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BEYOND AI INFORMATION RETRIEVAL: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXAMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND SELF-AUTHORSHIP [ABSTRACT]

Imani Akin*	University of Phoenix, United States	imaniakin@email.phoenix.edu
Ramona Burress	Onyx Health Collective, United States	ramonab@onyx360.org
Courtney M. Burress IV	Columbia University, United States	Cmb2367@columbia.edu
Pennington A. Burress	North Carolina A&T State University, United States	paburress@aggies.ncat.edu

* Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	With the increasing accessibility and convenience of artificial intelligence (AI), college students risk defaulting to passive information rather than engaging in deep, meaningful learning. This paper examines how academics, AI-native students, and experiential leaders are navigating AI to foster sustained scholarly commitment.
Background	Two complementary theories make up the framework for this paper. Baxter Magolda's Self-Authorship Theory defines the developmental destination of advanced education as the capacity to construct one's own beliefs, identity, and scholarly voice. Building on this foundation, the Zone of No Development (ZND), is a conceptual state in which continuous reliance on AI assistance replaces cognitive discipline necessary for scholarly growth.
Methodology	This basic qualitative research design is grounded in the academic experiences of its authors across three distinct vantage points: students navigating higher education as AI-native scholars preparing for graduate education; an academic scholar reflecting on observed shifts in student engagement and scholarly identity formation; and a practitioner examining AI's implications

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	for professional practicums. Narrative reflection, observational insights, and experiential perspectives were analyzed through the theoretical framework.
Contribution	This paper advances scholarship of artificial intelligence and meaningful learning by centering the integrated perspectives of an academic, students, and practitioner into a unified conceptual framework to cultivate cognitive discipline that AI-enabled environments require but cannot produce.
Findings	Three themes emerged. Academic observation revealed shifts in student engagement within discussion sections and ideas when AI is available. Students experience reveals an ongoing tension between AI authority and developing intrinsic scholarly expertise. Experiential practitioner reflection identified a systemic risk of AI fluency without substance.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Practitioners should integrate an interdisciplinary approach to using and working with AI through teaching, learning, and professional experiences to cultivate cognitive discipline that AI cannot replace; including structured opportunities for reflective practice, scholarly voice development and independent case study synthesis.
Recommendations for Researchers	Researchers are encouraged to develop interdisciplinary models that examine how AI influences dimensions of scholarly identity formation, self-authorship, and cognitive development across educational and professional contexts.
Impact on Society	Developing sustainable frameworks that advances basic information retrieval from AI will have broad societal implications, determining whether the next generation of scholars and professionals develop capacity for original thought, critical thinking, independent judgement, and meaningful contribution.
Future Research	Future studies should examine how pedagogical and experiential interventions can disrupt the over reliance on AI and support authentic scholarship.
Keywords	AI-native students, meaningful learning, artificial intelligence, higher-education, scholarly identity, interdisciplinary education, Self Authorship Theory, Zone of No Development

AUTHORS



novation in the educational community.

Dr. Imani Akin holds an MS in Special Education, an EdD in Educational Leadership, and an MBA in Data Analytics. A faculty member in the doctoral research department and dissertation chair, she has designed and led professional development initiatives empowering educators across K-12 and higher education to implement evidence-based intervention strategies. Dr. Akin was awarded a research grant to explore the scholarly needs of doctoral graduates — work that was subsequently published and evolved into a replicable model for knowledge-building. She continues this work as a Research Fellow and is a committed advocate for collaborative research, regularly presenting and publishing to advance in-



Ramona Burress, PharmD is a healthcare leader with deep expertise in patient engagement, health equity, and clinical research diversity. A licensed clinical pharmacist specializing in infectious diseases and oncology, she has held senior leadership roles at Takeda Pharmaceuticals and Janssen Pharmaceuticals of Johnson & Johnson, where she led global health equity initiatives and efforts to increase diversity in clinical trials. She serves on the boards of Susan G. Komen Chicago, the University of Chicago's Women's Board, ONYX360, and the MarSid Fund, and chairs Friends of Kenwood Academy High School, reflecting a sustained commitment to community health, educational enrichment, and advancing healthcare access for underserved populations.



Courtney M. Burress IV is a fourth-year Biochemistry student at Columbia University, where he serves as an elected board member of multiple campus organizations focused on community engagement and neighborhood impact. He currently conducts research in Dr. Catherine Spina's laboratory, investigating the carcinogenic effects of the adenosine signaling pathway. Courtney aspires to pursue an MD/PhD in medical oncology, with a focus on advancing cancer research and improving patient outcomes.



Pennington A. Burress is a fourth-year Public Relations student at North Carolina A&T State University, where she holds leadership roles across multiple campus organizations focused on community engagement and collaborative impact. Her professional experience spans public relations, event management, media production, and brand activations; building a foundation in strategic communications and creative leadership. Pennington aspires to advance the entertainment industry through public relations and production, with career interests in organizations including BET, Sony Music, and the Recording Academy.