



A co-creation approach to using generative AI for enhanced learning gain

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Presentation abstract

This presentation explored how the University of Birmingham's Academic Skills Centre (ASC) is responding to urgent needs to equip taught students with the skills and knowledge for effective use of generative AI (GAI) tools for study. As Martin Compton (2023) noted, there is an 'ongoing drive to centre information literacy and critical-thinking skills in the development of our students'. The introduction of tools like ChatGPT and Copilot reshapes how knowledge is acquired and applied, underscoring this imperative.

With expertise in embedding information literacy and critical thinking across a range of disciplines, learning developers are uniquely equipped to adapt these skills to the challenges posed by GAI. Through this adaptation, students will be better positioned to navigate the complexities of studying and learning in environments influenced by GAI. Learning developers can take the lead in shaping the ethical frameworks and guidance for using GAI tools. Our ASC produced the university's student-facing guidance on using GAI tools and is currently working with postgraduate students — 'GAI Ambassadors' — to co-create an interactive and accessible Canvas resource. A co-creation approach has allowed these students to be active participants in their own learning (Katz, 2021) whilst

ensuring they bring their unique perspective to using these tools. Ultimately, this presentation had a dual purpose: to allow us and our students to showcase what we have produced and to share best practice; secondly, advocating for learning developers, alongside their students, to be at the forefront of leading university policy on how and when GAI tools should be used.

Keywords: generative AI (GAI); student-facing guidance; co-creation.

Community response

Higher education, and education more generally, is in a state of flux. Emerging technologies, such as generative AI (GAI), are changing the educational landscape and disrupting the nature of how we teach in universities. In this session, Dr Rachel Webster, Stephen Griffin, Irene Chatterjee, Anitha Kuriakose, and Hieu Nguyen, all from the University of Birmingham, showcased their student-facing guidance on using AI as well as their progress in developing an interactive Canvas resource co-created with postgraduate students. Attendees were keen to see the Canvas resource in action and were also interested to learn about the challenges and opportunities that arose from co-creation with students.

This was a lively and engaging session, with both members of the Academic Skills Centre and the student co-creators presenting. What was clear from the presentation was the positive impact that co-creation can have on students, as well as staff. Indeed, as Dr Webster explained, a student experienced such positive benefits from involvement in the project that they subsequently shared this on their [LinkedIn Learning profile](#). This demonstrates the potential for co-creation of this nature to have tangible benefits far outside the project itself, and clearly reflects one of ALDinHE's shared values: *working in partnership with students and staff to make sense and get the most out of HE*.

From the animated discussion in the room, it was evident that LDs saw significant potential for the Canvas resource to have widespread impact outside its immediate institution. Indeed, Dr Webster noted that she has since been invited to talk at the University of Sheffield about how students were involved in the project, demonstrating clear impact both

within and outside the conference. The following comment by an LD captured the excitement and interest from colleagues:

The resource presented in this session was very impressive [...]. Involving students in the creation of this resource is also a great idea and I hope it helps many people in understanding and adapting to the challenges of GAI. Given the general consensus in the LD community that learning activities are most effective when embedded [...] I'd be particularly interested in hearing about how this resource is rolled out at Birmingham. It might even be something which could be licensed or shared more widely, thus having a potential national impact!

Another LD colleague acknowledged the opportune nature of the resource:

The recent publication by *Inside Higher Ed*, '[Majority of grads wish they'd been taught AI in college](#)', indicates that a great majority of students (70%) in fact want to have GAI incorporated into their learning, mostly out of fear they would be left unprepared for the job market [...]. In which case, the resources developed by Dr Webster's team in partnership with the students will be absolutely invaluable to the coming generations of learners.

There was some acknowledgement in the room that not all students are interested in talking about their use of AI. One LD colleague reflected on the difficulties of this for their practice:

My experience with AI so far is that some students use it but most students don't want to talk about how to use it [...]. This made me think that perhaps they preferred me to think they do not use it for writing. And then, of course, I saw it in their writing.

Students' reluctance to openly discuss their use of AI could clearly be for an array of reasons, including fear of allegations of academic misconduct, lack of understanding about the nature of AI, feelings of overwhelm, and perhaps little interest in the topic. As one LD interestingly reflected:

Since this session included students, I asked them why that might be — why would students not be interested in learning about AI use? I wonder if [...] because the students present in the room were self-selected experts in AI already [they] could not be representative of those who use AI surreptitiously or hope that it can be concealed.

