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AI in Innovation

What changes in business, and what we should teach next

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Would you invest in an AI-generated idea?

A great pitch.

A plausible model.

What would you need to believe it?

Keep one investment question in mind as we look at the evidence

AI expands the search for new materials

380,000

crystal structures predicted to be stable



New search possibilities still need experiments and a route to market

AI can accelerate product innovation

25.1%

quicker task completion

>40%

higher human-rated output quality

BCG experiment, 758 consultants. Results concern tasks within AI capabilities.

Business capability: develop options faster and recognise their limits

AI can bridge business and technical expertise

776

P&G professionals in a field experiment

Individuals with AI matched teams without AI on solution quality

AI helped bridge commercial and technical perspectives

Learning task: defend the idea from another discipline's perspective

AI is already part of the MBA classroom

930

MBA students used Julius.ai



Conceptual illustration

HBS DSAIL course, reported March 2025. Adoption measure.

Innovation in education: analysis through natural-language questions

Business simulations can respond to students

0.33

GPT-3 / instructor rating correlation

0.77

GPT-4 / instructor rating correlation

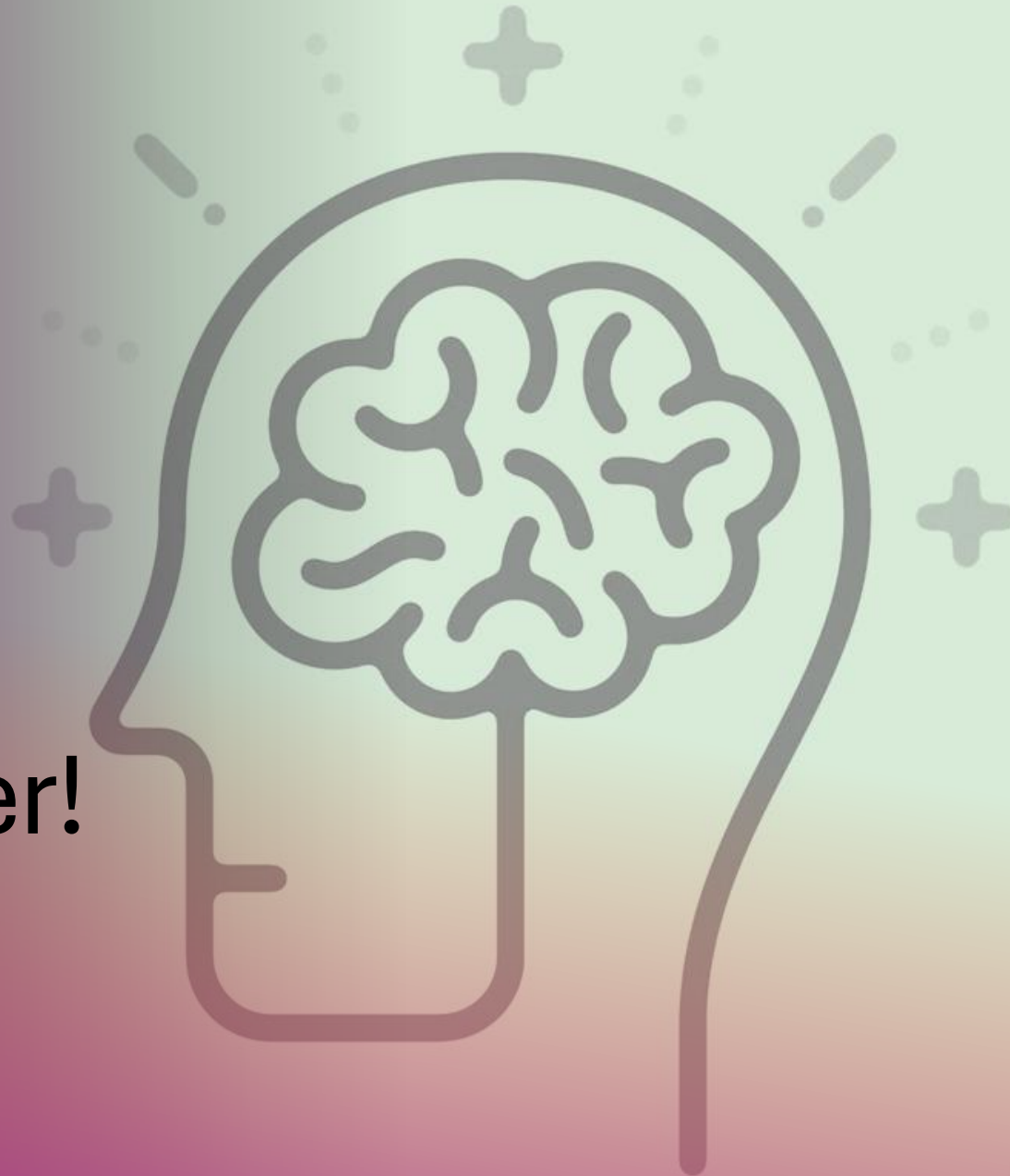
Wharton case study, 2024. Measure: vision-statement concreteness.

Innovation in education: open responses with immediate practice feedback

Existing tools for innovation tasks

Tool	Innovation task
Elicit	Find research evidence
ChatGPT / Claude	Explore and challenge ideas
Figma Make	Build a working prototype
Julius.ai	Analyse data through questions
Makersite	Compare product lifecycle impacts

Choose the task first. Check access, data permissions and output quality.



Brainteaser!

Your café has a problem

A café wants fewer disposable cups

Customers dislike carrying an empty cup

What would you change in the business model?



A classroom innovation experiment

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 Propose | An independent idea and business model |
| 2 Challenge | AI objections and another possible model |
| 3 Test | Customer evidence, cost or lifecycle assumptions |
| 4 Revise | A decision supported by evidence |

Learning outcome: justify a sustainable business model with evidence

What would convince you they learned?

"What if customers return only half the cups you expected?"

Assessment: a revised model, a checked claim and a defended decision

What students should hand in

Learning evidence	What an educator can assess
Their first idea and revised model	How the proposition changed
An assumption and a test	Evidence that addresses the real risk
AI output they challenged	Their ability to check and improve it
A short decision log	Their choice, reasoning and remaining uncertainty

A suggested assessment design. Adapt it to the course learning outcomes.

The business decision as a learning task

- Business transformation gives us authentic problems
- AI helps learners explore and challenge alternatives
- Sustainability requires evidence about consequences
- Assessment makes learning and judgement visible

A learner should be able to explain why the decision is worth making

Human oversight needs authority

Risk	Checkpoint	Decision owner
Invented facts or assumptions	Check sources and input data	Business analyst
Missed customer concerns	Compare summaries with feedback	Customer lead
Exposed confidential data	Approve data and tool before use	Data owner
Unsupported green claims	Review baseline and method	Sustainability lead

The reviewer needs time, evidence and the power to stop the decision

A real example: product impact analysis

Microsoft uses **Makersite** to help model product components

AI supports analysis of material and supplier information

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) practitioners add supplier data and check model quality

Business lesson: faster analysis still needs data ownership and expert review



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THANK YOU!

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