Title: The Rise of Generative AI, challenges and opportunities in higher education in Sungshin

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With weary eyes and bags under their eyes, students at Sungshin Womens’ University symbolize the intensity of exam week. As Soojungs(students of Sungshin) strive to achieve the best scores in their classes, evaluation methods become a matter of intense interest. Recently the rise of generative AI has brought notable changes in how subjects are evaluated, raising important questions about its impact on education and the student’s learning journey.

Engaging in a conversation as if talking to an expert in all areas, it becomes evident that generative AI offers a convenient way to access information with minimal effort. However, Googling often yields diverse results based on the specific keywords used, making knowledge retrieval challenging without domain knowledge. While the low entry barrier of generative AI is advantageous, its compatibility with the objectives of educational institutes is questionable. Students should be encouraged to strive without resorting to cheating. However, the use of generative AI makes cheating more accessible in assessments or tests. Moreover, schools play a vital role in fostering not only one-way learning from educational mentors but also the development of creativity and critical thinking. When faced with assignments or problems, their students should be inspired to think independently. However, generative AI always readily provides answers, leading students to bypass the process of critical thinking and merely rely on the advanced technique for solutions when encountered challenges. Consequently, several countries, including Italy and China, have implemented measures to ban the use of generative AI. Additionally, certain universities have imposed restrictions on its usage, all prompted by these concerns. Striking the right balance between using AI technology to help students and encouraging their intellectual growth is a significant challenge for educational institutions.

Sungshin was no exception to the impact of generative AI. While there were no official bans on its use, some subjects modified their evaluation procedures due to concerns about students using generative AI during exams. Open-book exams became more prevalent, recognizing that it could be challenging to recall all the contents from the lectures. These exams focused on applying knowledge to solve intensified problems based on what students learned in lectures. Previously, using search engines required some level of preparation as students had to enter specific keywords and skim through the lecture notes. However, with the introduction of generative AI, the dynamics changed. Several no longer felt the need to study extensively and resorted copy and pasting the exam problems seeking answers directly from the generative AI. The shift meant that AI solved questions based on its knowledge rather than the students’ understanding. Acknowledging these developments, professors began implementing conditions like allowing the use of any other materials or sites except for generative AI. In some cases, exam procedures were changed to adopt an Open-book style to ensure fair evaluation and encourage students to apply their knowledge effectively.

Among all the other lectures, IT subjects were significantly impacted by generative AI, especially due to its capabilities in programming. As computer majors, students are well aware of generative AI and many of them actually used it. Consequently, numerous classes transitioned from open-book evaluation styles to closed-book formats to prevent students from relying on generative AI during exams. However, there were also instances of embracing ChatGpt in the educational context. In an AI-intensive major class called “Recommendation System”, the professor not only recommended but also guided students to use generative AI. During the class, the professor demonstrated how he leveraged generative AI in his research activities and showcased excellent examples of its smart application. Embracing the emergence of generative AI, the professor proceeded with “Recommendation system” and “Cloud Computing” intensive major classes, both of which were taught by the professor as open-book exams. Furthermore, the professor even encouraged and assured students that they could use generative AI during the exams. This approach aimed to utilize generative AI as a valuable tool for students, promoting its responsible and beneficial usage to enhance their learning experiences.

Generative AIs particularly starting from ChatGpt, have experienced rapid growth. However, due to the limited availability of Korean data, its accuracy has been compromised. The oncoming Naver’s HyperClova X(a developed ChatGpt that The Mirror dealt with in the last issue) equipped with abundant Korean data along with the emergence of numerous future generative AIs will undoubtedly impact Sungshin’s evaluation methods and students’ studying approaches. The potential changes are evaluation methods, such as permissions to Google on subject exams nowadays, remain uncertain. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that generative AI will serve as a knowledgeable companion for students rather than being seen as a tool for cheating or an enemy for studying, or a hindrance to learning.