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Episode 13 - AI and Reasonable Adjustments: Can LLMs Make Assessments Fairer?

Carly Culver
So, in the 2024 to 2025 academic year, nearly one quarter of students sitting their GCSEs and A levels in the UK had some type of rreasonable adjustmentapplied to their examination. Now, reasonable adjustments inclusivity, and accessibility are of course complex and emotive topics with far reaching impacts. So, we've brought together our special guests today to explore how the learning and assessment industries need to adapt to keep up with ever more complex requirements. So, welcome to our guests today. We have Dan and we have Andy. I'll ask you to introduce yourselves properly in a moment. But before we dive into the topic today, when I say a reasonable adjustment, Andy, what do I mean?

Andy Gregory
You mean something that's been put in place to ensure that the playing fields as level as possible. Okay. So that anybody who may have a special educational need or a disability has been given some sort of adjustment that means that they can participate equally or so far as possible.

Carly Culver
Yeah. And Dan like what kind of examples are typically seen out there?

Daniel Morgan
Your standards in a university setting is extra time. So, that is whenever you go into a lecture, normally lectures will always say "those of you that have got reasonable adjustments, you get your 25% extra time." It's like a blanket thing regardless of what the disabilities are. But also you get adaptive software, text to speech software, there's multiple and how to breakdown PDFs for example.

Carly Culver
So, as I mentioned, we've welcomed you both here today to dive into this topic further. So, maybe I'll start with you, Andy, if you can introduce yourself and kind of explain to the audience how you've managed to get to this point about being interested in reasonable adjustments.

Andy Gregory
Sure. So, I'm Andy Gregory. I'm COO at VICTVS and in my previous life I was a secondary school teacher. So, reasonable adjustments have been a big part of my life for 20 odd years. I think the majority of the time, it's the things that Dan's just mentioned. But the reason that we've got Dan here today is the bit that I'm really interested in, this alternative view of different technologies. So, it's going to be really interesting to hear what Dan's got to say.

Carly Culver
Yeah, certainly. And as Andy mentioned, we asked you here today um because we discovered one of your papers in the course of our work, so if you'd love to introduce yourself and tell a bit more about your background.

Daniel Morgan
Okay. Yep. So, I'm Daniel Morgan. I am a socio-legal researcher. I'm also a student with the University of Wolverhampton. I look at how disability studies are done with the lived environment. So more of the lived experience. I've written a paper recently on what reasonable adjustments are. Prior to my education side, my research side, I was working in engineering facilities management, which I was doing for a number of years. And over my adult life, I found that I was neurodivergent myself. So I was a late bloomer. I was ticking off all the boxes

with dyslexia, ADHD, autism, was doing very well, which helped me understand who I was, why I am the way I am, why my brain thinks the way it does. I'm not the same as everyone else. And, you know, even within a neurodivergent world, everyone is different within that environment. And it sort of helped me, especially within a university and learning environment it's helped me understand what I need to achieve and what people can give me and also what's missing, and then I look at what's wrong. So I take experiences from what's touched me, what have I experienced so I can then, you know, throughout my career I've always looked at what's a problem, what needs fixing, we move on. So, I've sort of done it that way.

Carly Culver
Excellent. So, we're certainly really, really interested to dive into some of those creative solutions you've come up with some of the perceived problems regarding how education and assessments especially are accessible. So, let's dive into the paper that was recently published in disability and society. So, maybe you can start by giving the audience a good layman's overview of what your proposal is in that paper.

Daniel Morgan
My paper is basically looking at how generative AI, your LLMs, can act as a reasonable adjustment within a higher educational setting. There is an amazing tool out there that can achieve so much used in the right ways. And there is currently, there's a stigma within AI where you've got one side of the camp are all for it and then another side of the camp are very much against it. And I just think where people like myself, where you generate ideas, you have visuals but the problem is this bottleneck where you cannot interpret what you want to achieve. So, that's where an LLM can help you. It can scaffold that information for you. But my argument is that it doesn't take away the cognitive element of that. It's your own thinking. It's just how you work with that machine.

Carly Culver
Is anything like this being used currently?

