



ChatGPT: a force for good? Using the I.D.E.As framework to 'develop and empower' students

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Abstract

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools (for example, ChatGPT) are a specific application of artificial intelligence which generate novel content in response to questions or instructions. Their use in education has generated diverse responses. Critics express concerns that they might discourage students from engaging in independent analysis, evaluation and problem-solving, and hinder the development of critical thinking skills (Farrokhnia et al., 2023). Another concern is the potential effect on the development of meaningful student-teacher and peer-to-peer interactions, important in fostering student belonging, and developing communication and social-emotional skills.

Conversely, supporters see these tools as valuable resources providing instant access to tailored information, facilitating personalised learning experiences and promoting student engagement. They argue that rather than undermining higher-order skills like critical thinking and evaluative judgment, GenAI tools can enhance their development. Some propose they may even help address the 'awarding gap' (Fido and Wallace, 2023), with students using such tools as a 'dialogic tutor', to personalise learning and so develop their knowledge and understanding (Compton, 2023a).

The presentation introduced the 'I.D.E.As framework' (Hack, 2023), a resource developed to help structure thinking and curate ideas regarding using GenAI tools in learning and teaching. The session explored ways in which GenAI tools may be used as a 'force for good', to enhance the student learning experience and support their individual learning development. Resources to 'develop and empower' students as independent learners were shared, providing an opportunity for attendees to reflect on how/whether they might be incorporated into their own learning and teaching contexts.

Keywords: artificial intelligence; AI, generative AI; GenAI; ChatGPT; personalising learning; teaching and learning; higher education.

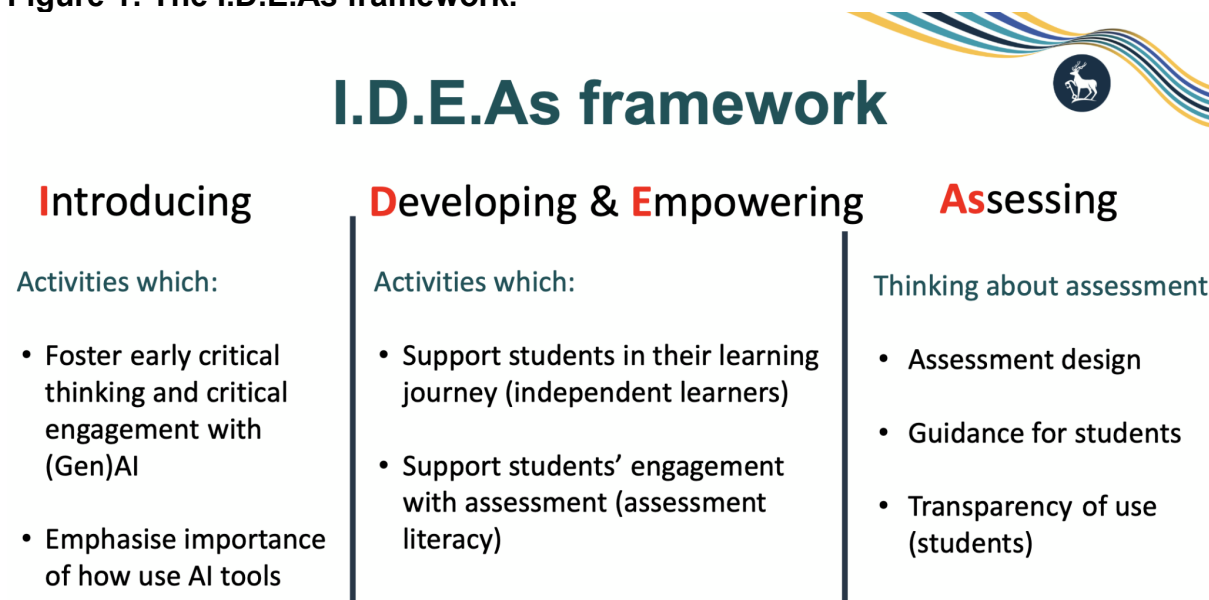
Presentation context: the I.D.E.As framework

The session focused on Hack's (2023) I.D.E.As framework, which focuses on:

- Introducing AI through activities that encourage critical thinking, supporting students to engage with the advantages and disadvantages of AI use and to consider ethical issues.
- **D**eveloping and **E**mpowering students to apply AI to further their learning journey.
- **A**ssessing students, re-designing and re-imagining assessment in the context of AI.

Figure 1 (below) overviews the framework, and the full resource is available on the LearnHigher website and the National Teaching Repository (Hack, 2023).

Figure 1: The I.D.E.As framework.



Community response

It was clear that the session was well received by the attendees, with a significant level of response and discussion both within the session and across the community response. The session chair provided an excellent overview of the session and immediate response:

Thirty-two people in this session on the I.D.E.As framework in generative AI (standing for Introducing, Developing and Empowering, and Assessing – see Figure 1). On reflection, the main focus today was on the developing and empowering end of this framework.

In the discussion at the end, there was much conversation about people's fears of Gen AI, which was partly about whether AI threatens students' ability to think for themselves. In the presentation, however, there were some solid suggestions on how generative AI might be used to develop critical thinking skills because of its dialogical nature, though it occurs to me that, like a lot of earlier learning technology, effective teaching and learning inevitably involves some technical training that is not always easy to fit into teaching schedules.

Focused on the I.D.E.As framework, another attendee noted that the real value of the framework is its ability to 'open up the conversation' from many angles with our students. Their reflection built on this further:

I am encouraged by two particular points from your presentation around ChatGPT as a 'force for good'; rightly noting the drawbacks you outlined that balance this.

