

Pilot or Passenger?

Bridging the AI Agency Gap in Higher Education

THE AGENCY GAP: PILOTS VS. PASSENGERS

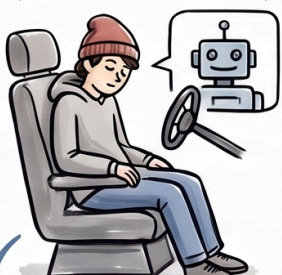
PILOTS (ACTIVE CONTROL)



Set goals and question outputs.

It is shaped by student initiative, output monitoring, and final decision-making authority.

PASSENGERS (PASSIVE DEPENDENCY)



Copy verbatim and outsource judgment.

The perceived distance between active control and passive dependency.

THE
AGENCY
GAP

DATA SNAPSHOT: EXPLANATORY POWER (R^2)

REFLECTIVE LEARNING ENGAGEMENT		0.539 - 0.556
SELF-REPORTED CRITICAL THINKING		0.283 - 0.518
ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT		0.442 - 0.574

Shows how strongly the research model explains student learning behaviors across combined sample.

REFLECTION AS THE "COGNITIVE BRAKE"



Interrupts the "prompt and paste" cycle.

Forces pause to identify contradictions and integrate AI material with prior knowledge.

THE PATHWAY TO CRITICAL THINKING



Not a direct byproduct of AI use.

Only emerges when students reflectively interrogate and verify what the AI produces.

High agency is the primary predictor of reflective engagement.

REFLECTION POWERS
CRITICAL THINKING

Students in control significantly more likely to interrogate AI results.

THE AGENCY-REFLECTION CHAIN

CONTEXTUAL DIFFERENCES (UK vs. CHINA)



UK: Favor "learning-by-doing".



China: AI literacy acts as a "gatekeeper".

Local norms shape the AI experience.