Daniel Morgan
Well, yeah. So, Oxford University have got the ChatGPT Edu. So, they've got their own integrated system which they allow students and staff to use. There are different levels of when it can be used and for what in different types of assessment, but it's not just within the UK with Oxford. I've looked at one study where University of Sydney have got this two-lane system. So on one side, they've got where basically, on assessments where you can take home, you can use AI, but on the other lane it's more of a more controlled type of assessment where it could be, you know, an internal exam where AI still could be used or not necessarily. And then different institutions around the UK have traffic light systems or some others have blanket bans, and I think that's what the problem is with how it is being managed. Within the UK, there's no uniform... as a student who's going to join a university, even before the moment you step through that door you want to know what reasonable adjustments are there available for you and sometimes they're not quite accessible when you look on the websites. One university may give you a lot of information of what is available, another one you could be trying to go through every page and it doesn't say that or it will just say generic information about what reasonable adjustments will be given, or other information is what's actually required in the course. So you know, for example, if you want to go into nursing, you want to know am I going to be doing a Viva, or will I be doing OSCE? Those sort of things or what type of exam you going to do? Will it be a sit-down control type of assessment or will I be doing just problem style questions? It's having that information beforehand can give you an informed choice. Does that course suit me? Does that method of assessment suit me? Because I think that's the problem with assessments is that someone will have barriers already created within them by how they're going to be delivered where we should be looking at, let's remove all those barriers and make it accessible for everyone. And how that's achieved is difficult.
Carly Culver

Yeah. So, let's talk about that. What are we actually,what as part of your paper are you proposing is the solution to this? How would you apply, how would you suggest it's applied?

Daniel Morgan
Well, one way I would look at it is, the institutions have to look at what are we assessing? What's the competences that we're assessing? So, you've got for example, if it's a multiple-choice question, are we measuring their cognitive ability to recall memory or do we want to understand what they actually know what you know, how to understand? So, for example, you could have two students equally understand a subject. It's all in their head. But one student can write absolutely perfectly, no problem at all. Where the other student might have dyslexia or ADHD and they can see it, they understand it, but they will struggle with writing it down in academic prose. And so, there's that barrier there, because they're not going to achieve the same as what that one would do because of that environment. Whereas if you looked at what an LLM can do, if you were to work with the LLM saying so you've got an idea, you give it prompts. For example, let's say we talk about satellites, so if I want if I want to discuss satellites and I've I know what I've done, I've done my research I've read the papers I understand what the problem is, but I can see it perfectly in my head but what I can't do is put it down onto paper, it's like this: it's a blocker. So you can work with an LLM and I can just say "satellite autonomous debris communication" and then the LLM will think what it thinks I think, and it will spit out some things and then you've got to go "No, I didn't mean that, let's try this" and you keep working with it and keep working with it until the sentence resembles what you're thinking. And it can take time, it's not a quick thing.

Carly Culver
Okay, so it's not an input-output thing?

Daniel Morgan
No, but it's there. So you go, okay,we're on the same level now. So that's what I mean, I call it my brain buddy. It's not doing the thinking for you, but it's just doing the interpretation for you. So everything that is coming out, what's going to be on that paper is yours. It's just that how that sentence is structured, that is the LLM doing that because you don't have the ability to or the cognitive strength to do that. And I think that's where barriers are and that's where we got to sort of consider, is it integrity that we're losing? Or, you know, we should be opening more opportunities. This technology gives more opportunity for more students to learn. If you go back to when I was in my early 20s, I would never have been able to go to university because even without LLMs, the technology that I am given as a reasonable adjustment to put me on that same level, it was never available in the 90s. You know, I wouldn't have succeeded. And that goes from, you know, where I could have the paper read to me, because with dyslexia, I'll skip a paragraph or I have to keep reading a sentence because I've read it but I haven't really read it, if you know what I mean. It's those types of problems but because it's reading to me that wasn't there… I want to say 20 years ago, but it was 30!

Carly Culver
So, what you're suggesting is really novel isn't it, in terms of using Gen AI as a reasonable adjustment. So, compared to what exists currently in terms of reasonable adjustments, do you think they're fit for purpose or do you think they fall short?

Daniel Morgan
I think they fall short. And the problem is with reasonable adjustments is, when you go through the process of getting your reasonable adjustments and you contact DSA, so disability services for the for the students, it's done on, what is your diagnosis? You know, what do you have? Do you have ADHD? Do you have dyslexia? Do you have autism? Do you have dysgraphia? And its sort of, you don't necessarily know what your barriers are,

especially if you're a mature student or even late diagnosed. You don't know what your barriers are because you haven't been in that environment yet. You haven't done a written essay for quite some time. So, it's a difficult thing because you know I can't tell them what I need. I don't know what I need. So, it sort of turns into this blanket "Here you are, you have some more time."

