

March 2025

AI agent for oral assessment

Research & Insights Forum



AI agent for oral assessment

Digital technologies for assessment

This project will build and pilot an AI agent for oral assessment. We will also publish our learnings as we go, and a playbook for providers.

Meet the team



Adam Barker
Project oversight



Phoebe Gill
Project manager



Sam Cormack
Lead developer

SCARLATTI



Today's agenda

1

AI landscape
(10 min)

2

Demonstration
(10 min)

3

Lessons learnt
(3 min)

4

Discussion
(7 min)

“AI in Education” articles



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Overview

Everywhere you look, New Zealand organisations are exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI). Within the educational space, most organisations are still at the beginning of their journey. However, as 2025 rolls in, a few are piloting AI tools to solve problems whose solutions have seemed dim until now.

This article is the **first in a series titled “AI in Education”**, aimed at education providers interested in AI. The intention is for this series to act as a beginner’s guide to the use of AI in education, with particular focus on AI chatbots. This series is being developed as part of our project to develop an AI chatbot for learner oral assessment (more specifically, an AI agent), funded by the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FFCoVE). We invite you to follow along as we (Scarlati) document our learnings about this exciting space.

The article below provides a **brief overview of the global use of AI in education** – covering delivery, assessment, and pastoral care. It focuses on products or projects that undertake *distinct* roles. However, we acknowledge that there are also ones that combine roles. We also acknowledge that there will be other examples out there. We plan to explore these more in our subsequent articles.

AI in delivery

There are many ways AI can be used for the benefit of learners, providers, and others in education. Researchers Mollick and Mollick (2023) outline seven roles for AI in training delivery. Language models, like ChatGPT, can be prompted to act within these roles – but they can also be incorporated into standalone products. Below we describe each role and provide examples of each.

AI-Simulator:

- Creates role-playing scenarios for students to practice skills in context and problem-solve in real-time. Examples of AI-Simulators are the most plentiful of the seven types.
- Duolingo’s ‘Video Call’, ELSA AI, Makes You Fluent, Cathoven, and LanguaTalk are examples within language learning. FundamentalsSurgery combines AI and VR to simulate medical procedures for students while Viri combines these technologies to simulate workplaces for students to gain ‘real’ life work experience.

Written by



Phoebe Gill



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This article is the **second in a series titled “AI in Education”**, aimed at education providers interested in AI. The intention is for this series to act as a beginner’s guide to the use of AI in education, with a particular focus on AI agents. This series is being developed as part of our project to develop an AI agent for learner oral assessment, funded by the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FFCoVE). We invite you to follow along as we (Scarlati) document our learnings about this exciting space.

The article below provides an overview of the **emerging AI projects within Oceania’s education sector**. This list is not intended to be exhaustive – but provides a glimpse of the landscape and their relevance to the AI agent Scarlati is currently developing.

Projects in delivery and assessment

Cogniti, University of Sydney

Country: Australia

Phase: Mature

Cogniti is a generative AI platform (rather than an AI agent itself), designed to enable educators to build custom AI agents. Since its soft launch in October 2023, educators from [30 institutions](#) in Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore have created more than 600 AI agents using Cogniti.

For example, the University of Sydney itself has built [a peer-based learning tool for chemistry tutorials](#), a tool