First, in response to your concern around higher education losing currency amongst industries due to GenAI's perceived ability to undermine assessments: it strikes me that industries need graduates that [*sic*] can "do things" not just "know things". It seems to me that GenAI has the potential to turn a generation of educators and graduates to the increased value of *applying* theory and knowledge gained. If we could respond to your challenge to reimagine our assessments in terms of the skills we are assessing in our students, I believe this concern will become a plus point over time.

Second, the discussion and information in the accompanying PowerPoint about prompt writing is interesting. I am leaning towards seeing this requirement of using GenAI, for example, the ability to write a good prompt (in other words, ask a good question) as a real benefit of GenAI use. When students use GenAI they are learning how to ask good questions - a vital academic skill. In this way, perhaps GenAI will teach us how to ask good questions. This is becoming more and more important. The inclusion within your framework of Compton's GenAI as a 'dialogic tutor' appears in line with this thought and would be a useful topic to explore further.

Another aspect that was drawn upon was the distinction between development and empowering AI use versus assessment. This, in particular, presented an opportunity for dialogue with students:

One element I really appreciated in the IDEA framework is the separation of the DE and the A, since assessment is where many of the conflicts around GenAI occur for my context. These legitimate concerns can force GenAI out of the discussion altogether but demarcating the difference between GenAI use for development

versus assessment can open discussion back up. Maybe I can more effectively advocate critical AI literacy by presenting it through the framing of IDEA.

Reflections built upon this further, considering AI as a potential vehicle for social justice, particularly in specific contexts such as those who are isolated or are first-generation scholars:

The idea of isolation and loneliness is something I have yet to consider. This is especially important after listening to the points raised in the 'Engaging men 18-24 using Social Media' session. I would like to know what the demographics are for ChatGPT use.

The possibility of increasing or decreasing loneliness with ChatGPT was also very interesting:

I agree that AI could be a tool for social justice by empowering students who are first-generation at university, but in order to ensure critical engagement with the tool, and not use it as a short-cut or workaround for learning, it needs to be demonstrated within relevant disciplines and given time to explore. Learning developers are in a great position to do this alongside academic staff for a particular discipline. However, what makes it hard is when there is a conflict between individual personal positions on the acceptability of AI use!

However, the concerns around the appropriate level of AI use were not the only concerns. There was a particular issue around two-tier systems, producing different access to answers for those who subscribe and those who do not. This was identified by one participant who highlighted, 'The slide comparing pass rates on the free version of ChatGPT compared to the paid version was a shock with significant implications for creating inclusive learning experiences'.

This comment was based on Newton and Xiomeriti's (2024) research that indicated 54% of students answered correctly with the free ChatGPT 3 version versus 75% of students passing when using the paid ChatGPT 4. Attendees drew attention to this, questioning how this may lead to new challenges in access to technology, 'Universities will have to think carefully about what platforms they are able to invest in if the digital divide is not going to get even bigger'.

One element of the presentation that drew particular thanks from attendees focused on Compton's (2023a; 2023b; 2023c; 2023d) website and videos.

Thank you for introducing me to the Compton videos – I'm particularly interested in how students can use Gen AI to develop/improve their academic reading skills and whether AI can have the same effectiveness as a group discussion on a reading.

I also am grateful for the introduction to Compton's work, as well as the idea of the 'democratisation of plagiarism', which I hadn't considered previously.

Next steps and additional questions

The community response acknowledged much potential learning from this session. There is a need, however, to reflect upon this, as recognised by numerous participants:

There were many useful ideas in the presentation that I will have to marinate in a bit before I can properly discuss.

There was a huge amount in this session that made me think so thanks to Sarah. What would be fantastic would be if, at some point in the not-too-distant future, we had a day when people actually ran some of the AI-related workshops they have done with students with we [us] learning developers. We would learn a lot!

This last comment has an interesting call to action, showing potential for future AI workshops for learning developers.

Author's reflection

I am really grateful for the engagement during the workshop and in this post-workshop collaborative writing exercise. Contributions here and at the time have provided welcome support for my positive (overly optimistic?) thoughts on how GenAI tools might be used to support students' learning, whilst also contributing to the ongoing development of my thinking in this area including my concerns regarding the limitations and potential threats from such tools. It seems clear to me that all of us who work to support the development of student learning see the potential but share concerns about the proliferation of GenAI tools.

Interesting points were also raised regarding the implications of GenAI tools for assessment, both in terms of their potential to undermine many current forms of assessment, but also how we might reimagine assessments to enable students to develop and demonstrate skills that will be increasingly sought after by employers. For me, this is

where the greatest challenges are, and where they will remain for quite some time to come. It is also where I believe as educators we feel most ill-equipped, and where the importance of community and sharing ideas and practice is key.

To work effectively with such tools, we need opportunities to learn about them, to try out ideas and most importantly, to share these ideas with each other. I hope the I.D.E.As framework may be useful as a starting point for individuals to organise and curate their own thinking and resources. The next challenge is how we might create a 'super-framework' to which we can all contribute and access. I have started converting the original set of slides that constitute the I.D.E.As framework into a Padlet, but do not have an institutional account. Perhaps something along the lines of LearnHigher, but focused on the practical suggestions for using AI tools to support learning and 'develop and empower' students? Something for me to continue to reflect on....

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The author and contributors did not use generative AI technologies in the creation of this manuscript.

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