One of the things with ADHD, a lot of people with ADHD do suffer from time management where they could be late. I don't suffer from that because my autism takes over and I've got to be very early, and I think because I was in the military, that drives me — I've got to be on time with a smile on my face. But the problem you get is, one software I was given as my reasonable adjustment was to do scheduling for me, right? And that just clutters it up for me. You know, I've got Microsoft Teams, I can use that for if I've got a lecture, I've got a seminar, I've got this, I've got a meeting, whatever I got to do. Don't give me another tool on top of something else because you're just giving me far too much information. So, some are very good, some are not fit for purpose. But then some have already got AI-integrated them into them already. So where do you draw the line? One programme I've got is, it's an integrated system where I can put in a PDF and it will break that PDF into readable chunks for me. But it's AI that does this. Yeah. So, it will give me the introduction. It will give me what is the paperback. Then I can ask it questions and it's not going outside into the web and making a decision on itself. It's just purely taking that from what is in that paper. So, I'm getting good information from this AI-generated text which is okay.

Carly Culver
Yeah. So, Andy, a question for you. You've heard a little bit about what Dan's kind of proposing as to what tools could be available. From a more practical, maybe negative standpoint, more practical standpoint, how could you see this being rolled out? Is it practical to be rolled out? What considerations would we need to think about if, you know, this was a service that, as Dan suggested in his paper, we'd need to roll out nationally, for example.

Andy Gregory
I think it's a lot easier if you're talking about assessments that aren't timed assessments, so if it's assessments that are done in your own time, that's obviously a lot easier because you can potentially do it from home, that kind of thing. I think the challenge could be if you're doing in an exam hall kind of scenario and you've got computers, how we control that and what kind of software people would use, cost implications for universities. But I think I think one of the more interesting questions from my point of view is would you make it, or would you suggest making it available to everyone? So it wouldn't technically be a reasonable adjustment then, because it's applied to everyone, but. So for example, if someone has English as an additional language or they're a speaker of another language that could obviously help them in an English exam.

Daniel Morgan
So, the way I look at it is, it was HEPI, the Higher Education Policy Institute, they did a 2026 study on higher education students and 95% of students are using AI for their essays. And one of the figures that came out from there was of all the students that were doing it, and they found that 12% of text was AI generated text in an assessment compared to 8% in 2023 or 2024. What does that mean? You know, just because it was an AI generated text, what does it mean? It doesn't mean that it wasn't the thought, you know, the thinking from the person that put it in there. It just means that it's good writing. So, we've already got students who're using it. Now, there is an inequality already in how it's already been done because someone could afford the high-end model of ChatGPT and be paying $200 a month, or someone could be using a free version which is based on an older LLM. Now, you got problems where you would move on to bias, misinformation, disinformation, and all that sort of thing on what the level is. But, I think if you were to put it out as a blanket, something like the ChatGPT Edu system, that makes it fair because the person that can already write well already writes well, and the person that needs that support, that support is there. So, if I can write well, do I want ChatGPT to write it better? Well,

you know, there are people out there that say, "Yeah", you can use it to help strengthen your wording, you know, make corrections, refine corrections, like a Grammarly kind of tool whereas you know if it's equal for everyone, then that is fine, it's still a reasonable adjustment for all.

Carly Culver
So, I'm interested to touch upon something which you referenced in your paper which is obviously quite a landmark legal case. Obviously, you're a legal student, that's you know, as much as you have an interest in reasonable adjustment, that's not what the focus of all of your research is. So obviously within the sphere of reasonable adjustments, there was a landmark case this year, University of Bristol versus Abrahart.

Daniel Morgan
Yes.

Carly Culver
I know you've got an interest in this as well Andy, so I don't know if one of you could maybe explain for our viewers who aren't as familiar kind of what that case was, and how it's kind of impacted how reasonable adjustments are having to be considered, especially by UK universities.

Daniel Morgan
So I mean yes, it was a landmark case in 2024 which was born from obviously a terrible incident where there was a student was asked for, she was due to take an oral assessment and she had so much anxiety about this oral assessment she asked for a reasonable adjustment or an alternative method. University of Bristol said "No, you got to do it as an oral assessment" and the anxiety got so much for her that unfortunately the student committed suicide. It was the father that took the university to court and it was found with the courts that the onus of the reasonable adjustment and how the assessment is due is on the university not on the student, and that universities need to be looking at how the assessment design is, what is the competence that you are assessing and basically, you know, is the method equal to how you are... So, is the assessment equal to how you would assess the student. And so that has created this noise I would say across the university environment, and there has been guidelines on what to expect but nothing's changed.