Most educators are still talking about how to stop AI

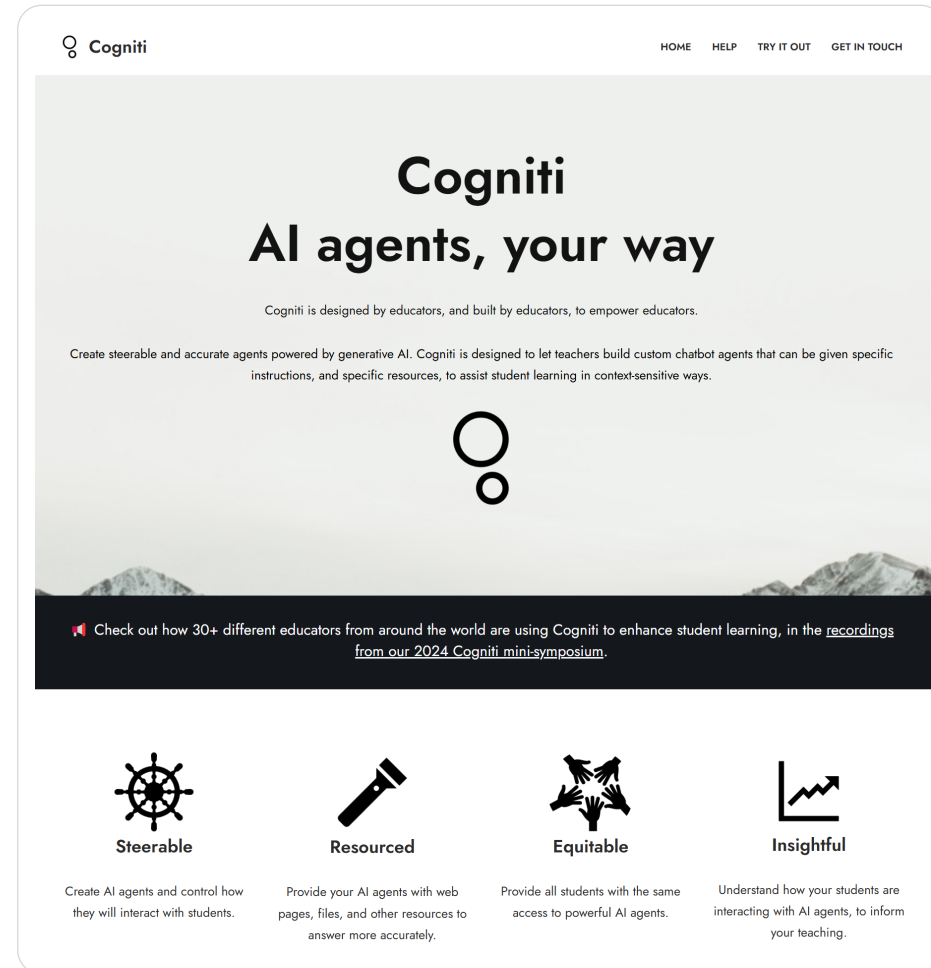


Figure 1: A commonly sighted LinkedIn avalanche of commentary

Meanwhile, AI agents are flourishing in Oceania

These are typically...

- **Who:** Universities
- **Location:** Australia
- **Tool:** Cogniti
- **Mode:** Text-based



You are much less likely to find:

- **Who:** VET
- **Location:** New Zealand
- **Tool:** Custom
- **Mode:** Speech-based

Example trailblazers

TOI-OHOMAI
Institute of Technology

CONCO>E
TŪHURA



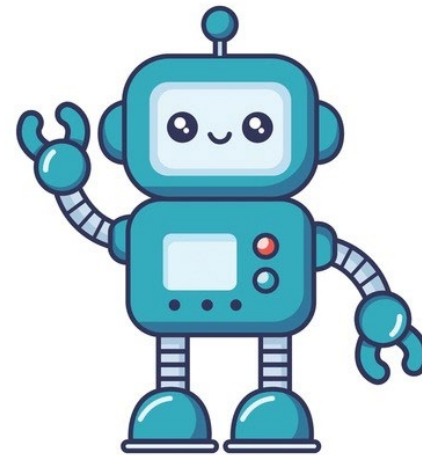
The logo for the Manukau Institute of Technology, featuring a stylized black and white circular emblem with three birds in flight above horizontal lines.
MANUKAU
INSTITUTE OF
TECHNOLOGY
Te Whare Takiura o Manukau

Most are tutors, simulators, support... Not assessment

Welcome to legal studies 101. How can I help you study today?

Hi, I am here for my physio appointment.

We've noticed you haven't logged in recently. Did you know the student centre has free study support services?



1 Generate

Auto-generate
questions based on
content

Student may then
answer via agent or
on paper

2 Administer

Text or speech-
based conversation
Non-formal
learning
Not tertiary or VET

3 Grade

Score closed
questions or open
ended






If formal, only
closed questions
and low stakes

May not involve an
agent







4 Interpret

Identify trends and
knowledge gaps
Generate
personalised
recommendations

Here are some New Zealand examples

Organisation	Assessment stages covered
 <small>Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa New Zealand Qualifications Authority</small>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Administer <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade <input checked="" type="radio"/> Interpret
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Administer <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade <input checked="" type="radio"/> Interpret
 <small>UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND Wāipapa Taumata Rau NEW ZEALAND</small>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Administer <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade <input checked="" type="radio"/> Interpret
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Administer <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade <input checked="" type="radio"/> Interpret
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Generate <input checked="" type="radio"/> Administer <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade <input checked="" type="radio"/> Interpret

Some do the whole process, but in different ways

Organisation	Assessment stages covered	User	Speech or text based	Q type	Formal or non-formal
	● Generate ● Administer ● Grade ● Interpret	Uni student		Closed	Formal
	● Generate ● Administer ● Grade ● Interpret	School teacher		Open	Non-formal
	● Generate ● Administer ● Grade ● Interpret	VET learner		Open	Formal

You are a new contract milker

This assessment is for contract milking 101 with Dairy Training Ltd. It will cover:

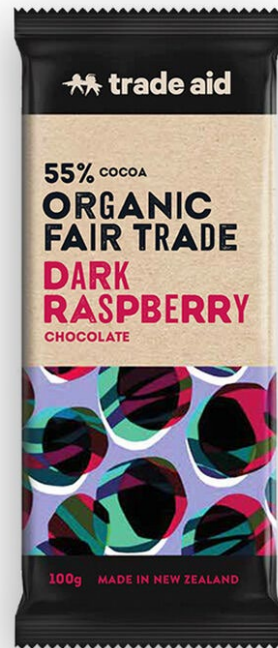
- Typical contract issues (Us)
- Guidelines for issues (Us)
- Who to go to for help (Volunteer)



Dairy training 

We need a volunteer

Will you have a go?



Recording forum demo

2025-03-11 03:13 UTC

Recorded by

Stella Sutherland
Stapleton

Organized by

Stella Sutherland
Stapleton

- Research what already exists, ethics frameworks, contacts and government guidance
- Build in mitigations for unusual student behaviour
- Consider decoupling the assessment AI agent into two (“Examiner” and “Assessor”)
- Have agent search course materials / rubric (“RAG”), instead of including it in prompt
- ...



Any thoughts?

We would love questions or feedback



Scan the QR code

For articles and playbook

