:** Students use Google AI Professional Certificates as a starting point for 100-hour applied projects with local businesses.
- **University System of Maryland:** Partnered with Google to offer AI Essentials courses for industry-recognized credentials.

Research and Studies

Digital Education Council Global Survey 2026

The Digital Education Council released its most comprehensive global study to date, drawing on 45,398 responses from 35 countries. [2] The findings reveal a field at a critical inflection point.

Metric	Global	US & Canada
Students who say AI is integrated into many of their courses	15%	—

Metric	Global	US & Canada
Students who say AI has transformed how they learn	5%	—
Students who believe instructors are well-equipped to guide AI use	29%	17%
Faculty intent to use AI in teaching	High (most regions)	67% (down from 76%)
Faculty who believe AI poses a serious risk to intellectual development	—	55%
Students who would support an institution-wide AI ban	—	43%
Students who feel their programme is current with AI	30%	19%
Employers who say higher education is not keeping up with industry change	80%	—

The survey's most striking finding is the sharp divergence between APAC and North American faculty. In APAC, 57% of faculty are excited about AI and believe it can make learning more effective; in the US and Canada, only 26% share this view. [\[2\]](#)

Brookings Institution: Lessons from EdTech History

A Brookings Institution analysis by Brad Olsen and Jobin Thomas applied lessons from over two decades of EdTech research to current AI deployments. [\[8\]](#) The authors identified three conditions that have historically determined whether educational technology succeeds or fails:

- 1 **Whether the technology supplements or substitutes for teachers.** Rigorous RCTs of AI tutors in Nigeria and Ghana both demonstrated learning gains only when teachers remained present and involved. The Mindspark personalized learning program in Delhi raised math scores by 0.37 standard deviations—but only when used as an after-school complement with a teaching assistant, not as a classroom replacement.
- 2 **Infrastructure and equity.** AI raises the infrastructure bar rather than lowering it, requiring reliable bandwidth, processing power, and capable devices. Schools that fell furthest behind during COVID-19 closures are the same schools AI deployment will struggle to reach.
- 3 **Disciplined measurement of effectiveness.** The Global Education Evidence Advisory Panel's 2023 review of over 13,000 studies found that providing more devices and platforms without complementary changes in teacher practice and curriculum sits in the "Bad Buys" tier. AI rollouts are currently accelerating ahead of evidence in the same pattern.

The authors' key recommendation is that AI's true value may lie in institutional support work—information management and administration—freeing teachers to focus on the relational work that no AI can replace. [\[8\]](#)

Bibliometric Review: AI-Driven Innovation in Higher Education (ScienceDirect)

A bibliometric analysis of 482 scholarly articles on AI in higher education didactics, published in *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, found that research is concentrated on personalized learning, learning analytics, and intelligent tutoring. [\[13\]](#) However, the authors identified persistent gaps: ethical issues such as data privacy and algorithmic bias remain comparatively underexplored, and the empirical evidence base is still largely fragmented and claim-based. The review calls for more

robust empirical studies and comparative, quantitative syntheses to identify which AI strategies are most effective across different disciplines and institutions. [13]

Policy and Guidelines Updates

American Federation of Teachers (AFT): The AFT, despite having accepted millions of dollars in AI training funding from Microsoft, OpenAI, and Anthropic, called in May for removing all student-facing AI tools from elementary schools and for stronger governance frameworks at the K-12 level. [7]

New York City Public Schools: More than half of New York City council members issued a public letter calling for a two-year moratorium on AI use in schools. The city also scrapped its plan to open an AI-focused high school after public outcry. The NYC public schools chancellor has indicated a more cautious approach, with a commitment to developing policy in partnership with families and communities. [7]

Stanford University (March 2026): Stanford reported that there is little evidence on how AI impacts K-12 education and that it remains unclear whether AI is "helping students complete tasks or helping them develop durable learning and skills." [7]

Law Schools: As of 2024, 62% of US law schools had incorporated formal AI learning opportunities into their first-year curriculum, with 93% considering curriculum updates to include AI education, according to the American Bar Association. [6]