Carly Culver
I was going to say has anything changed? But it sounds like no.

Daniel Morgan
No, that's why I wrote that paper, I came across that landmark case. It was like no one else is talking about it. The responsibility is on the institutions, but then you go to an institution and then you get this mixed information. So you'll have a university, they may have a policy, they may not have a policy or it could be a blanket policy saying no RAs. Well, then you've already taken away one part of my reasonable adjustments because there's AI in it, or it will say you cannot put in any writing that uses AI. Why not? What's the fear? Because even before AI, a student could have paid someone to write a paper and submit that paper, there's no evidence. And that's the problem with assessment, there's no evidence that a student has the knowledge, or they understand what is in that paper, which is exactly the same with how LLMs would work. If you, you know, surrendered your cognitive ability and just said "write me a paper" on whatever you haven't learned, anything you don't know, that's why it's got to come from you. So, there's this duty of universities that they've got to make adjustments before the adjustment is needed.

Carly Culver

Obviously, you sort of mentioned that universities don't really know where to start with this it sounds like. Do you think there's a need for this to be set at like a national level, or is it, you know, how do you think universities tackle that part of kind of educating themselves about what the possible options could be to support students?

Andy Gregory
I think they do just need more guidance because I think they're confused, aren't they? They're not sure what they can do.

Carly Culver
And now they're a bit scared as well.

Daniel Morgan
Yeah. There's a major fear factor.

Andy Gregory
Because it could be things like, if you could demonstrate how you've used the prompts and that kind of thing. So that whole thing of maths when you show your working out and you get marks for showing your working out but you get the wrong answer, but you still get three out of four even though you got the wrong answer. So, it could be something along that kind of idea with regards to "this is how I've used an AI. This was my thinking", because, like you're saying it's the thinking as well then, you're not determining something on the pure output.

Daniel Morgan
Yes. I think there should be some sort of like journaling, you know, how you've used it, what prompts you've given to the machine, because there should be evidence of your own learning as well, which sort of gets onto how the assessment would or how an assessment could be changed, but you know what have you fed into that machine? What information are you using? And then what is it giving you back compared to what your own thinking is?

Carly Culver
You can see the, you know talking back to the university's role in that, that requires then the assessors to learn a whole new skill set in terms of how do they set assessments that allow for that kind of information to be tracked? Like you said, a journal of what's been done, how do they then pass the responses that have been given by the student back to them? Like you know it's a whole new skill set for them as well. I'm not saying there's a reason not to do it, but it must be something that universities are considering when they're kind of thinking about how to integrate LLM generated things into their work.

Daniel Morgan
That's the problem with how assessments are at the moment is you'd have a bunch of students over a 12 week period and you're going through the lectures for the seminars and, [I know] through my own experience, seminars can be very quiet -- a lot of people, there's not much interaction in the seminar, so how do you know that a student is taking it in and understanding it? And then come week 12, you've got a lovely shiny essay which tells you everything you've taught them, but how do you know that they know that? So, there needs to be some sort of change within how assessments are sort of done.

I've come up with a theory of three stage sort of setup which would be process and assurance, and what it is the student interacting throughout the entire module? Instead of how formatives are done at the moment where, you know, maybe you'll write a part of the paper or you'll answer a dummy question or something and again you get feedback on that, but perhaps [we should have] smaller formatives throughout and [have] more interactive

quizzes. So, then the lecturer can understand what the students understanding is, what knowledge they're gaining or what weaknesses there are so that they can then help. It's more how you would do it in high school, you know, where you get additional support, because you lose that in a university. A student loses that additional support...There is a lot more independent learning in there, but some people still need that additional help, and that's again where LLMs can come in because it's your brain buddy!

Andy Gregory
And I think like you were saying earlier because this is so polarising lots of people would immediately just discount it and say "Nope it's AI, it's doing all the work, the students not thinking about it." So one potential counter to that could be if you could explain how you used it in producing your paper, because there was a note on your paper that says "I use these techniques myself".