This is where there may be significant opportunity for us as LDs in our third-space, intermediary role to provide students with a safe space to openly share their experiences

of using GAI. Resources, such as the one showcased by Dr Webster and her team, developed in conjunction with students, clearly provide potential for extensive impact. Given the complexities of GAI and all it might entail for teaching and learning in HE, the need to work together with students in the way showcased will likely become increasingly necessary for us as LDs.

Next steps and additional questions

It will be important as a LD community to respond in a proactive way to what continue to be rapid advancements in GAI technologies. This session demonstrated one way in which we might do so: by working alongside students in genuine co-creation and involving them in the process of navigating these significant changes. Bearing this in mind, the following questions might be a helpful starting point for our community to consider:

- Is co-creation with students the way ahead for our community response to developments in GAI?
- In what ways have you co-created with students in your practice?
- What are the challenges and opportunities presented with co-creation?
- How have students in your institution responded to GAI?
- Have you observed an increase in students wanting to discuss the use of GAI, or do students seem reluctant to do so? Why do you think this might be the case?
- What opportunities do you see for a Canvas resource such as the one showcased either in your institution or nationally?

Authors' reflection

Thank you to all those who attended our session. It was a great experience for our PGT students to experience a presentation in front of such an encouraging and responsive audience. An overriding theme of many of the talks delivered at the conference was GAI and how we as LDs should respond to the use of these tools in student learning. As we explored in our presentation, it is both an opportunity and a challenge to lead on shaping policy in this area. Our presentation sought to show what could be produced if an

Academic Skills Centre is given institutional backing and works with students to co-create the guidance.

There was one moment in the presentation that stood out for us, when the first of our students, Irene, shared the screenshots of our Canvas resource, and suddenly participants in the room started taking photos of the slides. Our students talked through each module of the course explaining the rationale for the content and approach taken. It was clear that there is a keen desire and interest in not just exploring how we should respond to GAI, but also seeing examples of what that response should look like. A lively discussion followed in the Q and A, with the audience asking how the course would be integrated and disseminated, and there was particular interest in hearing the students' experience of using GAI tools. It is clear that there is still work to be done to encourage students to talk openly about their use of GAI so they can be supported in using it appropriately and ethically. It has been particularly important in this project to write the course content in a friendly, open, and accessible tone to promote engagement rather than censure.

We hope the launch of our course for the 2024/2025 academic year will prove useful to LDs as a blueprint for interactive student guidance. As noted by one LD, we know that a significant part of the work is still to be done in ensuring the course is disseminated widely and we are able to measure its impact effectively. We hope to rely on Academic Integrity Officers, Heads of Colleges, and our partnerships with individual Schools to encourage the adoption of this course.

Our PGT students reflected individually on their experiences.

Hieu's reflections

Attending the ALDinHE Conference 2024 as one of three postgraduate students who presented was an incredibly enriching experience. Presenting not only honed my public-speaking skills, but also deepened my understanding of the transformative potential of GAI in HE.

The opportunity to engage directly with HE professionals offered a unique platform to discuss the integration of AI tools into learning environments and to investigate the complex challenges that new technology is raising. The questions posed by participants

were insightful, challenging me to think critically about the scope of GAI in academia, ethical considerations, and the balance between technology and traditional educational methods. This interaction highlighted the crucial role of clear communication and evidence-based arguments in professional settings.

One of the significant takeaways from this conference was the importance of collaboration in educational-resource development. The information and feedback received during the conference has inspired me to advocate for more inclusive practices in creating educational content, ensuring that it is adaptable and relevant to diverse student needs. Witnessing the positive response to our approach, where student voices are central to the development process, reinforced my belief in participatory educational methods.

Anitha's reflections

Presenting at the ALDinHE conference as a student was a transformative experience. I was able to network with experienced professionals, academics, and peers, which can open doors to future collaborations, mentorship, and career opportunities. It provided me with a unique opportunity to showcase the benefits of using AI tools for study, highlighting how they can enhance learning and productivity. Engaging with the audience and answering their insightful questions deepened my understanding and reinforced the significance of the research. This experience has inspired me to further explore the intersection of technology and education.

Irene's reflections

Attending the ALDinHE Conference 2024 and presenting our work was an invaluable experience, especially as a master's student specialising in AI and Machine Learning. The opportunity to discuss and showcase the practical applications of AI in education allowed me to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world impact. Engaging with a diverse audience of professionals and academics not only deepened my understanding of the ethical and practical challenges associated with AI in education, but also reinforced the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. This experience has significantly enhanced my ability to apply AI and Machine Learning concepts to address complex educational challenges, further fuelling my passion for innovation in this rapidly evolving field.

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