Pearson ED.tech Symposium
Maximizing Learning with AI
Student Perspectives on the Future of AI Study Tools
With Ben Piercy and a Student Panel
VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Tim Peyton
This session is about hearing from students. It's my pleasure to introduce Product Marketing Manager Ben Piercy and our student panel. They'll share their insights on how AI is shaping their learning experiences and their points of view on the future of study tools. Ben and students, the virtual stage is all yours.

Ben Piercy
Go! Well, thank you, Kimberly Bryant. Thank you, Tim, again. Welcome everyone, to our Maximizing Learning with AI student perspectives on the future of study tools portion of the webinar. And first, wherever you are, we know you have very busy schedules. You could be doing a lot of different things right now. So again, thank you for taking the time out of your day to be with us.

Today we are diving into Pearson's MyLab and Mastering AI-powered study tool and how it's transforming the way students study and learn. Joining us today are five incredible students who have been using Pearson's new AI-powered study tool throughout the semester. They've been documenting their experiences in a diary study, and today they're going to share their thoughts, feedback, and insights.

So let's hear directly from them about how Pearson's AI-powered study tool is shaping their academic journey this semester. And let's actually start off with some quick introduction. So student panel, could each of you briefly introduce yourself? Where do you go to school? Tell us your major. We'll go from there. Let's actually kick off with Morgan.

Morgan Regier
Hi, everybody. My name is Morgan Regier. I am a senior at Eastern Kentucky University, and I am a marketing research and analytics and risk management, and insurance major with a minor in sales.

Maddy Beavis
Hi, everyone. My name is Maddy Beavis. I'm a student at Rutgers University majoring in math with a minor in education.

Kylie Guzman

Hi everyone. My name is Kylie Guzman. I'm a senior at Western Kentucky University and my major is in strategic marketing. I also have a minor in entrepreneurship.

Saige O'Rourke
Hi everybody. My name is Saige O'Rourke. I am a senior as well at the University of Tennessee. I'm studying business analytics with the collateral and information management.

Mikayla Wallace
Hi everyone. My name is Mikayla Wallace, and I'm a senior at the University of Arizona where I study business management.

Ben Piercy
Awesome. Thank you very much. Quite the diverse panel we have in terms of majors. And I wanted to give a special shout out to David, who could not make the panel today. He also was busy with class, of course. And he was a great part of this research and diary study. So his insights are kind of shared throughout this.

So I just want to make sure we're giving David some context there. I want to give a brief kind of overview of the diary study itself. So over the past month, we have been tracking how students have been using our AI-powered study tool and comparing their experiences to more general AI tools like ChatGPT and other methods and tools to help them study and learn.

So a quick overview of the insights as reported and logged by our students here. One standout trend is that the subject-specific accuracy of the AI-powered study tool—something that students overwhelmingly found more useful as it compared to those broad responses they might get from ChatGPT or from Google. Next, we saw that students primarily are engaging with the explain-and-practice question features, and we'll get into that, here momentarily.

But about 85% of the sessions involve these specific features, which align with better engagement with their textbook content. Interestingly, more than half of the sessions happened during these late-night study session hours showcasing that convenience and, of course, out-of-office hours availability, which are big factors to our students here. And what's more than about a quarter of the students' queries were high-order, critical-thinking questions, not just simple fact checks, but showing the AI-powered study tools potential for that deeper learning experience.

Students appreciated the ease of use provided by the Pearson's AI-powered study tool. Students highlighted the ability to quickly access in-depth explanations, ask follow-up questions all within one single platform experience saving them time, reducing the need to navigate different browser windows, of course, and, potentially unreliable external sources, like on Google which created this better streamlined learning environment.

And additionally, when it came to efficiency, having again, a single interface for their study resources, whether it was notetaking, practice questions, or generating detailed explanations, meant that our students here could easily move between tasks which maximized their study time. So these insights, of course, are supplement to traditional learning experiences, helping students engage, and especially during those late night study sessions.

So let's actually deep dive into that. Again, we've noticed that students frequently engage with the explain-and-practice question features of our AI-powered study tool. Again, 85% of these sessions during our diary study noted that students mentioned that these features helped them, again, review content, test their understanding, prepare for group projects and presentations, and the personalized nature of these tools provide a support tailored to their individual needs, really helping them reinforce, and getting quick answers when they need them.

So this first question after I ran those actually for Kylie. Kylie, which of the, which feature of the AI-powered study tool did you find the most useful and why?

Kylie Guzman
Great question, Ben. So yeah, when I was doing this study, I found that the practice questions were one of the most useful tools for me personally. And every answer that you gave today is going to be based on everybody's personal learning style. So for me, what really worked for me is having these questions asking me on the key points that I had read over the chapter.