Daniel Morgan
Yeah on my paper, I put a disclaimer on there that I actually used ChatGPT to help me formulate what was in it and make sure that my prose was right. So basically, again, we've got this tool, AI, what is missing from what reasonable adjustments are in the real world? Why can I not have this tool to help me take what's trapped in my brain and what I will struggle to type because I will have this image of what I think it should be, but I can't put it onto paper, and then I'll talk to the machine saying this is the problem and it will say, "Oh, oh, do you think like this?" And I say, "No, no, not at all." And I say, "Right, in a recent...", I will then type out what happened in the case." So, I typed out what happened in the case. I've already envisioned how I put my four-step process in there, which was all about student design, the university has to take onus, I put it in there and then I would break down how I want it to sort of interpret that. It can be a long process, very long, and then the first draft is nothing like what I want it to be, cause then there'll be some bias in there or there'll be something wrong and you're going "Why have you said that, I didn't say that! I didn't want you to say that, you need to get rid of that", and it's tiresome! It's not an easy thing, to make sure it's right and make sure it's reflective of what you understand.

Carly Culver
Yeah, so, do you think it's really important that then there are specialist LLM and generative AI tools designed for that purpose, as opposed to more general ones? We all use co-pilot and Claude and ChatGPT and stuff, it needs to be a specialist tool.

Daniel Morgan
I'll give you an example, Neil deGrasse Tyson the astrophysicist. So he did a video recently where he was talking about how one of his son's friends wanted to test Neil's knowledge about something. So then this boy didn't really know the answers. So, he said "I've used AI to give me some questions" and the first question was, which element on the periodic table has the highest boiling point? So, Neil deGrasse Tyson said, "It's carbon." And then the boy went, "No, no, no, you're wrong. It's tungsten." And he went, "Well, no, it's not." And he went, "No, I've checked in every AI,you put in that question into every AI, and it says it will be tungsten." Cause tungsten does have the highest boiling point for a metal, right? But carbon under certain atmospheric pressures doesn't melt. It evaporates. So, the answer really is carbon, but that's because Neil deGrasse Tyson knows that.

Carly Culver
Yes.

Daniel Morgan
So if you are using the LLM and you don't know what you're talking about, it can tell you anything and then that's the problem where you get the misinformation. So you've got to use systems like the ChatGPT EDU because it's

more of a closed system, and you want a system that's linked to your university's library so you're only getting sources that are already in there. I'll give you another example. The publisher Science Direct via Elsevier, if you're searching for articles, it's got it own AI in there and it will say, "What's your research question?" So, you could type in your research question, you say "Here's a bunch of articles" and it breaks it down exactly, [which of] those batches of articles would support your question and it was like, you know, before, that was never there and you'd have to use your own mind to try and find those papers. Then going back to your point earlier where it can be so polarising is, you walk into one lecture and the lecturer can be so anti-AI, they're like "no AI", then you go into another one and they say "Oh yeah, use ChatGPT, have a look. Get ChatGPT to write it for you no problem" and it's confusing. It's conflicting information, especially if there's no policy or there is a policy and it can be confusing. I'm okay. cause you know, I'm mature. But if I was 20 years old or a 22-year-old neurodivergent person, you get this feel of shame on you because if you're going to use a ChatGPT, it's droned into you that you're cheating.

Carly Culver
Right, yes.

Daniel Morgan
When you're not. Something's just helping you get there.

Carly Culver
Yeah. It's an interesting discourse. We were talking before recording today about the fact that in the real world, everyone uses AI all the time for the same thing as well, organizing your thoughts, trying to make compelling arguments, making your writing slightly better. That's the thing it offers you now, especially from an enterprise perspective. It says oh, make this more persuasive, make this more concise, alter this for a certain audience. From a business perspective, we wouldn't think twice about using it because why not use a tool that makes you more effective? So, it is an interesting argument that shouldn't then be applied to an assessment when essentially, you're trying to assess for real world outcomes, aren't you? You know, how will you be able to apply that knowledge or that thing in the real world? Well, you would be able to use the tool. It's a bit of a contradiction, right?

Daniel Morgan
I remember, you know, back in my working days, and I've been making presentations for for management meetings, and you spend a lot of time getting your presentation all right. Now you can just put it into Claude or ChatGPT or even Copilot and say "Make me a presentation on this" and it's like you've taken some joy away from me, but it does look a lot better. So, it's like, what are we measuring when it comes to a student? What you is it, the noise? Or is it how good they can write? You know, that's the difference.

Carly Culver
So that brings us nicely onto the topic of assessment design then obviously. Well, I'll start with you. What What are your thoughts on that? Do you think it should be more variable from student to student across a curricular? Or-

Daniel Morgan
-I think there should be choice.

Carly Culver
Yeah. Okay.

