ASCILITE 2024

Navigating the Terrain:

Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies

Affinity spaces: Co-creating new media knowledge and understanding of AI in education

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This poster (Padlet 'Collaborative reflection on AI') showcases a professional development approach that uses Padlet as an affinity space (Gee, 2004; Honeychurch, 2023) for educators to collaboratively explore and reflect on their experiences with Generative AI (GenAI) in education. Following Vallor's distinction between ease of creation (a key affordance of AI) and challenges of creative expression (a solely human capacity), we found that Padlet was an accessible tool for creating virtual affinity spaces, and that the Padlet format offers a visual representation of a collaborative method of co-creating that ASCILITE attendees can interact with, using a range of multimodal creation tools, including AI-based features available in Padlet (image creator, text-to-speech, and a poll creator). This poster may function as a catalyst for conference attendees to reflect on their own position in this rapidly developing space, and as a model of practice that educators can adapt to their own contexts to design GenAI-integrated learning experiences.

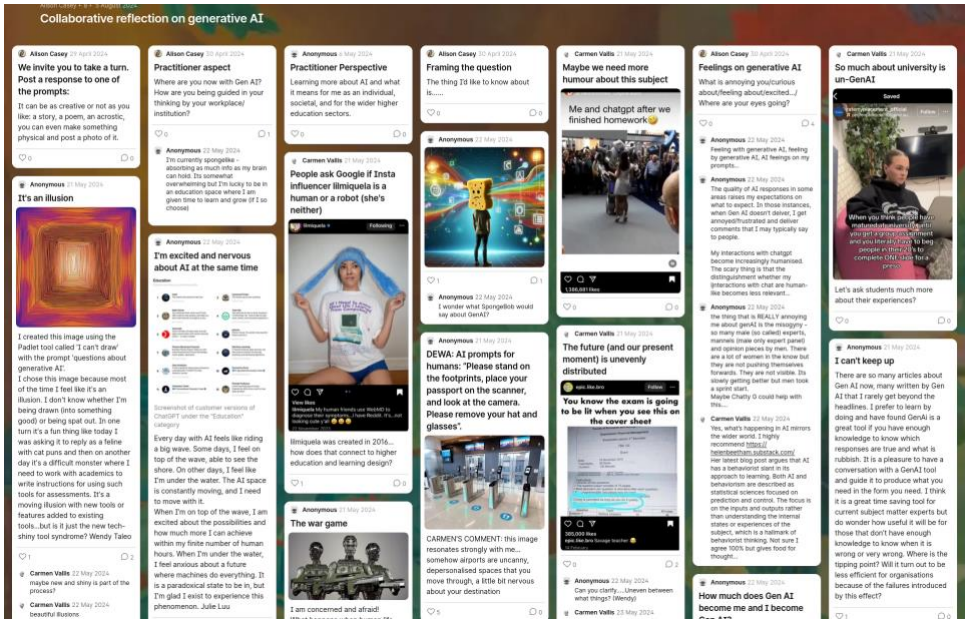

Figure 1: Collaborative reflection on generative AI [Padlet, screenshot]

Educators need novel ways to make sense of the changing nature of education with GenAI (Vallis et al., 2023) and advance both research and practice in technology-enabled learning. Drawing on a paradigm for academic development that is centred on the notions of construction and co-construction as a process of learning (Pimmer et al., 2016, p. 495), this inquiry used Padlet to provide an affinity space for this sense-making. Affinity spaces differ from communities of

practice in having a flat hierarchy instead of a periphery of less experienced practitioners around a core of experts; people enter an affinity space as interactants ("affines"), rather than members (Gee, 2005).

In this inquiry, a Padlet provides a "portal" (Calder et al., 2021, p. 448) to an affinity space, a space where contributors who have varying levels of (GenAI) expertise can bond around a shared endeavour (for a comparable use of Padlet to house a 'thinktank' for a scholarly project in teaching and learning, see Coleman, 2023). The Padlet serves as both an interactive platform for educators to engage with various perspectives on generative AI in higher education and a model for future learning activities. The aim is to facilitate knowledge sharing and community building around GenAI in education: as Timperley (2008, p.19) states, "participation in a professional community with one's colleagues is an integral part of professional learning that impacts positively on students".

The collaborative aspect of this inquiry sparked conversations, introduced collaborators to new tools, and stimulated reflection. It encouraged a patchwork of contributions in a variety of formats to provoke more perspectives. It allowed expression of sociotechnical imaginaries about GenAI (Costello, 2024; Dishon, 2024), including themes of "overwhelm to excitement"; "creative potential to concerns of control"; and perceptions of GenAI from "uncanny to real", and demonstrated that sharing creative practices in a virtual space allows educators to develop new knowledge about their experiences, concerns, and insights about integrating AI into their educational practices.

Keywords: GenAI, creative practice, academic development, postdigital

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