Emerging Trends

1. From Policy to Pedagogy. The most significant institutional shift underway is the move from writing AI policies to redesigning pedagogy. Leading institutions are treating AI as a pedagogical and cultural challenge, not merely a technological one. The question is no longer whether to allow AI, but how to design courses and assessments that put human judgment at the center. [10]

2. The "Human Intelligence" Premium. As AI automates more cognitive tasks, there is a growing emphasis on the irreplaceable value of human skills: critical thinking, empathy, negotiation, public speaking, and leadership. Universities like Miami are explicitly building curricula around this premise, arguing that the liberal arts tradition is more relevant in the AI era, not less. [5]

3. The Governance Gap as a Strategic Risk. With 92% of higher education students using AI and only 20% of universities having formal policies, the governance gap is becoming a strategic liability. Institutions that close this gap first—through coherent, evidence-based frameworks—will be better positioned to capture AI's benefits while managing its risks. [1]

4. Regional Divergence in AI Attitudes. The sharp divergence between APAC and North American faculty attitudes toward AI suggests that the global higher education community is not converging on a shared model. North American institutions face a distinctive challenge: high student adoption, declining faculty enthusiasm, and growing public skepticism. [2]

5. AI Tutoring for Motivated Students. Emerging evidence suggests that AI tutoring systems are most effective for students who are already motivated and self-directed. The challenge of using AI to reach disengaged or struggling students—who arguably need the most support—remains largely unsolved. [14]

Source Links

[1] Engageli. "25 AI in Education Statistics to Guide Your Learning Strategy in 2026." <https://www.engageli.com/blog/ai-in-education-statistics>

[2] Digital Education Council. "AI in Higher Education Global Survey 2026." <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/resource-library-items/ai-in-higher-education-global-survey-2026>

- [3] Brooks, J.T. & Elwesmi, F. *Inside Higher Ed*. "A Practical Framework to Help Students Use AI in Learning." (June 15, 2026). <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/career-advice/carpe-careers/2026/06/15/practical-framework-help-students-use-ai-opinion>
- [4] Digital Education Council. "Universities Shift Towards New Models of AI Integration." (April 15, 2026). <https://www.digitaleducationcouncil.com/post/universities-shift-towards-new-models-of-ai-integration>
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- [6] Jakubowski, G. *Inside Higher Ed*. "Texas Law Dean Pushes Socratic Teaching Amid Rise of AI." (June 26, 2026). <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/06/26/u-texas-law-dean-calls-socratic-teaching-combat-ai>
- [7] Berger, E. *The Guardian*. "AI in the classroom prompts tide of concern from US parents and experts." (June 23, 2026). <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2026/jun/23/ai-us-schools-students>
- [8] Olsen, B. & Thomas, J. *Brookings Institution*. "Will AI in education succeed?" (June 9, 2026). <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/will-ai-in-education-succeed/>
- [9] Rowsell, J. *Inside Higher Ed* (via Times Higher Education). "'All or Nothing' Approach to AI 'Risks Shutting Down Innovation'." (June 10, 2026). <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/tech-innovation/teaching-learning/2026/06/10/all-or-nothing-approach-ai-risks-shutting-down>
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- [11] Warner, J. *Inside Higher Ed*. "The Emotional Toll of AI in Education." (June 22, 2026). <https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/columns/just-visiting/2026/06/22/ai-drains-spirit-out-teaching-we-can-get-it-back>
- [12] McAlister, M. *Google Blog*. "How universities are preparing students for an AI-powered future." (June 17, 2026). <https://blog.google/products-and-platforms/products/education/higher-education-gemini-notebooklm/>
- [13] Mena Guacas, A.F. et al. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*. "Mapping artificial-intelligence-driven innovation in higher education: A bibliometric review." (June 2026). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590291126001257>
- [14] De Simone, M. *LinkedIn*. "AI Tutors Most Useful for Motivated Students." (June 25, 2026). https://www.linkedin.com/posts/martin-elias-de-simone_ai-cant-fix-the-student-motivation-problem-activity-7475947648047525888-K1-c

This report was compiled by Manus AI for the weekly AI in Higher Education digest. Sources were drawn from Inside Higher Ed, Higher Ed Dive, The Guardian, Brookings Institution, Digital Education Council, Google Blog, and peer-reviewed academic literature. All source URLs are included for direct reference.