Daniel Morgan
So, I'm all for choice. So, I was quite lucky in one assessment that I was given a choice. See, I don't like problem-style questions. I despise them because they are designed for linear thinking and they want you to go through a process from start to finish. But, as a nonlinear thinker, you can look at something and then say, "Well, okay, I understand how to fix that and how I got there was quite messy." To write that down is very tiring and burdensome. Whereas with linear thinking you go "Yes, so I will start from here, go and follow these steps." So, I was given a choice where I could either do that, or I could write an essay. Well, I'd take the essay anytime! I get to research. I get to look at journal articles. What's this person saying, what's that person saying? I make my decision on what I think the answer should be. Whereas instead of looking at
a scenario-based question...It doesn't work for me. So, I think there should be assessment choice. I think that assessment should also be more of a longitude hing and not of an endpoint thing because going back to the point I said before whereas, are you just seeing how good the person can write? And what is on that piece of paper, or do you want the student to have the knowledge and be able to answer that? Now I'm not saying that you do a viva for every paper. That's not feasible. But if there is doubt, if there's doubt... So, let's say you've got a student that hasn't engaged, not engaged at all, and then given you this stellar paper that was perfectly written and states everything correctly -- there may be some doubt in there. So then, maybe you may want to do a viva. Not like it being an academic misconduct type viva, but there should be stages and that goes back to the formatives. Formatives should be part of, not as the assessment itself, but a process. So the one aspect where I've looked at is maybe like a three-stage model is does the student, has the student engaged? Have they shown knowledge? Do they understand? What's their reasoning? Is the paper, you know, does it show that reasoning? And do they understand it? As long as they understand what they've written.

Carly Culver
What are your thoughts on this, Andy? Maybe especially in regards to novel or new assessment methodologies.

Andy Gregory
Well, I just think that one of the difficulties from the awarding organisation point of view will be that whole idea of standardisation and how do we achieve that while still giving choice? Because I think with what you're saying with regards to ChatGPT, you're quite clearly not using it as a cop-out because you're using it to refine and like you said, it can be quite tiresome and hard work because you're putting so much effort into it. But I think the worry of lots of people would be that many students wouldn't do that, that they would just use it for opting out essentially. So yeah, I suppose it's whether you can do those things in terms of assessment design that mean you can still allow the use of it but you would pick up sooner whether somebody is just using it to opt out, because yeah, they're not engaging in anything else. They're not contributing. But it's a big change.

Daniel Morgan
And it's that type of environment where I think that there should be another step involved if that doubt is there. Because you know like we said before was that was always the case even before you know, AIs were around, people would get other people to write a paper for them. The only person that's really losing out on that is that student themselves because they're not learning anything.

Carly Culver
Yeah.

Daniel Morgan
They get a degree, they go and get a job, have this lovely, you know, BA in something, but they won't know what they're talking about, or they won't understand. And if someone was to say, "Oh, can you do me a paper on that?" And then they go, "Oh, let me go to ChatGPT and quickly figure out what this is." It doesn't work that way.

Carly Culver
So, you've already raised this point, but obviously there is potentially, you know, a lot of opposition to implementing a model like this. And more generally, you know, we've had many, many episodes about how AI is involved in the education industry, pluses and minuses. You obviously cover some of the risks and how you think your model addresses these in your paper. Can you expand on that a bit more?

Daniel Morgan
Yeah. So one of the problems you have got with generative AI is hallucinations, which I would say probably is being reported that it is getting better now. But there's also bias within certain models. The algorithm in there will be designed for one thing and it will pick up on your writing style, how you question, it can pick up on many different things. So that's where it goes back to you need to understand your subject. Because if you're just going to, you know, dump your thoughts and release and just let it do the thinking for you, you're going to fail and you're going to look stupid because it's going to be wrong. So that's where you've got to understand your subject. But that's where I think it needs to be a closed unit, not this free for fall which it is, going back to the 95% of students already using it then okay, let's take the ownership. It should be institution-led you know, as what Oxford are doing with the chat GPT, and it's contained so then they've got control of what is the bias, what is the information available there? So, it's, I say it's an easy fix, probably isn't, you know, it's me being a bit naive on that, but I just don't think that being able to let someone use Dola or Claude, one is that's not a level playing field, and one is going to agree with you because it's designed to make you happy. It's more like you know the Google AI, you put into Google AI, it's designed to please you. You know, no matter what you ask, it will be nice to you even though you could be wrong. Whereas a control system will challenge you. "No, that's actually wrong." Because that also helps with your ideas. So let's say you've got an idea, and you want to look at a subject and you think you know it. It will challenge you. It can challenge you and then it can make you think. So, what you don't want to do is take their word for it. You need to look into that information and then make that informed decision yourself. Am I right or am I wrong? You know, you need to go down that rabbit hole a bit deeper.