And it's very specific to the learning objectives as well, which when you're in class and if you're in a class where it's very lecture heavy and it's test based, which in my experience in my major, that's what most of my classes are like, it's really helpful to have some questions that are thrown your way that challenge you to think deeper than just, just definition-based questions and answers.

So I found that whenever I was asking a lot of questions about ethics, it was giving me good feedback too. But whenI wanted to practice and put what I learned into practice with this feature on the AI tool, it was able to ask me questions that didn't necessarily just get me to memorize. It got me to apply.

And I think when you are going into a class that is based on exams, that's your best friend right there. It really helps you absorb what you just read in a different way. And especially if you miss a question, you now get to see where your, the holes are in your learning experience and you get to go back and comb through the book and see what you need to work on.

So yeah, I found that the practice was amazing, and I really loved it.

Ben Piercy

Awesome. That's great. Thank you. Kylie. Panel, anybody else want to elaborate further on, on the different features they might have used within the AI parts study tool?

Saige O'Rourke
I just kind of wanted to echo what Kylie said. I also learn very well with repetition. And so using the practice questions were, it was very repetitive of the content that I had just read and tried to absorb, right, and so I think that is also something that puts us in that competitive advantage because there isn't another platform right now that has the feature to work inside of your own textbook that you're learning inside of your class, and then create personalized questions for you to work on.

You know, there's other websites and things that you can try to use as an outside resource, but it's kind of hard to find that personalized effort. So it worked really well for me.

Ben Piercy
Anyone else on the panel?

Maddy Beavis
One last point to add on as well, I agree that the practice questions I also found to be the most helpful tool. And one part of that as well is after you answer the question, if you see on, you know, the screenshot that you have on the right is you do get a little bit of a summary at the end so you can understand why you got the question wrong, or if you got it right.

Also why the question was right, if maybe you were guessing. But it's also just helpful to have, you know, those accurate and reliable answers afterwards. So, you know, you can keep learning from your mistakes and checking your work.

Ben Piercy
All right, let's move on to our next insight. The convenience of out of comfort, out-of-hours use. So one of the most interesting patterns that we observed was the portion of the student engagement with our AI-powered study tool actually took place between 9 p.m. and 8 a.m., so well outside of, of course, traditional class hours or even office hours for the most part.

So this suggests that the students are relying on the AI-powered study tool when instructors aren't available, highlighting really that value of having a 24/7 support system on demand in these different study hours, especially for those who are juggling work, family responsibilities and, of course, other commitments. So the students told us that they appreciated being able to access a reliable and immediate source that helps align directly with their course materials.

So this question, for Maddy, did the AI-powered study tool help you study more efficiently during times when you didn't have access to your instructor?

Maddy Beavis
I definitely think that it did. I almost feel like the best way to describe it is that the AI study tool became my instructor a little bit. A lot of times in my experience, my professors will have, you know, office hours midday during the week, but I often will have class at that time. So I have found it difficult to attend office hours when I feel like I need some additional support.

So it's really helpful to have the summary option for each chapter, as well as the explain option, so that if I do have questions, either while I'm reading through the chapter or doing some of the practice questions, that I can get reliable answers that I need, and I don't feel like I have no idea what I'm doing. And then I'm going to Google, or I'm trying to use ChatGPT, which may not have reliable answers or may have incorrect information.

So I felt like, you know, the little AI study tool was my personal tutor or my personal instructor as I was working through my studying.

Ben Piercy
Panel did anybody else have a similar experience? Either using it kind of at different hours and, and maybe finding it useful or helpful.

Mikayla Wallace
I just want to add on to what Maddie said, I definitely study at night, but even studying during the day, like being able to use the AI when I only have 30 minutes to study, is a lot more time efficient than trying to track down a professor at their office hours. Because those can be really specific and it doesn't necessarily fit into that 30 minutes I have between classes.

So using the AI tool is huge because I can use it whenever I need to.

Kylie Guzman
Yeah. I want to add on to what Maddie and Mikayla just said, emphasis on the convenience and efficiency of this tool. I was actually able to use my iPad or my phone, which, you know, it's probably not ideal, but I'm doing this while I'm walking. Or if I'm on the bus getting myself to class. But those early moments, whenever you're on your way to class and you're able to even access outside of your laptop, just a quick question like, oh my gosh, I'm about to walk into my class.

Let me ask about some principle of marketing topic really quick that I, I can't recall in my head right now. I think it's really awesome that we have something that we can just ask really quick and get a reliable answer when our professors aren't necessarily available.

Ben Piercy

Does anyone think on this panel, that this could maybe replace office hours with the instructor? Or is there a way maybe to supplement both? Hey, on demand 24/7 for these questions that maybe I'm trying to get answers to, but also maybe going to the instructor using their office hours to maybe further explain something.

