

ASCILITE 2024

Navigating the Terrain:

Emerging Frontiers in Learning Spaces, Pedagogies, and Technologies

Empowerment and connection: Developing organisational capacity in AI literacy through connectivist pedagogy

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This poster showcases a case study of an Australian higher education institution's artificial intelligence (AI) literacy staff development program. It offers practical suggestions to ASCILITE attendees on how to empower academic and professional staff to navigate the unknown terrain of generative AI collaboratively and responsibly.

Since the release of ChatGPT in November 2022, higher education institutions have been grappling with its impact on assessment, teaching and learning, and the world of work (CRADLE Blog, 2023) - culminating in the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Request for Information (RFI) about how institutions will engage with AI and secure course integrity (TEQSA, 2024).

Effective institutional responses to TEQSA's RFI are predicated on staff at all levels rapidly developing their AI literacy in order to conceptualise and implement the curriculum and assessment changes required. AI literacy is generally accepted to include understanding of AI tools and how they work, discussion of ethical and societal implications and critical evaluation of their outputs, and competency in integration of AI ethically and effectively into daily practice (Chan & Colloton, 2024; Hibbert, Melanie et al., 2024; Hillier, 2023). This poses a significant challenge for institutions because of rapidly evolving AI tools and the diverse capabilities and starting points of large staff cohorts, including among third space support staff responsible for implementation.

ECU's evolving strategy for building organisational capacity in AI literacy is outlined in this poster. The approach, which aligns with ECU's Framework and Guidelines for Ethical and Productive Use of AI (Edith Cowan University, 2023), is designed to empower and enable staff. It intentionally incorporates connectivist and constructivist learning theories, informed by Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning (Fink, 2013) and Miller's Pyramid (Miller, 1990). This meant (a) providing essential foundational knowledge about AI, (b) developing practical skills through hands-on experience and exploration, and (c) fostering collective capability through sharing and collaboration. These efforts complemented initiatives to support student AI literacy through similar impactful interventions (Sullivan et al., 2024).

In 2024, ECU implemented the following activities to support academic and professional staff:

- **"AI 101" Canvas site:** Covers how AI works, ethical and societal considerations, and AI in learning and teaching.
- **"Explore AI" workshops:** Focused on practical exploration of AI tools that generate both text and images, as well as ethics, research and assessment.
- **"AI Digest" Viva Engage Community:** Provides regular updates about AI.
- **Generative AI tools:** A series of tools for trials e.g., custom chatbots and image generators.
- **Workshops co-designed with Schools:** Explores generative AI in discipline-specific ways (including arts, humanities, business, law and performing arts)

Despite currently being voluntary, these initiatives have received strong engagement and positive feedback to date. For example, all respondents to the Explore AI Session feedback forms said they would recommend the sessions to colleagues. 331 academic and professional staff have engaged with the AI 101 Canvas site so far, spending a median of 3 hours and 5 minutes in the course. 74% of the 50 respondents to the AI 101 evaluation form stated that their confidence levels improved after completing the course.

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ECU continues to iteratively improve its AI literacy offerings and expand staff engagement, collectively making sense of generative AI and its effects as an institution.

Keywords: AI literacy, generative AI, ethical AI, connectivism, professional development, collaborative learning

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