Carly Culver
That's quite interesting though, using your Neil deGrasse Tyson example, people then go away and use generative AI to also fact check themselves and then potentially go down the wrong path.

Daniel Morgan
Exactly. You'd now be thinking that tungsten has got, exactly, as a metal it has, but in another environment -

Carly Culver
-and then gone to use the tool to write a paper about it that's incorrect on an incorrect supposition.

Daniel Morgan
Right, and the problem is because I don't know the subject of the boiling point of elements. I would have taken what the Copilot said as fact, because I know no different. So, the fact that Neil knows what he's talking about, you kind of have that trust in that. So, if you're studying a subject, it could be history or whatever the subject is. You want to make sure that you do understand the facts. My argument for the use of LLMs is that you've got the knowledge, but you haven't got the communication style or you haven't got the gift of being able to produce perfect writing, but you've got the knowledge so with that, you can challenge what is coming back to you.

Andy Gregory
So as a law student, the term reasonable adjustments have that wonderful legal word of "reasonable" in it. So, what's your understanding of that from an assessment point of view? What would you consider to be reasonable?

Daniel Morgan

That's the problem with the word reasonable in itself is, what is reasonable? And it's such a content level word, as in, it must be for what the assessment is designed to achieve. So, what you want to look at is, how am I measuring the student, what am I measuring? Does the method that I am using to measure that, is that already creating a barrier? And then that's where we got to step back and then say well, if we were to initiate this technology, would this technology lift that barrier? That's reasonable. We need to figure out what are the barriers? Because at the moment, it's all individual-led. It's what's my barrier? What's their barrier? What's that person's barrier? Well, that's where the institutions should be looking at what barriers are they already making and then leading from their own design saying, well is our assessment method, is that the right one? Is that the only way we can assess someone? You know, is the essay right for this topic? Could we do something else that makes it more accessible for everyone?

Andy Gregory
So, I think you mentioned universal design principles in your paper in terms of how you could possibly structure these kinds of things. Is that something you would advocate?

Daniel Morgan
I would, yeah. I think that's where you go back to where every institution is different with how they're talking, you know, with how one would allow this, one would allow that, "We will allow an LLM"; "we will have a traffic light system"; "We've banned it"; "Our assessment method is sit-down exams"; "Ours is 'you can do an essay at home'". Let's make it fairer, because as a student, as a young student, you've got to decide which university you want to go to, the cost of living of where you want to go. And if it's more of a level playing field, it's easier to make your own choice of where you're going to go, and it sort of stops this ranking of universities as well.

Carly Culver
Do you think the onus for that is on the regulators then?

Daniel Morgan
Yes. Yeah definitely. Well, at the moment there's too many awards because every university is number one at something.

Carly Culver
So obviously this paper was published earlier this year. You've moved on and are working on lots of new things since then. What other kind of interesting avenues have you gone down in relation to this?

Daniel Morgan
Yeah, so I've got a paper coming out imminently with the Law Teacher Journal by Taylor
and Francis which is looking at the problem style question.

Carly Culver
Okay.

Daniel Morgan
Which was because of, from my frustration for how one was designed, I thought-

Carly Culver
How popular are you at the university with your lecturers?!

Daniel Morgan
If it annoys me, I'm going to be writing about it. I'm like that grumpy old man that writes to the local paper!

Carly Culver

I'll come back and ask you the question again. But it is interesting because obviously like you said, the confidence that you gain from being a mature student versus being a first-time standard student when you're like 18, 19, 21, I'm sure that makes a massive difference in your ability to challenge these systems.

Daniel Morgan
Yeah. Because I've had a career, and I've had a successful career. I've been management and I understand how people work and it's given me a voice. I think back t when I was 20 years old and I can remember how I was. I wouldn't have said anything. You know, you take how you're thinking, you think that's normal and you just follow the instructions. Whereas now, I'll go "Hang on, that's wrong." I will ask that question. I will challenge that. "Is this the best way we can do this?" And if I feel that the way they want something doesn't feel right for me, then I'll write about it.

Carly Culver
Perfect. So, coming back to then, tell us about your new paper.