Maddy Beavis
Personally, I want to say no. I think there really is something to that face-to-face instruction. And if I could go to office hours in person, you know, maybe I have a conflict with a class or an extracurricular activity. If I could go to those office hours, I would. But I would say that this is a very helpful supplemental tool to go into office hours or asking your professor a question after class.

And I really like what Kylee said as well, where, you know, maybe you're walking in right before an exam. Professors are not necessarily looking to answer questions right before that, you know, type of situation, because they're handing out exams and things like that and getting students set up. So it's just a way to, you know, you have a quick question.

You just want to answer it and you can get it answered. But for those bigger problems, maybe something you're really not understanding. I think this is just more supplemental to talking to your professor face to face and getting that in-person instruction.

Ben Piercy
So yeah, that's such a great way to put it. I think back to my own experience, bugging the professor right before something to hopefully explain this key concept that I either didn't have time for or, for whatever reason, just didn't, didn't work. Look at the explanation. So awesome. We'll move on to our textbook alignment versus general AI tool.

So one of the most, key, one of the key findings from our diary study, of course, was how much students value the subject-specific alignment with Pearson's AI-powered study tools compared to more general AI tools out there, such as maybe a ChatGPT or Gemini within Google. Nearly all of the students consistently use Pearson's AI-powered study tool because it integrates directly with the course materials that, of course, instructors are teaching from and students are learning from, offering a more accurate explanation and guidance that aligns with, again, that specific textbook.

This allowed the students to engage more deeply with their specific subjects without the distractions or maybe inconsistencies that sometimes come with some of these other technologies. I want to ask, actually, Mikayla, how does using the AI study tool aligned with your textbook, help you compare maybe to more general tools like ChatGPT?

Mikayla Wallace

Yeah. Thanks, Ben. I want to say, like, using the AI study tool has, that's directly aligned with my course textbook, has significantly increased the effectiveness and also the efficiency of my study sessions. An example is I use the AI study tool to summarize, like, a chapter or a section of my textbook for my econ course.

And then I have it create flashcards instantly from that summary. And this exports—or not export; it's within the Pearson+ platform, which is great because I know we mentioned earlier having multiple tabs open while you're studying, it's like really inefficient. So it's nice that I can get a summary immediately from a section of the textbook and then have it make flashcards from that specific summary.

Usually I'd spend hours creating my own flashcards, 'til my hand cramps. I'm running out of ink. But like using the Pearson materials with the embedded AI tool, it just takes seconds. And if I were to use, like, a generic ChatGPT tool to do the same, it's, I would worry about the summary being, like, inaccurate because it might pull from outside sources that aren't as trustworthy as, like, straight from that e-textbook.

It also wouldn't allow me to instantly create those flashcards that are available alongside the e-text, like in the same platform. So overall, Pearsone-text with the embedded AI study tool offers just like a one stop shop for all my study needs.

Ben Piercy
Awesome. Saige, you mentioned maybe, you know, do you see this AI study tools again a supplement to your textbook and course materials? Or could it potentially replace them?

Saige O'Rourke
Yeah. So, personally, I think my short answer is no. I don't think that I could see it replacing my textbooks. And I also don't think that I see AI replacing anything at all, actually. I think that I speak for everyone when I say that generally, AI can't always be the most reliable, whether it outputs incorrect information or it doesn't fully understand the question.

But the great thing about the AI study tool is that it is only pulling from our textbook. Right? So all of that information is directly what you're learning. And so I think we're always going to need the material, whether it's in a print or digital form. But with that being said, I think that if AI is used in the right way, which in this case it is with the study tool, then it can make a great at-home tutor or, you know, use, outside of office hours and everything.

And so I've been able to use it as a side-by-side tool, in my coding classes, just to correct my code or explore other avenues. And then I've also used the study tool a lot to complete practice questions. Like I said before, test my knowledge of the actual textbook and really fully understand what's going on.

So I think they work hand in hand, but I don't think that you could get rid of one and have the other.

Ben Piercy
Morgan, as students who, you know, use both general AI tools, and also Pearson's AI powered study tool, how do you think this tool could change the way students learn and succeed in the future?

Morgan Regier
Yeah. So I, I can say from experience that I've used both, you know. I, I hop on ChatGPT sometimes just to see if I can get a quick answer, but we've always been told that it's not … it can't be a reliable source. You can't, you know, use it when you're writing a paper because you just don't always know that it's correct.

And I honestly feel that, like, in the future, maybe in like five, ten years, maybe AI can be a little bit more reliable. But I think for right now, like, it's never going to be as reliable as this Pearson AI study tool which made it a lot easier because, like you said, it did take the information, like solely from the embedded textbook, which made it easier for me to, like, know that I was getting the correct information when, you know, I was asking the, the tool to summarize an entire chapter or to make practice questions like, I knew that, like, this information was only coming from inside the textbook, which

honestly made it a lot easier for me to, like, trust the information. And so, honestly, I think that this tool could change the way that, like, students like, can learn and succeed in the future. Because I think it'll make it a lot easier. Like Kylie said, for students to, like, learn quickly while you're on the bus or, you know, walking from class, things like that.

