When AI Tutors Speak — Boston University's Pre-Registered Online-MBA Trial Finds Tutor Structure, Not Voice, Drives Learning

AI in Education · Good practice · United States of America

Quality score: 60/100

Evidence strength: Moderate

Summary

Pre-registered field trial in BU Questrom's Online MBA finance module: 86 students randomised to a course-grounded GPT-5.4 tutor or ambient consumer AI; tutored students gained 6.63 points more (p=.007). Voice, alternated weekly with text, cost 2.8x more without better learning.

Key dimensions

Dimension	Score
Evidence of learning impact	2/3
Equity & inclusion	1/3
Transparency, ethics & data protection	3/3
Teacher capability & pedagogy	1/3
Scalability & sustainability	2/3

Evaluated by C-NAPSE

Data sources

C-NAPSE web research — accessed 2026-11-23

Boston University Questrom School of Business — accessed 2026-11-23

arXiv 2609.23958 — When AI Tutors Speak — accessed 2026-11-23

Unite.AI commentary on the study — accessed 2026-11-23

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