Daniel Morgan
So yeah, my new paper is 'Linear by Design'. So, problem style questions and neurodivergent students. So basically, it's looking at... give choice. It's like, how the problem style question can be challenging to a non-linear thinking student where they don't necessarily see in that process from, you know, A to Z. They may go from Z to M to B and it would look jumbled up and when you write that, it would be marked incorrectly because you haven't followed the correct pros of how they want you to answer the question, even though you've come to the same conclusion. But because you haven't followed their method, it's the wrong way. So, I wrote about that and basically, ultimately, it's about giving us choice, you know, allow us to have choice on how we're being assessed and yeah, so that one's coming out [soon]. And then I was working on a paper proposal this week, I was looking at assessment design, I was looking at the University of Sydney's two-lane model. And then I also came across a page a paper titled Greek Capture.

Carly Culver
Okay.

Daniel Morgan
So, this paper is about, it's basically looking at studies of where you've got published articles at the moment. So, there's a lot of discourse at the moment about what's AI generated, what isn't AI generated. And what these students were looking at was if someone submitted a paper, they would give 10 questions to prove that the person's got the knowledge on how they've written the paper. Now, they tested on 31 different people that wrote on paper, but there was limitations on there and one of the limitations was about disabled students and how that would work. But it was interesting. So, I sort of took that where you know, you do the assessment, well, how do you know the knowledge? And then looking at the two lane [process] of how Sydney were doing, so I was coming up with this conceptual idea of what I could write and then at the same time I received an email from WONKE, which is a policy advocacy organisation. So, they've asked me to write a paper for their October to December piece which leads into, you got the office of students are doing their recommendations on reasonable adjustments, disability and all that sort of thing and that's out early next year. So, they've asked me to write one piece for that. So, I'm going to talk about these three conceptual ideas that I've got and see how it would work.

Carly Culver
It's fantastic. You're obviously making a splash in the topic. You're obviously making waves. But do you feel it's a part of the industry that needs some waves making? I think I know your answer to that question, but do you agree?

Andy Gregory

No, it definitely is because, like we've been talking about, it needs to have some different ideas. It can't just be the same things that we're talking about all the time. And like we started with, it can't just be "give candidates additional time." That can't just be the answer.

Daniel Morgan
No!

Carly Culver
People have changed, their lives have changed, the things we're trying to assess have changed.

Daniel Morgan
Technology is getting faster before they can write the policy. And it's like law. Law is a reactive thing. You know, laws come in after the event. And universities are very similar with that. Whereas we've got this brilliant technology. What do we do with it? And so, we need to take this on. It's in the business world. You know, they now expect people when they go get a job that they are AI literate. But if you got an establishment that is fearful of it, you know, you're putting disadvantages in for all students, not just your neurodivergent ones.

Carly Culver
Definitely. So, if you had one message to the educators, the policy makers out there, around how to approach this problem, what would you tell them?

Daniel Morgan
I would say not be fearful of what the technology is. Look at the advantages. Look at what is it that you are assessing and how that you're assessing it and can that technology remove any barriers that are already there. You know, instead of looking at reasonable adjustments as an individual basis, look at it from an institutional point of view and just try and remove the barriers that are there already.

Carly Culver
Andy, same question for you.

Andy Gregory
I think we just need to pay more attention to people like Daniel doing innovative work and getting us to think differently.

Carly Culver
Yeah, absolutely. Fantastic. Well, in that case, I want to say a massive thank you to both our guests, Andrew and Daniel. Daniel, if people want to follow your work or find out more for you, where can they find you?

Daniel Morgan
LinkedIn.

Carly Culver
Perfect. We'll share that in the show notes afterwards. And obviously, people can keep up to date with the latest things with VICTVS on victvs.co.uk.

So, throughout this episode we've heard about the complex challenges and the creative solutions that are being suggested in the field of accessibility in education and specifically within assessments. Whilst obviously some of the suggestions have risks associated, we've also explored some of the amazing benefits that could be explored with creative thinking in regards to these challenges. So, we're really, really keen to hear from you, the audience, about how you're approaching these challenges, what creative approaches you've seen. You can

comment on the video, you can contact us at victvs@victvs.co.uk. And we want to thank you very much for watching.

Sources:

- Daniel Morgan's recent paper on ResearchGate: Reasonable adjustments for neurodivergent students in higher education: generative AI, accessibility, and mediated authorship
- The University of Bristol vs. Abrahart ruling: University of Bristol v Abrahart: equality watchdog responds to judgment in landmark case | EHRC