I can just quickly read a summary of the chapter because I don't know about anybody else, but I don't like reading textbooks. 20 pages a textbook is just not something that I sit down every night and I enjoy reading about. And so when I was able to still learn about, still learn about what I wanted to, but have it summarized where it was only like maybe a page of a textbook, and I could still get a general understandng of what I was learning.

Definitely made it a lot easier. And I was so thankful for it because it just, it's just not. I love reading, but not textbooks. And so, yeah, I honestly think that it can and it will help students succeed, when they're learning and, you know, even a little bit down the future, honestly, just for the convenience of it and like, even for me, I enjoyed the summarizing and the practice questions because I knew that the information was correct, and I knew that I was going to be able to learn what I needed to, but in a shorter amount of time.

Ben Piercy
Thank you for sharing. Panel, was there a time where, maybe you were using both or maybe you tried the ChatGPT angle, and then you maybe went back to the AI-

powered study tool. Does anybody have an experience over the diary study, maybe doing that and.

Kylie Guzman
I did. I, so, I did this more for experimental purposes and not for me genuinely trying to find more information on what I was reading. But I took a topic like, I think, from the second chapter in my book about business ethics really quick. And I compared the summary, the concept like one of the concepts that I was reading, I remember, and it was so far off from what my book was saying, because I know that in ChatGPT sometimes you can input like a textbook and specific chapter in addition and ask it to summarize.

And I've done this before with classes on my own, like my own classes that I have at my university that don't use a Pearson textbook. So I was just kind of taking ChatGPT's word for it. But then I tested it with Pearson's textbook, and the summary was way off of what I read in the actual book. So it just kind of proved to me that, one

I need to stop doing that, and two, that it's not reliable, that it's not as reliable as something that's directed straight from the source.

Ben Piercy
Yep, it's a great way to put it. Did anybody else have an experiment like that throughout the month?

Mikayla Wallace
I just wanted to add, I, so in my econ textbook, I was asking about, like, yield curves and different, like, bonds and things like that. And the textbook gave me something that was, like, way closer to what I needed, for, it was for a homework-related question, and asking like, the regular ChatGPT just kind of went in a, in a wrong direction.

But I was able to ask the Pearson AI tool, like, I'll be honest, I was being vague with my question, that I was asking it, but the Pearson AI tool, because it's embedded in the text, was immediately able to gather what I needed, and it was much more relevant to my homework that was in a Pearson homework platform than what ChatGPT provided.

Ben Piercy
Did you find, uh? Oh, go ahead, please.

Morgan Regier
Sorry, I was just going to say that I agree with Mikayla. In terms of the Pearson like AI tool, knew exactly what information I needed when I asked the question, whereas if I plugged it into ChatGPT, it would just give me like a generalized statement. And so it was a lot nicer to use the like practice questions or ask a question, part of the study tool because like, it was only taking information from that book and it was answering questions from the book that I needed.

Ben Piercy
Lastly, did you feel like our AI-powered study tool impacted your confidence in whether either preparing for maybe like a quiz or test or even just you being able to even coach another student on a specific topic. Did itimprove your confidence at all?

Morgan Regier
I think it did. I, it definitely took a lot of like weight off of my shoulders because again, when you're reading so many pages of textbooks, you forget information or me, I just skip over information because again, I just don't want to read that many pages. And so it definitely made it a lot easier when I was taking a quiz to, you know, be like, oh, I only read, you know, such a little bit amount.

But because the information came straight from the textbook, it was still summarized in a great way, and I was able to be like, oh, that's what that means. Because like the summary told me, and then I know that that was correct.

Saige O'Rourke
Yeah. Just to add on to that, I was using the study tool to, prepare for one of my exams that was in my class, and I just found that I was so much more confident in the content that I was learning because of the fact that I was able to ask clarifying questions and work directly in the textbook.

You know, because those are the things that you are being taught in class. And so if I was just using ChatGPT, it's not going to know exactly what my professor's talking about in class. But if I'm using the AI study tool, it's going to know exactly what chapter and page that's on because it's covered in the textbook, and that's what it's pulling from.

So I felt a lot more confident about the answer that I was getting from the chat bot, and then the information I was going to be consuming to.

Ben Piercy
Anybody else on the panel?

All right. Well, we are at time. I want to thank this amazing group of students again, just for taking the time during their busy semester, balancing everything that they do, for work and school just to be part of our diary study. And of course, today, being a part of this panel, sharing your thoughts with all the amazing instructors that are, that are tuning in here right now, live.