



Role of the learning developer in teaching responsible use of AI: examples and challenges from embedded social sciences

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Presentation abstract

This academic year has seen a significant increase in requests for embedded teaching on the university's generative artificial intelligence (AI) guidelines, which our learning development team had a significant role in developing. The session highlighted the challenges faced when creating sessions within the ever-changing AI landscape (Bobula, 2024), and the importance of meaningful dialogue with academic staff to develop a shared understanding about how students can use AI responsibly.

Collaborating with colleagues has highlighted various positions academics have taken in engaging students with AI. Our role has involved championing the university's guidelines in discussions with academics, sometimes influencing a change in how AI is viewed or used. Developing sessions collaboratively with academics has been imperative in ensuring a consistent message for students about the responsible use of AI. While these collaborations have been successful, the ever-evolving AI landscape and increased expectations from academics raises questions about learning developers' role in teaching this content, which we explored with delegates in this session.

We also outlined the bespoke activities developed for students, including mapping studies using ResearchRabbit, which have garnered positive feedback from staff and students. Whilst we have adapted our approach for each discipline, the key aims of these sessions have remained the same: to encourage students to critically engage with AI tools to determine their value and effectiveness. However, rapidly progressing technology is

challenging us as learning developers to think creatively about how to engage students with meaningful activity to empower responsible use of AI.

Delegates had the opportunity to share their own AI teaching experiences and any similar challenges they have encountered. We also welcomed critical perspectives on the approaches we have taken, allowing us to develop these further, and encouraged delegates to consider how they could use and adapt our practices in their own teaching.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; learning developer role; collaborative teaching; social sciences; challenges.

Community response

This presentation addressed one of the most pressing challenges facing LD teams today: how to support responsible AI use while navigating the shifting academic perspectives and unclear professional boundaries. The presenters shared their institution's experience of developing and delivering generative AI guidelines, highlighting both the collaborative successes and ongoing uncertainties that characterise this emerging area of practice. Their focus on meaningful dialogue with academic staff, and the development of discipline-specific yet consistent approaches, reflects the mediating role that learning developers occupy in HE. The session clearly demonstrated that learning developers are not merely support staff but essential pedagogical collaborators in navigating this rapidly evolving AI landscape, with case studies from Law, Film Production and Hospitality that showcased the adaptability of AI-related skill development across diverse subject areas.

One response to this presentation demonstrated the broad relevance of the challenges discussed, with the respondent recognising similar patterns and approaches at their own institution:

In this presentation, Katie and Sam reiterated a key role of LDers as lead connectors with academics and students. This mediator position has made LD work distinctive and important to the student journey in HE.

Katie and Sam also mentioned the traffic light categories regarding AI use, which is probably informed by Perkins et al.'s (2024) AI Assessment Scale. This traffic light scheme has also been adopted at my institution (see the [webpage](#)) even though it

seems not yet widely ‘promoted’ internally but currently just left there as a point of reference or resource. I have also learned from colleagues discussing the issue of verifiability of students’ AI use despite such a guideline. However, by taking Mark Carrigan’s encouraging and positive tone towards the end of his keynote speech, I believe that the traffic light system provides a sound starting point for institutions and courses to work on details and nuances.

In Bett Show 2025 I learned about Surrey’s AI marking tool ‘keath.ai’. I am curious about how AI marking has impinged (or will have impinged) on how you support students. (Robert Ping-Nan Chang)

At a time when AI advancements are accelerating, the emphasis was on ensuring relevant, discipline-focused learning opportunities that are adaptable as the AI landscape changes. This work not only enhances the visibility of learning developers but also strengthens higher education’s collective capacity to engage with AI responsibly and effectively. The recognition of learning developers’ mediating role, and the shared experience of implementing similar frameworks, suggests that LD is developing some consensus around approaches to AI integration, even while significant challenges remain.

Next steps and additional questions

As this area of research and practice is still evolving, new questions will keep emerging. However, at any point in these developments, it will be worthwhile for learning developers to think about the following:

- How should learning developers’ responsibilities in AI education be defined as this area evolves?
- What training and support do learning developers need to maintain expertise in rapidly evolving AI landscapes?
- How are AI marking tools like keath.ai changing the context for student support and LD work?

Authors’ reflection

With our focus on what the role of the learning developer (LD) is or should be in teaching students responsible use of AI, it was interesting to hear the perspectives of attendees, which were generally similar to ours. In particular, the uncomfortableness of being seen as

'experts' in this area seemed to resonate with others, with questions arising about whether students see us as experts too (no, they're more expert than we are!) and how we define what an expert is. The more familiar position of LDs as 'lead connectors' and 'mediators' expressed in a community reflection is perhaps more accurate than that of expert and maintains our distinctive and unique position in HE.

It was apparent that other AI challenges were prevalent across institutions too, such as managing vastly different academic staff views on AI usage. The teaching sessions we discussed in this presentation were created collaboratively with academics who see the value in supporting students to use AI ethically, but other, more resistant views still exist in our institution. While we hope that the introduction of a traffic light system for assessments could affect the way AI is viewed institutionally, we have yet to see the impact of this initiation. It was also clear from attendee comments that similar systems at other universities are not universally adopted, and where they have been, these initiations have not yet made a significant difference to assessments or academics' attitudes about student AI usage.

It was invaluable to connect with LDs from other institutions on this topic and reassuring to hear similar points of view. We will continue to reflect on the unique role of LDs in teaching responsible use of AI as it evolves, undoubtedly presenting new and interesting challenges.

Acknowledgements

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The authors did not use generative AI technologies in the creation of this manuscript.

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